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Reforming the Yemen Security Sector

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Reforming the Yemen Security Sector¹

1) Yemen is an ancient country with a rich and varied history. It has staunchly resisted foreign control with military force, and thus Yemeni warriors play a strong role in Yemeni identity and tradition. Yet in modern times, Yemeni's political leadership politicized the security sector, with rent payments and plum positions for favored officers, thus inhibiting Yemeni security professionalism. Yemen's security sector also suffers from shortages because of Yemen's weak economy, and the corresponding corruption that often exists in a poor country. After the political transitions of 2011, Yemen now faces the challenge of reforming its security sector to both modernize it and make it politically accountable to the Yemeni people.

2) After his election in February 2012, President Abd Rabbuh Mansour Hadi concentrated on security sector reform as the core component of his political agenda. This paper proposes methods to both continue and further such reform. The paper starts with a broad discussion of the challenges facing the Yemeni security sector, and then proposes particular reforms to empower a more responsive and professional security sector. The emphasis is on the *political realm* of security sector reform, focusing, for example, on the depolitization of the security sector, and its reconstruction as professional and publicly accountable security sector agencies, and ancillary reforms that support such an objective. Thus, the paper does not cover a narrower set of reforms that might make the forces more efficient or effective, such as acquiring different weapons, or modifying training tactics. For Yemen, time is of the essence, and security sector reform needs to start now.

¹ This paper reflects only the views of the authors, and not necessarily the views of any U.S. or Yemeni government

The Yemeni Security Sector

3) The Yemeni security sector consists of the government forces and agencies responsible for both internal and external security, though these responsibilities overlap.² The sectors have separate divisions; the military report to the Ministry of Defense, and the internal security forces are under the Ministry of Interior. Generally, the military forces are responsible for defense against outside enemies, though they may also have domestic policing or anti-terrorism functions as secondary functions,³ thus the Yemeni Armed Forces have the responsibility to guard the borders with Saudi Arabia and Oman. The Ministry of Interior is mostly responsible for internal security; though it may on occasion engage in defense of external foes should they penetrate national boundaries. The Yemeni Coast Guard operates under the Ministry of Interior, and thus polices Yemen's coasts in campaigns against smugglers, piracy, and illegal immigrants, mostly from the Horn of Africa.

4) In addition, there are other special security organs that can be considered supra-ministerial, including Central Security Forces (CSF), which were operating fully independently though, theoretically, they are part of Ministry of Interior. CSF, together with the Counter Terrorism Unit (CTU), which was established as one of its components, had been reporting to the former

agency.

² The Yemen Constitution defines the Security Sector in articles 36 to 40. Article 36 stipulates that the state is the only authority to establish "armed forces, the police, and the security forces and any such force", ... "to protect the republic and safeguard its territories and security", the "law stipulates the conditions for military service, promotion and disciplinary procedures in the military, police and security forces", and "no other organization, individual, group, political party or organization may establish forces or paramilitary group for whatever purpose or under any name." Article 39 provides that "The Police is a civilian body, for the maintenance of order, public security, and public morals; (and) to implement order of the judiciary." Unofficial translation of Constitution of Yemen, UNHCR, <http://www.unhcr.org/refworld/category,LEGAL,,YEM,3fc4c1e94,0.html>. The Arabic text of Yemen Constitution is on the website of Supreme Committee for Election and Referendum: <http://web.scer.gov.ye/ar-page.aspx?show=13>.

³ Phillips notes that al-Qa'ida in the Arabian Peninsula (AQAP) is active in soliciting support from Yemen's varying tribes, taking advantage of the lack of central state reach and control in Yemen's peripheral areas. Sarah Phillips, "What Comes Next in Yemen: Al-Qaeda, the Tribes, and State-Building." Washington, D.C.: Carnegie Program for International Peace, Middle East Program, No. 107 (March 2010), pp. 2-5. The Yemeni military also campaigns against the Al-Huthi rebellion in northern Yemen.

president. In addition, there are two organs concerned with counter-terrorism, one within the Ministry of Interior, and the other under the ex-Republican Guard, along with its Special Forces.⁴

5) In addition to these supra-ministerial organs, there are two intelligence entities which are the Political Security Organization⁵ (PSO) and National Security Organization⁶ (NSO), which are the largest security organs. Both organizations are considered unconstitutional, with ill-defined identical duplicated mandates, The two organs report only to the President, and lack transparency and perform their functions outside any laws and the Constitution.⁷

6) It is difficult to plan security sector reform without understanding how deeply the Yemeni security sector was politicized in previous regimes, thus the following section details how the security sector and the national political power structure interacted and, in some senses, joined to form national governance.

The Yemeni Security Sector in National Politics.

7) The security sector, and the military in particular, played significant roles in Yemeni politics for many years both during Yemen's division, and after unification.⁸ In the Yemen Mutawaklites Kingdom, North Yemen, the military participated in coups in 1948,⁹ in 1955¹⁰, and again in

⁴ In Arabic, "Yemen Security Sector and its Reform prerequisites", Mohammed Ahmed Ali Al-Mikhlaifi and Abdul-Kafi Sharafaddin Al-Arhabi, May 2012, Projects of Arab Security-Democracy and Security Sector Reforms, Arab Reform Initiative. Link: http://www.arab-reform.net/sites/default/files/SSR_Yemen_M-Mikhlaifi_May12_Final_Ar.pdf

⁵ Established by Republican Decree No. 121 of 1992, which merged the old intelligence organs of ex-Two Yemens, PSO reports to the President.

⁶ Established by Republican Decree No. 261 of 2002, which was established after events of 11 September 2001, NSO reports to the President.

⁷ Human Rights Watch link: <http://www.hrw.org/world-report/2013/country-chapters/112543>; US State Department on Human Rights in Yemen 2012, issued on 19 April 2013, link: <http://www.state.gov/j/drl/rls/hrrpt/2012/nea/204392.htm>

⁸ One of the best studies of Yemen military history is Sultan Nagi, *Attareekh Alaaskari Lilyaman 1838-1976, (Military History of Yemen: 1839-1967 A Political Study on Relation between establishment and development of military organization and activities, and political situations and their development)*, Dar Alaawda,; Beirut 1985.

⁹ Majid Khadduri, "Coup and Counter-Coup in the Yaman 1948." *International Affairs*, 28, (1, 1952) 59-68.

¹⁰ J. Leigh Douglas, "*The Free Yemeni Movement 1935-1962*", The American University of Beirut, 1987. Douglas book is one of the best record of Yemen and the role of The Free Yemeni Movement in political developments that led to 1962 Revolution. It gives full details of the 1948 and 1955 coups, and 26 September 1962 Revolution.

