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SPECIAL REPORT

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Security Sector Transformation in the Arab Awakening

Summary

- The Arab Awakening opened the door to democratic political change in the Middle East and North Africa (MENA). Security sector reform (SSR) is an integral component of the nascent democratic process in the region. While SSR is a long-term process, it should be a key part of institution building in the new democracies. Democracy requires security institutions that are open, professional, and responsive to public needs.

- The transitions to democracy are varied in nature and scope. SSR will differ by country and must be tailored to the political realities and specific circumstances of each state. The international community can foster successful SSR processes by calibrating its assistance according to the reform efforts in each country. A general or "one-size-fits-all" approach to SSR will not be successful.

- A sense of political powerlessness, an unresponsive bureaucracy, a general lack of opportunity, economic stagnation (including high unemployment), and repressive security forces all contributed to the Arab Awakening. As a result of the upheaval, democratic forces in several of the MENA countries are pushing for transparency and accountability in the security services.

- SSR must be undertaken in a holistic manner, couched within the framework of overall democratic reform and linked to other broad policies such as justice sector reform, evolution of the political process, and economic development. SSR will only be achieved if it is integrated and pursued in unison with these larger processes of democratic change.

- The international community, especially the United States and the European Union, need to foster democratic developments and, in particular, to support and coordinate SSR.

Introduction

The Arab Awakening has created an unprecedented moment in the history of the Middle East and North Africa—a time when people are pressing for democracy to replace the old authoritarian order. An integral element of this change is the reform of the security services constructed by the old regimes. These regimes used the security agencies as instruments of repression; therefore, the security agencies are symbolic of a lack of freedom and the abridgement of citizens' rights. The security sector is a visible, physical symbol of the old order. It is no surprise that public anger has centered on this segment of government and that security sector reform is an urgent priority for democracy activists and the leaders of transitional governments. In fact, it is difficult to see how democracy can be established unless SSR is pursued in a holistic manner and pursued in tandem with the larger process of democratic development.

Despite this groundswell of enthusiasm for change, the region is confronted with an array of challenges as it works to transition from authoritarianism to democracy. One of the most urgent tasks will be to reshape and reform the security services along democratic lines. The people of countries in transition will expect their new democratic leaders to replace the opaque security apparatuses of the old regimes with open, transparent, and accountable security institutions. Security sector reform, therefore, will be a major factor in winning the allegiance of the populace to the new order. A transitional government's credibility will be linked to its ability to launch SSR as a pillar of the new democracy.

That is not to say that SSR can be accomplished overnight or even the next few years. SSR is a long-term process that may require a generation to take full effect. What can be demonstrated, however, is a commitment to reform from the outset. Such a commitment can be signaled to the public through the adoption of strategies for transforming security institutions, the appointment of civilian defense and interior ministers, the introduction of parliamentary oversight, and the inclusion of members of the security services who are willing to align themselves with the new political order.

Successful SSR requires the extension of the principles of good governance to the security sector. Governance issues, such as the relationship between the executive and the legislative branches and responsibility for management and oversight of the security ser-vices, should be addressed. Security ministries and intelligence agencies must follow good governance practices and principles. SSR must be pursued simultaneously with the wider reform of the justice sector, including prosecutor's offices, judiciaries, and penal systems. Security services in a democracy must uphold the laws that guarantee the right of citizens to exercise political, economic, social, and cultural freedoms while maintaining public order and defending the country's sovereignty and territorial integrity.

Reforming the security sector according to democratic principles will require leaders to articulate a vision of the country's new democratic vocation in response to the wishes of the people. It will also require strong civilian leadership and a commitment to institutional change. The politics of SSR in the region will be challenging and there is a need to address the ideological gaps between Islamist and liberal politics, which have very different atti-tudes toward reform. Security sector reform is an essential component of the modernization and strengthening of new democratic states.

Before the Arab Spring, the security sectors in Middle Eastern and North African coun-tries were structured to assure control of populations. The police focused more on monitor-ing political activities than on law enforcement. Intelligence agencies spied on citizens. The armed forces were dedicated to assuring internal security. Egypt under former president Hosni Mubarak was a police state and the army had more power than elected officials. The security apparatus was present in all aspects of daily life—economic, political, and reli-

gious. It is no accident that the Egyptian revolution began with a crowd protesting police abuse in front of the Ministry of Interior on January 25, National Police Day. In Syria, the army replaced the police as managers of public order and provoked a public revolt. While some progress has been achieved, across the region the overriding question of how to proceed with SSR remains unanswered. Transitional governments struggle with the question of whether SSR should be confrontational or collaborative. Clearly, there may be elements of both in the process.

The Three Pillars of Security Sector Reform
Police Reform

The Arab Awakening was ignited by one Tunisian citizen's resistance to police corruption. The Egyptian revolution also targeted the police as symbols of repression and political control. These events underscore the importance of the police-citizen relationship to democracy and good governance. Police reform, therefore, must be at the center of SSR in transitions to democracy.