1962, allowing Colonel Abdullah Al Sallal to become president of the Yemen Arab Republic (YAR). The 26 September 1962 revolution was the start of direct military involvement in Yemen politics, thwarting Yemen's chances to develop democracy and the rule of the law, and the main reason behind the 1962-1970 protracted civil war in the YAR. The coups continued, deposing Sallal in November 1967, and resulting in civilian Presidential Council rule, but the military launched another bloodless coup in June 1974, suspended the 1971 Constitution, and replaced it with the Commanding Council, headed by Colonel Ibrahim Al-Hamdi. After the assassination of two YAR Presidents in less than nine months¹¹, Major Ali Abdullah Saleh, assumed the presidency in July 1979, escaping an assassination attempt in September and yet another coup attempt the next month.¹²

8) Similarly, in South Yemen (Aden, Federation of South Arabia and East Aden Protectorates), the military played a decisive role in the final outcome of the struggle against the British, as South Yemen gained independence with the help of the British-built military, which played a major role in ending the violent struggle between the two main combatants, the National Liberation Front (NLF) and Front of the Liberation of South Yemen (FLOSY). The military opted to support NLF and demised FLOSY.¹³ After independence of the People's Republic of South Yemen (then renamed as People's Democratic Republic of Yemen PDRY), the South Yemeni security sector played the dominant factor in the continuous cycles of intra-party conflicts.¹⁴ Similarly, assassinations, coups, and counter-coups continued in the South as well,

¹¹ Those were Ibrahim Alhamdi, assassinated on 12 October 1977, and his successor Ahmed Al-Ghashmi, assassinated on 24 June 1978; Robin Bewill, *The Two Yemens*, Longman Westview Press, 1983, p. 179 and p. 272

¹² Jean Gueyras, 1979. "North Yemen Faces Embryonic Civil War." *MERIP Reports* 18 (October 1979), 21-22.

¹³ Humphrey Trevelyan, "*The Middle East in Revolution*", "Aden 1967" pp 207-266, Macmillan and Co. Ltd, 1970. Trevelyan was the last British Governor in Aden since May 1967, who was commissioned with the evacuation of British Forces from the then Federation of South Arabia, which he accomplished by the end of November 1967. He gives a detail history of the months before People's Republic of South Yemen became independent on 30 November 1967, to include East Aden Protectorates, i.e. Sultanates of Qaiti, Katheri and Mahra. The role of the military in those critical months is thoroughly explained.

¹⁴ Steven R. David, *Third World Coups d'État and International Security*. Baltimore: The Johns Hopkins University Press, 1987, p. 90-91; Clarke, pp. 110-111.

with President Qahtan al- Shaabi overthrown in a June 1969 by a bloodless coup, after which Salem Robayya Ali, as a President of a Presidential Council, took over for several years (with Abdulfattah Ismail as Secretary General), which were full of internal conflicts, until he was sentenced to death, on 26 June 1978, on accusation of an assassination attempt on North Yemen President Ahmed Al-Ghasmi. Abdulfattah Ismail became Head of the State, until he was forced into exile to Moscow in 1980, as a result of conflicts with the ruling party. Ali Nasir Mohammad tightly controlled the country for five year. After some compromises, Ismail returned from exile. Party conflicts continued, culminating in Ali Nasir's failed bloody coup against the Central Committee on 13 January 1986, He fled to North Yemen. Ali Salem Al-Beedh, as Secretary General of Yemen Socialist Party, and Haidar Al-Attas as Head of State, took over until 1990.¹⁵

9) When Yemen was reunited on 22 May 1990, President Saleh, and his Vice President Al-Beedh intentionally refrained from unifying the two old security sectors into one; thus the security sector remained divided and was used in the 1994 war. Thereafter, theoretically, remnants of the two armies were unified; but in reality the security sector remained fragmented into several unprofessional "armies" to protect the regime. Division of security sector was explicitly manifested during February 2011 popular uprising.

10) Being a totally politicized security sector, which was intensively involved in reported killing and injuring of civilian peaceful protestors in Sana'a, Taiz, Aden and other cities during the 2011 uprising, Yemen SSR, in fact, became the core component of the Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC) Initiative and its mechanism and relevant UNSC resolutions No. 2014 (2011) & No. 2051 (2012), which are expected to facilitate Yemen's peaceful "political settlement" which came as a response to the uprising of 2011.

¹⁵ Robin Bewill, *The Two Yemens*, Longman Westview Press, 1983, "Chapter 6: The Federation of South Arabia, Chapter 7: The War in the North, Chapter 8: The Two Yemens 1985-1971, Chapter 9: The Two Yemens: 1972-1979" There are full details of the role of the security sector in shaping modern Yemen History, including the role of foreign intervention during the cold war.

11) During Saleh's presidency of the Presidential Council of the united Yemen in 1990, and later, after the 1994 war between the two security sectors, as a President of the Republic of Yemen, and based on the constitutional amendments he passed to strengthen his grip on all powers, Saleh utilized the security sector to bolster his electoral chances, dressing his military troops in civilian attire to give the impression of increased numbers of supporters at his political rallies using the Interior Ministry and intelligence services to spy on his opponents, and moving forces to competitive electoral areas so that they could vote for Saleh in close electoral districts.¹⁶

12) However, members of the Yemeni security sector also posed a challenge for Saleh, demanding adequate compensation and sometimes joining protest movements when the regime cashiered them. In some southern districts, former soldiers who Saleh forced to retire after the 1994 civil war rioted against his regime in October 2007, and four died when Saleh loyalist forces fired on the crowd.¹⁷ When mass demonstrations challenged Saleh in 2011, some soldiers supported him while others joined the demonstrations.

13) In summation, politics has been the business of the Yemeni security sector almost throughout Yemen's modern history, and has been the major obstacle to state building in Yemen throughout the last six decades. And it is for these reasons that Yemeni security sector reform should be inclusive, to include political reform, though it must also include more modest objectives.

The Ultimate Yemeni Security Sector Reform Goal: Top-to-Bottom.

14) Given the security sector politicization described above, SSR reform must ultimately construct a professional and accountable security sector under democratic civil control. This requires transforming both the military and internal security services from rent payment

¹⁶ April Longley, "The High Water Mark of Islamist Politics" The Case of Yemen." *Middle East Journal*, Vol. 61 (Spring 2007), p. 244.

¹⁷ Stephen Day, "Updating Yemeni National Unity: Could Lingering Regional Divisions Bring Down the Regime?" *Middle East Journal*, Vol. 62 (Summer 2008), p. 420.

dependency and regime support into a professional service. Thus, genuine SSR must start by transforming authoritarian rule to democratic governance. SSR then must include reorganization that removes security sector leaders appointed through patronage, replacing them instead with professional leadership selected through merit criteria.¹⁸ Then the entire security sector structure can be professionalized through education, pay reform, anti-corruption efforts, and missions linked to genuine security requirements instead of providing protection of the regime.

15) For many analysts and reform advocates, security sector reform must include political changes at the top to ensure transparent democratic oversight of national security forces,¹⁹ thus, the OECD Security System Reform and Governance report emphasizes civilian oversight of the security forces, transparency of operations and control, and integrated development of security forces with democratic governance,²⁰ which is particularly important for developing countries where militaries played a critical initial role in state construction.²¹

16) While democratic transformation in Yemen carries its own challenges, which are beyond the scope of this paper, other steps must accompany democratic reform to move the politicized security sector out of domestic politics, and put it under civilian political control.

¹⁸ “Rent-seeking is behavior by organizations or individuals in response to successful engagement in state distribution or redistribution activities. See Erich Weede, “Rent-Seeking, Military Participation, and Economic Performance in LDCs,” *Journal of Conflict Resolution*, Vol. 30 (June 1986), pp. 291-314; Nancy Birdsall, and Arvind Subramanian 2004. “Saving Iraq from Its Oil.” *Foreign Affairs*, 83 (4), pp. 77-89; Gwenn Okruhlik, 1999. “Rentier Wealth, Unruly Law, and the Rise of Opposition: The Political Economy of Oil States,” *Comparative Politics* 31 (3), pp. 295-315.

¹⁹ Gross notes that, “...SSR constitutes a holistic approach in that it focuses not only on integrating defence, police, intelligence, and judicial reform, but also on a normative commitment to the consolidation of democracy, and to the promotion of human rights and principles of good governance – including accountability and transparency.”Eva Gross, “Security Reform in Afghanistan: The EU’s Contribution,” European Union for Security Studies, Occasional Paper 78, 2009, p.5; see also Dimitris Bouris and Stuart Reigeluth, “Introducing the Rule of Law in Security Sector Reform: European Union Policies in the Palestinian Territories,” *Hague Journal of the Rule of Law*, Vol. 4 (March 2012), p. 178; Louise R. Andersen, “Something’s Gotta Give: Security Sector Reform and United Nations Peace Operations,” *African Security*, Vol. 5, No. 3-4, pp. 221-222; Nicole Ball, “Reforming Security Sector Governance,” *Conflict, Security, and Development*, Vol. 4 (December 2004), p. 511.

²⁰ *Security System Reform and Governance*. OECD, 2005, at <http://www.oecd.org/development/incaf/31785288.pdf>, p. 11.

²¹ See for examples security sector reform in Indonesia, Malaysia, and the Philippines, for example. Mark Beeson, Alex J. Bellamy, and Bryn Hughes, “Taming the Tigers: Reforming the Security Sector in Southeast Asia,” *Pacific Review*, Vol. 19 (December 2006), pp. 449-472.

17) To gain and hold power, the Saleh regime had packed the security sector with regime favorites, often family members, or members of the same tribe, religion, or region as the head of state,²² in short, constructing and maintaining praetorian forces.²³ Thus, a critical step in reforming a rent-seeking security sector is to alter its mission, from protecting the regime to protecting the country, from running businesses and other enterprises for personal gain to professionally running the sector. This means constructing security sector professionalism, through the adoption of a set of norms like service, self-sacrifice, specialty competence, and, most importantly, a divorce from political management while accepting civilian political oversight. Professionalism means that the security sector must remain out of the political sphere, and that politics must not taint the military—separate but equal attachments that impede security performance.²⁴

18) As democratization progresses, it is important to also depoliticize the security sector and to reduce their rent-seeking objectives, because if the political center requires the security sector for regime survival, it will ultimately re-politicize it.²⁵ And where reform efforts are segmented out to different task forces, reform may fail, as each reform part rarely works well in isolation.²⁶

²² This applies to other Arab countries as well. In Syria, Hafez al-Asad elevated his sons to significant security sector positions, along with members of his Alawi Islamic sect (though he also placed Christians and some Sunni Muslims in key positions to buy their loyalty), and senior members of the Al-Saud family serve in leadership positions in the Saudi Arabian security sector. In Qaddafi's Libya, family members commanded the People's Militia and the Revolutionary Guard. In other cases, militaries receive remuneration in exchange for regime support, distributed through large defense budgets, or through operating businesses, legal or otherwise

²³ See Amos Perlmutter, "The Praetorian State and the Praetorian Army: Toward a Taxonomy of Civil-Military Relations in Developing Polities." *Comparative Politics* Vol 1 (1969), pp. 382-404; Eric A. Nordlinger, 1977. *Soldiers in Politics: Military Coups and Governments*. Englewood Cliffs, NJ: Prentice-Hall; Babar Sattar, 2001. "Pakistan: Return to Praetorianism." In Muthiah Alagappa (ed.), *Coercion and Governance: The Declining Political Role of the Military in Asia*. Sanford, CA: Stanford University Press, 385-412.

²⁴ South Korea ended its practice of elevating officers from the home province of Presidents Park Chung Hee and Chun Doo Hwan after democratic transformation in 1987. Jeeyan Rhee Baum, *Responsive Democracy: Increasing State Accountability in East Asia*. Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 2011, p. 40. Indonesia's armed forces once served to protect the autocratic president, but after democracy took root there, they refused to do so, choosing instead a path to professionalism. Siddharth Chandra and Douglas Kammen, "Generating Reforms and Reforming Generations Military Politics in Indonesia's Democratic Transition and Consolidation." *World Politics* 55 (October 2002) pp. 96-136, as also happened in Greece after the disastrous colonels' coup in 1967. Constantine P. Danopoulos, "Democratic Undercurrents in Praetorian Regimes: The Greek Military and the 1973 Plebiscite." *The Journal of Strategic Studies* 12 (July 1989), pp. 349-368.

²⁵ Experience in countries like Haiti demonstrate the necessity of comprehensive reform; reformers created a new

Depoliticizing and Reorganizing the Security Sector

19) Several methods exist to demilitarize national politics; the easiest is a military purge, as it quickly rids the country of politically meddlesome officers, though it can sweep up the professional as well as the political soldier.²⁷ Another de-politicization technique is to professionalize the security sector, which takes much more time and resources, but potentially avoids the baby and bathwater problem. A third way is to reorganize security sector, thus breaking the chains that link security units to their old political owners.