It is useful to recall that the roots of the Arab Awakening are found in the desire for basic human rights such as more jobs and more social, economic, and political opportunity, including the fundamental right to have a voice in how one is governed. Unresponsive bureaucracies and repressive police forces frustrate the exercise of these rights. In coercive states, the police are agents of government political control. In democracies, the police are on the front lines of democratic governance, interacting with citizens on a daily basis. The police are responsible for maintaining public order, the cornerstone of a peaceful society. The public's sense of the government's respect for basic human rights is formed by contacts with the police. Countries in transition to democracy must exchange the old police model characterized by mistreatment of the public for models that stress transparency, accountability, and citizen involvement. Without this fundamental change, it will be difficult to achieve true reform.

Transitional governments should reach out to civil society and the police to determine what each needs from the other to forge a consensus on police reform. There must be a symbiotic process—the police must listen to citizen's concerns, while civil society must adopt a posture of positive contact, participating in discussions and helping to find solutions. An important step is to convey to the public that the transitional government has an overall strategic plan for police reform. The presentation of a plan will reassure the public that real police reform is under way. Transitional governments should emphasize that a new model will be adopted that replaces the repressive, politicized police force with a police service that is dedicated to protecting the public. In Egypt, civil society has worked with the lower ranks of the police to develop a plan for police reform that includes a draft law with clear provisions for civilian oversight. This could be a useful model for other countries in the region. The international community could offer counseling and training in support of such efforts.

A critical part of institutional change will be reforming ministries of the interior. This will require the introduction of modern management practices, computer-based administrative systems, the creation of departments to deal with human resources and career development, procurement, and logistics, an inspector general's office to ensure discipline, and an internal affairs section to deal with citizen complaints. Pay and benefits must be adequate in order to attract and retain high-quality individuals, to blunt corruption, and to create a sense of professionalism and pride in a police career. Appropriate compensation and merit-based promotions will also produce institutional loyalty and acceptance of the new democratic norms.

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Problems related to policing have arisen early in the transition in several countries. The appearance of street crime and a growing sense of personal insecurity were major issues in the Egyptian presidential campaign. The ruling military council failed to start reforming the police despite early promises. Lower-ranking police officers in Egypt have pressured for reforms, including organizing strikes and calling for changes in the Ministry of Interior. They are also interested in training and professionalization. However, these officers have had problems finding partners in the higher ranks and among the senior political leadership. The Interior Ministry has reacted to this pressure by introducing unhelpful amendments to a proposed police law. There is also a complicated relationship between civil society and the police in Egypt. The police view human rights organizations with suspicion and believe that nongovernmental organizations seek to punish the police. These attitudes have precluded a meaningful partnership with civil society to reform and reconstruct the police. A way must be found for the police and civil society to work together.

Pressures for immediate police reform can be difficult to manage for transitional regimes. In Tunisia, for example, the populace wants to keep the current police force operating in order to maintain basic law and order. On the other hand, there is a desire to clean up the police, remove the bad elements, and retrain the force along democratic lines. Reform will be a difficult balancing act because many policemen remain loyal to senior officials who have retained their positions in the ministry. Tunisians fear that these officials who were appointed by the former president, Ben Ali, might attempt to frustrate the transition to democracy. The police have gone on strike to protest the implementation of reforms or have refused to perform their duties claiming they were unsure how to proceed in the new environment. Experience suggests that the new political authorities must build public support for police reform while introducing programming to change the force. In Libya, which was left without a defense ministry and a functioning formal army by the Qaddafi regime, the transitional government is attempting to build national security institutions from the ground up. However, the transitional government has held off on long-term reforms pending election for a new National Congress.

Armed Services Reform

Reform of the armed services is the second of the SSR pillars that must accompany transitions to democracy in the Middle East and North Africa. Armed forces must be restructured and reconfigured to conform to democratic models. This means establishing civilian authority over the armed forces, redefining the mission of the armed forces to one of providing security from external threats, eschewing any internal security role, and professionalizing the military through training and institutional development. Reform may also include downsizing the armed forces, depending on mission requirements, and reorganizing the forces internally.

Egypt is among the most problematic cases for reform given the power of the Supreme Council of the Armed Forces (SCAF) relative to the newly elected president and the future Parliament. While guiding the reform process to date, the SCAF has tried to safeguard its economic interests and primary responsibility for national security matters. The Egyptian Armed Forces are major actors in the Egyptian economy, owning companies across a range of economic and financial areas from the manufacture of tanks and weapons to the production of pasta and bottled water. Maintaining these privileges has been the cornerstone of the SCAF's approach to the transition. The army has attacked and arrested peaceful demonstrators at the Ministry of Defense and subjected detainees to military interrogations and military court proceedings. The SCAF defended these actions by maintaining that it is the only body capable of providing security for the country. While Parliament passed an ameliorating amendment to the military justice law, it kept intact many of the powers that permit the armed forces to continue arrests and military trials.