20) In Yemen, former president Saleh controlled the security sector through family and tribal control of top military divisions, regions and security posts, through keeping each as a separate “island”, where commanders had to report directly and only to him, away from normal channels in the Ministry of Defense and the Ministry of Interior, taking advantage of the lack of any clear constitutional or legal authority or mandate. Saleh drew largely upon tribal affiliation for his selection of military generals in particular, with a majority coming from Saleh’s Sanhan clan and his Hashid tribal confederation.²⁸ Special units got special patronage, for example, the Republican Guards got sporting clubs, housing, and hospitals under the command of Saleh’s eldest son, Ahmed Ali.²⁹ Saleh also exercised security sector control by issuing a series of unconstitutional laws and decrees granting him the power to control the security sector himself,

Haitian National Police out of demobilized forces in early 1995, but in the absence of judicial and civic reform, the forces initially professionalized, but slipped back into the world of corruption and politicization because there was no corresponding effort to reform the judicial and penal systems. Johanna Mendelson-Forman, “Security Sector Reform in Haiti,” *International Peacekeeping*, Vol. 13 (March 2006), pp. 20-21.

²⁶ An example is the SSR initiated by the Group of Eight Donor’s Conference in 2002, which disbanded the Afghanistan tribal militias, replacing them with five new pillars, each led by a donor nation: the U.S. led military reform, Germany led police reform, Italy had judicial reform, disarmament, demobilization, and reintegration led by Japan, and counter-narcotics operations by the United Kingdom. Given this responsibility by outside nations, it is hardly surprising that a lack of coordination followed, with uneven progress resulting (police reform could not continue very far without judicial reform, for example). Hodes and Sedra, pp. 51-93.

²⁷ The most recent example of military purges occurred in Turkey, where state officials have arrested scores of senior officers, charged with either plots against the current regime, or involvement in either the 1980 coup or the 1997 “velvet memorandum” that ended Turkey’s first Islamist-oriented government.

²⁸ Khaled Fattah, “Tribes and Tribalism in the Arab Spring,” *Yemen Times*, April 26, 2012.

²⁹ “Yemen’s Military-Security Reform: Seeds of New Conflict?” International Crisis Group, Middle East Report No.

demanding citizens to respect and abide by his security sector decisions.³⁰ Saleh allowed no laws to independently regulate the security sector, and turned a blind eye to the definition of “Security Forces”. Consequently, Yemen SSR must eliminate those “islands”, or centers of power and loyalties in a divided army, which Saleh carefully carved out to guarantee tribal patronage.

SSR taken by President Hadi:

The Military and Ministry of Defense

21) President Hadi has started such reform, after inheriting a divided military from the Saleh regime, the origins of which are important:

The key to understanding this division can be found in Saleh’s structure of governance, based on a complex, overlapping and competitive network of families, clans and tribes. Political and economic competition among these elites is instantly reflected inside the military, which mirrors tribal coalitions and elite struggle, not state power. Complicating the situation is the fact that the military is composed mainly of tribesmen from the northern highlands. The tribal bonds of the soldiers are stronger than their military allegiance, creating a military-tribal complex of patron-client relationships.³¹

22) In April 2012, Hadi purged twenty of former President Saleh’s relatives from high security sector positions, and in August he reduced the size of the powerful Republican Guards, and then he formed a new military unit, the “Presidential Protective Forces,” formed from units removed from Republican Guard units commanded by Saleh relatives.³²

139, April 4, 2013, p. 8.

³⁰ Those laws included Entry and Residence of Foreigners Law, the Yemen Nationality Law, the Civil Status and Registry Law, the Military Academy Law, the Civil Defense Law, the Regulation of Arms and Ammunitions and Arms Trade Law, Regulation of Prisons, and Police Authority Law, and Duties and Mandates of Police

³¹ Khaled Fattah, “Yemen: A Social Intifada in a Republic of Sheiks,” *Middle East Policy*, Vol. 18 (Fall 2011), p. 82.

³² Khaled Fattah, “Insuring the Success of Yemen’s Military Reforms,” Washington, D.C.: Carnegie Middle East Center, December 13, 2012, at <http://carnegie-mec.org/publications/?fa=50349>. The overall structure became: 1. The Yemeni Armed Forces Headquarters; 3. Service branches: the Army, Navy and Coastal Defense, Air Force and Air

23) While Hadi probably intended to weaken the remaining Saleh influence, the initial result was clashes at the Yemeni Defense Ministry by disgruntled Republican Guard forces, and fears from some analysts that the restructuring might backfire against Hadi. Said one Yemeni analyst, “The implications of rejecting these decrees don't bear contemplating,” and another Yemeni analyst said, “Hadi has created a political earthquake in Sana’a.”³³ Rumors of these divisions continued, as troops movements in Sana’a in early January 2013 elicited this response from Mohammed al-Bogheti, a member of the General People’s Congress: “You don't usually see soldiers in full combat gear unless the army issued a red alert ... Given recent rumors General Ali Mohsen al-Ahmar [Army Chief of the 1st Armored Division] is planning to move against President Abd Rabbo Mansour Hadi, I assumed the brewing storm is about to unleash on us.”³⁴ The rumors proved at the time to be false, but the tensions between factions over security sector control remain tense.

24) Before former President Saleh stepped down in November 2011, he had installed his relatives in senior positions in the security sector. The reforms carried out by Hadi cleared those positions. Until November 2012, Tariq Mohammed Abdullah, Saleh’s nephew, was demoted from the post of Commander of the Presidential Guard to Brigade Commander, and Ammar Mohammed Abdullah, Saleh's nephew from the post of Deputy Director of National Security; Ali Saleh, Saleh’s brother, from the post of Director of the Office of the Supreme Commander of the Armed Forces; Mohammed Saleh Al-Ahmar, Saleh’s brother, from the post of Commander of the Air Force and Air Defense; and Mohamed Mohammed Abdullah Saleh, Saleh’s nephew, from the post of Commander of Counter-Terrorism Unit. Hadi kept the president's son Ahmed Ali Saleh, to continue as Commander of the Republican Guard and Special Forces, and Yahya

Defenses, the Border Guard, and the Strategic Reserve Forces. Under the Strategic Reserve Forces, came the Special Operations Command, the Missile Defense Command, and the Presidential Protective Forces.

³³ Mohammed Ghobari, “Yemeni President Curbs Rival’s Power in Army Overhaul,” *Reuters*, December 19, 2012.

³⁴ “Heightened Tensions in the Yemeni Capital.” *Yemen Post*, January 9, 2013.

Mohammed Abdullah Saleh, Saleh nephew, as Chief-of-Staff of the Central Security Forces.³⁵

The latter was replaced later.

25) On 19 December 2012 President Hadi issued a Decree³⁶ on the Main Components of the Organizational Structure of the Armed Forces, to be valid for five years. The resolution emphasizes the absence of a valid law to regulate the Yemeni Army. *Inter alia*, the Decree provided for reconsidering the Law of the Supreme Council of National Defense to cope and the new structure.

26) On April 10, 2013, President Hadi undertook further significant decisions in military restructure, removing Saleh's son, Ahmed, from command.³⁷ The decisions divided the country's military fields into seven geographical regions determined according to a military deployment map, to be drawn later.³⁸ It formed "Reserved Forces" out of six brigades, with headquarters in the Sana'a suburbs, to be deployed only by decision of the president. Another decision appointed Major General Ali Mohsen Saleh as an adviser to the president for security and military affairs, while Ahmed Ali Abdullah Saleh received an appointment as Yemen's ambassador to the United Arab Emirates. Finally, the president formed a new "specialized advisory group" with some important Saleh loyalists.

³⁵ Jeremy M. Sharp, "Yemen: Background and Relations," Congressional Research Service, November 2012, p. 5.

³⁵ Details in Saba News Agency link: <http://www.sabanews.net/en/news305422.htm>

³⁶ Presidential Decree Supreme Commander of the Armed Forces No. (104) 2012, by which the main components of the Armed Forces are: (1) Ground Forces, divided into Seven Regions, and (2) Navy and Coastal Defense, and (3) Air Force and Air Defense, and (4) Borders Guards. Decree formed the "Strategic Reserve." It also introduced two new post which is Inspector General of the Armed Forces, Deputy Chief of the General Staff, 4 Assistant Secretaries for strategic planning, human resources, Logistics, and Technology. Under the General Chiefs of Staff 5 branches were formed which are: Operations, Intelligence, Training and Rehabilitation, Manpower and Logistics.

³⁷ Details in Saba News Agency link: <http://www.sabanews.net/en/news305422.htm>

The Ministry of Interior

27) In February 2013, Hadi issued a Decree on Organizational Structure of the Ministry of Interior (MoI).³⁹ The Decree specified that “reorganization and restructure of MoI should create a national professional police service, on a scientific basis; to rigorously and strictly enforce the Law; to respect citizens’ rights and safeguards; to respect human rights; and to serve the citizens and thus to earn their trust and cooperation in combating crime.” It also requires neutrality for professional police service and an end to nepotism and narrow loyalties to tribe, clan, sectarian, racial, partisan, instead mandating loyalty to God and the homeland the sole motive for police service. The new structure of the MoI is to meet these objectives through a series of guidelines to streamline and consolidate functions.⁴⁰ According to President Hadi’s presidential decree, “Regulations shall organize those foundations etc, as governing the relationship between the principal organs and their branches and their duties.”⁴¹ Nevertheless, appointments have not yet been made to fill the new posts created thus far, and merging the two intelligence organs is pending receiving reports of finalizing the matter.

The Next Security Sector Reform Steps

28) To this point, President Hadi has attempted to move the security sector away from its patronage-laden orientation, and to reorganize and depoliticize them. These are important first

³⁸ The headquarters of those will be as follows: 1st Region in Sayon, 2nd Region in Mukalla, 3rd Region in Marib, 4th Region in Aden, 5th Region in Hodeida, 6th Region in Amran, and 7th Region in Dhamar. New commanders were named as commanders.

⁴⁰ Specifically the reforms called for: 1) Clarity of functions and responsibilities, and avoidance of functional overlap, 2) Integration of all police functions, 3) Oversight and accountability, 4) Limitation of police abuses, and fight against corruption, 5) Promotion of transparency to allow civil society organizations the opportunity to oversee police conduct and behavior, 6) Creation of unity of control, logistics, and order; and granting geographical administrative power to the highest administrator (i.e. The Governor) in the region. (المسئول الاول), 7) Development of new departments and units to achieve anticipated goals in the new structure, 8) Promotion of national unity in police organizational structure through admission to academies and institutes, and in recruiting, and 9) Maximization of effective evaluation.

⁴¹ Article 1 of Presidential Decree No. 184 of 2013 issued on 21 February 2013. Translated by Ambassador M.

steps, but more can and should be done to push the Yemeni security sector towards institutional professional standards that will both keep it out of the Yemeni political space and ensure its capacity to perform its security obligations.

Further SS Reorganization

29) Subsequent SSR should push for further reorganization steps to help Yemen's security sector become more efficient and responsive, as that sector has layers of organization and oversight that sometimes hamper their efficiency and operations.⁴² One way to repair this problem is a combination of centralization of authority, as noted above, and the reduction of separate security sector organizations. Along these lines, YAF reform should shift control of the "Border Guards" to the MoI, as suggested by some observers.⁴³ As mentioned before, Presidential military decrees have already re-divided Yemen into seven new regions with new commanders, upon which all Army units will be redeployed outside the cities. But new appointments of new leaders of the new structure of MoI have not to be delayed further.

National Dialogue Conference and SSR

30) It is noteworthy that, National Dialogue Conference (NDC)'s nine Committees includes a Military and Security one, tasked with military and security issues so as to lay foundations for development of a refashioned and professional national security sector, and development of its

Noman.

⁴² Sometimes a lack of coordination between security sector branches impedes cooperation. For example, in 2010, General Yahya Saleh (a nephew of former President Saleh) complained that his anti-terrorism unit, which falls under the Ministry of Interior, could not get air support without asking the air force, which reports to the Ministry of Defense. Said Saleh, "The bureaucracy is a nightmare, ... If no one in the air force answers their phone, I can't get a helicopter that day."⁴² A U.S. report confirms the coordination problems; the MoD takes at least three months to respond to MoI requests for helicopters, hardly adequate for a timely response to counter-terrorism urgency. "U.S. Assistance to Yemen," United States Government Accountability Office, March 2013, p. 23.

⁴³ Ambassador Marwan Noman interview with a foreign team involved in helping Yemen SSR..

identity, including its role in politics, and how to protect Yemen.⁴⁴ Such an approach confirms the transitional and interim character of all steps that President Hadi has taken thus far, and that SSR will be a protracted and politically well-calculated procedure that will take no less than several years beyond the transitional period expected to end by 2014 elections, depending on the final outcome of the NDC that will be reflected in the new draft constitution which will be put for referendum towards the end of 2013.

31) The Draft of the New Constitution will revisit the “state structure and the political system”. . The emphasis of this reorganization will be to emphasize a *national* military⁴⁵.

32) Yemen also has to construct an intelligence organization that centralizes the duplicate institutions and eliminates its vague and ill-defined mandates. Military intelligence should be a separate organ in the military, yet integrated in anti-terrorism operations with regional and international partners. It is of great importance that the new Constitution of Yemen addresses all of these flaws and shortcomings.

Reforming SS Compensation Policy

33) Pay policy is an essential move towards security sector reform; pay must be adequate to attract qualified sector members, but not so high as to attract persons primarily because of lucrative salaries.⁴⁶ Merit, as measured by objective standards, should be a primary determinate in pay rewards, rather than regime loyalty. For the military side of the security sector, Yemeni

⁴⁴ The committee was divided into 4 working groups which are: 1) Armed Forces Group: dealing specifically with MOD, its units and personnel, 2) Security Forces Group: focusing on MOI and its personnel, 3) Civil and Military Apparatuses Group: concerned with intelligence Services, which are National Security Organization (NSO), Political Security Central Organization (PSCO), and Military Intelligence, 4) Armed Forces Military Polices Group: mandated on proposing forms of linkage between foreign, military, economic and media fields as well as with cultural rights and military policy services of various forms.

⁴⁵ “Tasks And Actions Relating to Restructuring Armed Forces Discussed,” SABA online, OSC, accessed January 25, 2013.

⁴⁶ The Afghanistan experience holds lessons; initial pay figures set at the creation of the Afghan National Army were insufficient to retain troops, leading to a 10 percent attrition rate, yet an adequate salary of US equivalent \$150

military pay is considerably below regional levels, with some soldiers earning as little as 30,000 Yemeni Riyals per month, about \$138 US, while generals may earn 50 times that much.⁴⁷ It is thus not surprising that morale is low, defections are high, and corruption is rampant. Yet Yemen has dramatically increased its arms budget, increasing its weapons spending by 96 percent between 2001-2005, largely from China and Russia.⁴⁸ Security sector reform would reverse this imbalance; shifting from the purchase of often-expensive weapons of dubious utility for Yemeni security to adequate pay for Yemeni troops. Pay increases should reflect performance increases established by professional criteria (tests, exercises, objective performance appraisals, and such), with oversight by civilian-led Ministries of Defense and Interior. The trade-off may have to include a reduction in force, though the danger in such a reduction would likely be an increase in an already high unemployment rate.

34) While critics might argue that merit-based pay is unaffordable in a poor country, the counter argument is that more proficient security forces can also be smaller forces, where those who joined primarily for pay and labor benefits may be culled from the security forces' ranks. Yet this reform proposal has already run into resistance; the Ministry of Civil Service halted, three years ago, a program targeting reform of the government payroll, which the IMF financed.⁴⁹ Lately, this program has resumed and is orchestrated with parallel programs by Civil Registry, and by the electronic electors system.

per month was beyond the capacity of the national government without foreign aid. Cyrus Hodes and Mark Sedra, "Chapter Five: Security Sector Reform," *The Adelphi Papers*, 47 (2007), pp. 57-58.

⁴⁷ Sam Kimball, "Yemeni Military: The Regime's Cash Cow," *Al-Akhbar*, July 13, 2012.

⁴⁸ Abdul Hakim Hilal, "Yemen's Increase in Spending on Weapons over last Ten Years," *Yemen Post*, April 10, 2010.

⁴⁹ The IMF complained that Yemen's overall public wage, at ten percent of GDP, was very high by international standards, and recommended steps to eliminate ghost workers and double dipping. See "Republic of Yemen December 2012 Staff Visit. International Monetary Fund, December 9, 2012, at <http://www.imf.org/external/np/ms/2012/120912.htm>.

Corruption

35) All security sectors need to have measures against corruption; for the military alone, the sheer size of most military budgets and military positions offer the opportunity for personal gain, which increases when the internal security forces are added. Overall, Yemen suffers from high levels of corruption; Transparency International ranks Yemen at 156 on its 2012 list of corruption perception, with only 20 countries in the world ranked worse.⁵⁰ It has been difficult to measure corruption directly in Yemen, thus much evidence is anecdotal; U.S. sources claimed that the regular branches of the Yemeni armed forces were so corrupt that they encouraged the Yemeni government to establish an independent coast guard to conduct maritime security patrols.⁵¹ Corruption does tend to follow the money, and, according to Robert Mitchell, somewhere between 24-40 percent of the Yemeni central government budget goes to the military.⁵² A 2006 report commissioned by the U.S. Embassy in Sana'a found that:

“There are five main elite groups that profit from the structure of corruption in Yemen. The two most important are also the two with the most overlap: tribes and the military-security establishment. Sometimes military commanders served as de facto heads of provinces, recruiting members from local areas and distributing state

⁵⁰ “Corruption Perceptions,” Transparency International, December 5, 2012, at: <http://www.transparency.org/cpi2012/results>.

⁵¹ David Sorenson interview, U.S. Embassy, Sana'a, March 2005. This may have been a valid reason, but it also is possible that the Yemeni Navy, like the U.S. Navy, does not favor coastal patrol for bureaucratic reasons and thus the U.S. pushed for a Yemeni Coast Guard for the same reasons that there is a U.S. Coast Guard. Events in late January 2013 reveal how important the coast guard mission is when Yemeni security forces intercepted a cargo of illegal weapons at sea, reportedly from Iran, and destined for the al-Huthi rebel forces and, quite possibly, some southern secessionist forces. According to one report, the goods included anti-aircraft missiles, Katyusha rockets, and C-4 explosives, among other items. “Yemen Demands Iran Halt Support for Insurgents,” *Lebanon Daily Star*, February 7, 2013. In May, 2013 security forces intercepted a ship carrying 20,000 unregistered Turkish-made rifles south of Taiz. “Yemen Authorities Prevent Smuggling of Weapons,” *Yemen Post*, May 6, 2013.

⁵² Robert E. Mitchell, “What the Social Sciences Can Tell Policy-Makers in Yemen,” *Middle East Journal*, Vol. 66 (Spring 2012), p. 295.

resources, sometimes for favor in return. This is not surprising since tribal leaders constitute the lion's share of top military and security officers."⁵³

36) In Yemen, the military sector is divided, as the weak central state has empowered para-states in Yemen's regions, with five military regions commanded by a Yemeni general officer. General Ali Mohsen al-Ahmar's defection from President Saleh in March 2011 highlighted his reported involvement, along with the other four regional commanders, in transferring funds for development to residents, or withholding funds to punish disloyal citizens, power that got General Al-Ahmar the description of a cross between a warlord and a business oligarch.⁵⁴ Clarke reported that in Yemen approximately one third of Yemen's soldiers are actually "ghost soldiers," those who show up only on the rolls of the commander, who get to pocket their salaries and sell off their equipment, a finding echoed by a 2006 report on Yemeni corruption,⁵⁵ and by comments made in 2012 by Professor Muhammad Jubran, who noted the lack of transparency of the military budget, and the continuing presence of "ghost soldiers ("Suppose a military commander's base 'has' five hundred soldiers. The real number of soldiers there is two hundred fifty. The 'others' still receive their salaries." With no records of where the money ends up, salaries for fictitious soldiers "go into the pockets of the army leadership."").⁵⁶ According to a report in January 2013, over 54,000 fictitious soldiers belong to the Republican Guard, and over 100,000 exist in the entire Yemeni Military.⁵⁷

37) However, despite reports of widespread Yemeni military corruption, the U.S. funneled millions of dollars (almost \$68 million alone in fiscal 2009) to Yemen to purchase military equipment and military training. Inadequate monitoring produced the likely result that "...much

⁵³ *Yemen Corruption Assessment*, 2006. Produce for the United States Agency for International Development. Burlington, VT: Ard, Inc., p. v.

⁵⁴ "In New Face of Yemen's Opposition, Reflections of an Old Regime." 2011. *Yemen Post*, March 25.

⁵⁵ Clarke, pp. 265-266; *Yemen Corruption Assessment*, p. 4

⁵⁶ *Yemeni Army: The Regime's Cash Cow*, *Al-Akhbar*, July 13, 2012.

⁵⁷ "Military Budget Keeps Increasing," *National Yemen*, January 12, 2013; Mohammed Al-Qadhi, "Reform of the

equipment was unaccounted for. There were also significant discrepancies between ... data on the quantity that had been provided and that which was in the Yemeni forces' inventories."⁵⁸

38) One way to clean out ghost troops is to improve national record keeping. As mentioned above, the international community is helping Yemen transition to prepare for 2014 elections in revising the electors' registry using a national number identification card. This national number has been strongly opposed to by the security sector because they argue that it violates the confidentiality of its recruits. The new elections registry will help the reform to electronically cleanup name duplication in all civil and security sectors, which will eventually give the real figure for both civil servants and military sector conscripts.

39) One of the most important sources of corruption in the security sector is the Yemen Economic Corporation (YEC, formerly the Yemen Military Economic Corporation, or YMCO, before unification), the economic arm of the security sector. It was established in mid 1970s to supply the military with boots and uniforms and food supplies. After Saleh came to power, he used it to compete with civilian business houses, without any transparency, auditing or accountability, using public funds. It received thousands of hectares in different agricultural areas around the country, including most land-holdings from Imamic times.⁵⁹ Dresch notes that the YEC "... has expanded from farming and retailing to packing and canning, transport and refrigeration..."⁶⁰ It took over the ownership of most profitable public companies by instructions from Saleh. It is one of Saleh's most corruption money "taps," specifically to fund militias of "thugs" he brought into Sana'a and Taiz, to confront the 2011 uprising. After Saleh departed, President Hadi named a new Director General for YEC from within it, thus dislodging another

Army is Hadi's Big Challenge," *The National*, March 5, 2012.

⁵⁸ *Following the Money in Yemen and Lebanon: Maximizing the Effectiveness of U.S. Security Assistance and International Financial Institution Lending*. 2010. Committee on Foreign Relations, United States Senate. One Hundred Eleventh Congress, First Session January 5. Washington, D.C.: Government Printing Office, 2010, p. 10.

⁵⁹ Paul Dresch, *A History of Modern Yemen*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2002, p.162.

⁶⁰ *Ibid*, p. 208.

Saleh loyalist. SSR should include a proper evaluation of the YEC, and privatize or sell it as a public share company, with revenues used to establish a sovereign fund if possible.

40) Because corruption levels were so high, particularly in the Yemeni navy, U.S. military advisors assisted in establishing a new Yemeni coast guard in 2002 because the navy was too corrupt and unprofessional to carry out Yemeni coastal defense. The new coast guard, equipped with western-supplied vessels and training (and \$1.1 million in U.S. aid) is now responsible for Yemeni maritime security.⁶¹ Reports now claim that the Yemeni Coast Guard, established with U.S. assistance, has rented its patrol boats and crew through private business firms to commercial ships seeking piracy protection,⁶² thus even reorganization is not sufficient to stem security sector corruption.

41) Contributing to security sector corruption is the lack of transparency and oversight of Yemeni security sector budgeting process by Parliament as well as the Central Organization for Controlling and Auditing.⁶³ Mustafa Nassar, Chairman of Studies and Economic Media Centre (SEMC), complained that “There is a constitutional article that bans the monitoring of the defense and security budget,” noting that only the Ministry of Defense monitors the defense budget and military intelligence controls the intelligence funds.⁶⁴ The problem continued into 2013, with one parliamentarian noting, “The expenditures allocated for the Defense and Interior Ministries are very high, he continued, explaining the way these expenditures are spent is vague and unclear.”⁶⁵ The Ministry of Finance has no control or oversight of the defense budget either: “The military budget is solely a matter for the Ministry of Defense. The Ministry of Finance has nothing to do with the military budget,” said one unnamed Ministry of Finance official.⁶⁶ An

⁶¹ David Sorenson interview, Sana’a, March 2005.

⁶² “U.S. Military Aid is Up for Hire in Yemen,” *Wall Street Journal*, January 4, 2011.

⁶³ Yasser Ezzi, “Military Spending after the Revolution,” *Yemen Times*, May 29, 2012.

⁶⁴ *Ibid.*

⁶⁵ “Karman Calls on Mohsen to Fulfill Pledge and Let Go of Power for Good,” *Yemen Times*, January 21, 2013.

⁶⁶ “Military Budget Keeps Increasing.”

immediate solution is to turn the security budget in its entirety back to the Central Organization for Controlling and Auditing, with independent auditing and details publicly available.

Professional Education

42) Yemen lacks sufficient professional security sector education, with the military in particular having only the equivalent of a command-and-general staff college education (intermediate education at best), and thus it is essential to construct a senior professional educational program for both the military and the internal security services, though that takes time to build. While such a system is being planned and developed, Yemen can increase the number and quality of Yemeni security sector members through sending them for professional education in other neighboring countries with more advanced military education systems. Examples include Jordan, which has educated security forces and military officers from a number of countries, as well as Tunisia.⁶⁷

43) Even a few Yemeni security force members can become the core of a professionalized group that studies outside of Yemen and then returns to assist in building professional security sector education in Yemen itself. An essential part of Yemeni security sector education would be civil-military relations, emphasizing the proper role of the security forces within a democratic society, which would, if successful, empower the development of Yemeni democracy without the continual threat of security sector political intervention.

Security Forces Civic Action Policy

44) One of the quicker methods for weakly integrated states to extend central authority to peripheral areas is through security force civic action operations. The Yemeni security sector can

⁶⁷ David Sorenson interviews, Tunisian War College, March 2011; Royal Jordanian Defense College, March 2011.

increase their participation in public services to reinforce the centrality of the Sana'a government and its control over public goods distribution.⁶⁸ Yemen has a long history of division, partly because of its tribal structure and partly because of outside intervention. Since the early 20th century, the intrusions of outsiders, including Ottoman Turkey, the United Kingdom, and Saudi Arabia, have produced further divisions in Yemen.⁶⁹ One result of these divisions is the multiplicity of armed groups loyal to a local leader, or to an area, or a belief system. In Aden alone, there are elements of "...Ansar Al-Sharia, the Southern Movement, the remnants of the former regime, thugs, members of the Islamic Islah Party and Salafists."⁷⁰ The Huthi movement in Yemen's northwest area is a Zaydi Shi'a faction that articulates more regional autonomy, but in many ways lacks a clear political agenda.⁷¹ While the Saleh regime exacerbated these divisions for political purposes, a reformed Yemeni security sector could add to Yemen's unity through the provision of civic works, to include construction, communication, and military medical facilities in rural areas, for example through utilizing the Yemeni armed forces to supply airborne emergency medical evacuation, given the dire conditions faced by rural Yemeni hospitals (chronic shortages of trained technicians, supplies, and funding).⁷²

⁶⁸ For example, the Omani armed forces have responsibility for delivering goods, transportation, and medical services to remote locations, like the small islands in the Straits of Hormuz. The Jordanian security sector performs rescue and relief from the consequences of natural disasters (delivering goods to snowbound villages in northern Jordan recently). The Senegalese military performs similar tasks in a country with at least 22 language groups, and low national orientation outside of Dakar. David Sorenson interviews, Musandam Peninsula, Oman, March 2000, Muscat, March 2010. David Sorenson interviews, Dakar, Senegal, October 1999. One Senegalese officer told the interviewer that when he left from visits to his hometown in rural Senegal, his family wished him "a safe trip back to Senegal," having no identity with the concept of "Senegal."

⁶⁹ Britain and the Ottoman Empire arranged a rough agreement marked by the "violet line" (named for the color of the pen used to mark the map), between the northern and southern parts, as Turkey invaded the north and Britain wanted the port of Aden and control of the Bab al-Mandeb connecting the Red Sea to the British-controlled Suez Canal. Saudi Arabia took territory from Yemen. Saudi Arabia and Egypt took sides and sent troops and support for the civil war fought in the 1960s, and the former Soviet Union and the U.S. intervened before unification in the early 1990s. One of the better English language histories of modern Yemen is Paul Dresch, *A History of Modern Yemen*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press. 2000.

⁷⁰ "Different Armed Groups Govern Aden," *Yemen Times*, April 16, 2012.

⁷¹ "Fractured Yemen," *Al Jazeera*, June 5, 2012.

⁷² "Rural Hospital Struggles to Serve Community," *Yemen Times*, May 2, 2013.

45) These provisions are relatively inexpensive to perform compared to other military tasks, though care must be taken to avoid the security sector demanding rent for service, and to also prevent the loss of more traditional security skills. However, some civic action tasks, like performing medical procedures or delivering supplies, actually reinforce security skills.

46) Another reform would require security sector members recruited from one area to serve in another, to perform some duties in the capital, and to train and study with members from other regions, all for creating a sector with national, instead of regional, identification. Such a reform might also break up the pattern noted elsewhere in this paper of senior commanders becoming regional bosses and living off regional rent payments. Obviously civic action policy would work better after successful efforts to reduce corruption, because the opportunities to skim off supplies and services, or to charge rent for such services, is clear, particularly in poor rural areas where little oversight exists. And such actions would face opposition from local groups, who either view the security forces as opponents or as potential competitors for service provision, so civic actions must be done carefully, in niche supply areas (like emergency medical evacuation, or local dispute resolution, for examples). But if the security forces do positive civic work that might weaken local militias that would be a boon for Yemeni unity.

Yemen Security Sector Integration with Regional Security Sectors

47) Yemen is the only Arabian Peninsula country that is not a member of the Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC). With the inclusion of Jordan and Morocco as “honorary” GCC members, the question is whether Yemen should also become a GCC country. The GCC has established common security standards, including combined exercises, shared facilities, and information sharing across the membership. The GCC countries have also established a common set of security goals that go beyond military power to include stability and cooperation across all

regional players, including Iran, Iraq, and Yemen.⁷³ While GCC membership for Yemen would involve some costs, it would also bring benefits to the Yemeni security sector, particularly the military. GCC countries have professional militaries with advanced standards for training, education, and military performance, and funding that would allow Yemeni security sector elements to receive advanced learning, use modern training devices, and operate from state-of-the-art facilities. Such benefits would also be available to internal security forces under the Ministry of Interior, as the GCC states also have professional standards and equipment for such units. Saudi Arabia, for example, has an extensive training and equipment program for its internal security forces, which are responsible primarily for infrastructure protection.⁷⁴ As noted earlier, the Yemeni armed forces have a proud tradition and would most likely rise to the challenges of meeting GCC military standards and expectations. Yemen would add access to Yemeni facilities along with its large armed forces to the GCC overall capacity, thus providing mutual benefit. Yemen is a large country that has ample space for flying training ranges, and a large ground force component that could add to overall GCC capacity should the GCC face a serious military contingency.

48) A more difficult challenge is bringing at least some non-state armed groups into the state security sector structure, as has been attempted in some sub-Saharan African countries. While it would be difficult to curb regional loyalties, efforts might at least focus on the Huthi forces and the Southern Movement, bringing their armed elements into reserve status of the Yemeni military, and convincing international donors to pay for their basic salary and living expenses.

49) The more violent Salafist groups would pose a considerable challenge should Yemeni SSR efforts attempt to bring them in, yet such reform might at least encourage defections from such

⁷³ Trita Parsi, Gulf States Rethink US-Led Security Alliance, <http://www.antiwar.com/ips/parsi.php?articleid=9080>

⁷⁴ David Sorenson interview, Ministry of Interior, Riyadh, Saudi Arabia, March 2011.

groups (though “sleeper” members could also agree to defect, join state security agencies, and do their deeds from inside).

Conclusions

50) Yemen is on the cusp of significant political change, yet a number of factors, including the failure of security sector reform, can reverse such change. It is imperative that such reform, which President Hadi has initiated, be deepened and accelerated. Initial steps must include democratization at the top, and the professionalization of the SS through education, pay, and legal limits to their political engagement. One hope of the National Dialogue Conference is to further Yemeni democracy, though challenges remain, from the lack of national unity to an economy that remains in crisis due to both structural problems and the consequences of the 2011 political revolution. Security sector corruption must be eliminated, through penalties, increased transparency, and improved pay for all ranks and all sectors. It is imperative that SSR professionalize the security institutions, removing them from politics, and placing them under strict political control, and do this efficiently. Such steps prior to political reform may actually empower such reform, with a reformed security helping to empower further change.