The emergence of competitive politics in Egypt has neither broken the SCAF's control over the political arena nor limited its ability to shield long-standing privileges. While Egypt elected a president, the old security apparatus remains largely intact and protected from any real reform. The country is still experiencing crackdowns on political dissent, including the use of force against protestors and the intimidation and prosecution of activists. While there is hope that an elected president will break these patterns and introduce real change, it appears that Egypt is approaching a system wherein elected officials may be unable to control key government ministries. The most pressing challenge is taming unaccountable security bureaucracies and making them responsive to civilian leadership.

Tunisia contrasts sharply with the situation in Egypt. The Tunisian Armed Forces have not interfered with the revolution and have remained out of politics. The Tunisian Army is a professional force that was barred from any political role under the Ben Ali regime. Members of the armed forces could not vote, join political parties, or run for office. The army was not assigned responsibility for internal security, reflecting Ben Ali's high degree of reliance on the Interior Ministry, the security services, and the police. During the uprising, the armed forces refused Ben Ali's orders to fire on protestors and bomb a city. The challenge for security sector reform in Tunisia is the Interior Ministry and the civilian security services.

Libya represents a different case, underlining the point that SSR will be a different challenge in each of the Arab Awakening countries. The Libyan National Transitional Council (NTC) is in the process of consolidating power, especially in the security sector. Former revolutionary groups are being signed to short-term contracts and brought into the new national army and police as units, but they likely retain their loyalty to their commanders and home communities. Some revolutionary groups have refused to join the military and have said they are waiting for a constitutional government to emerge before handing over their weapons. Remnants of the Qaddafi regime smuggled large amounts of money out of the country and may attempt to use these funds to disrupt the transition. The NTC has money and is trying to take responsibility for its own reform process. The international community needs to take this into account when designing and implementing SSR programs in Libya.

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Yemen is still another case, featuring a complex scenario where SSR in the armed forces has begun in the context of a "negotiated" revolution. Yemen had slowly been slipping into political paralysis with the opposition parties denouncing President Ali Abdullah Saleh's decision to schedule elections for April 2012, without passing key reforms. In this context, while street demonstrations prompted by a pending constitutional amendment to lift presidential term limits were planned, events in Tunisia and Egypt provided added impetus. As is common in the region, close relatives of the president headed the key security entities. However, it would be a mistake to confuse the role of the Yemeni Armed Forces with the role of the military in Egypt. The Yemeni Armed Forces did not play a decisive role in overturning the regime. President Ali Abdullah Saleh was commander in chief and his relatives headed the Republican Guard and the Special Forces, but the army was deeply divided.

SSR is an explicit element of the agreement that governs the transition and its implementation will be a major test for the transitional president, Abdo Rabbo Mansour Hadi. The "good news" is that phase I of the transition has been reasonably successful. Security has improved, a military security committee has been established, and Parliament has ratified the Gulf Cooperation Council–brokered agreement. A general public acceptance of the transition prevails. Phase II of the transition will be more challenging and will pose such fundamental questions as who will participate in the national dialogue and how will the future of the south be determined.

Intelligence Services Reform

Reform of the intelligence services is the third pillar of security sector reform in the MENA region and is the murkiest and most difficult to handle. These services historically were targeted against internal opponents of the regime. Most citizens know little about the intelligence services beyond personal experience with abuse perpetrated by intelligence operatives. It is clear that transformation of the intelligence agencies is a requirement for successful security sector reform. These institutions have a track record of detention, torture, and arbitrary arrest and enjoy exemption from the rule of law. Reforms need to limit their function to collecting external intelligence, providing for civilian leadership, and establishing parliamentary oversight mechanisms. Reform of the intelligence services is perhaps the most daunting SSR challenge for the transitional regimes, but is an essential part of the democratic process. In Egypt, the three major intelligence agencies—the general intelligence agency, state security, and military intelligence—continue to crack down on demonstrators and there is little evidence of meaningful reform.

The Special Cases: Syria and the Gulf Cooperation Council Countries
Syria

The Syrian case is unique because the prolonged nature of the fighting has provided time for the opposition to factor SSR into its planning for a transitional government.

Syria's popular uprising has yet to move beyond internal armed conflict. The Syrian case is unique because the prolonged nature of the fighting has provided time for the opposition to factor SSR into its planning for a transitional government. The Syrian Army is subordinate to the ruling Baath Party and the security services. It is controlled by the Assad family and the sectarian Alawite community that the Assad family represents. The opposition's transition plans call for restructuring the army and assigning it an external security role—specifically, responsibility for protecting the sovereignty and territorial integrity of Syria. The army commander would report to a civilian minister of defense and the institution would be downsized to reflect its revised mission. The army would be retrained and professionalized.

All internal security responsibilities would be transferred to the Ministry of Interior. A professional national police force would be created to substitute for the existing force that has atrophied as the army has assumed responsibility for internal security. The police commander would report to a civilian interior minister and the police would undergo a thorough institutional reform. Similarly, the intelligence services would be reduced in number and their mission changed to providing external intelligence only. A new intelligence agency would be created headed by a civilian official. Each military service would have an internal intelligence bureau that would be limited to collecting tactical intelligence on military issues. While none of these reforms will be easy, particularly given the divisions among the Syrian opposition, it is encouraging that transition planning for Syria highlights SSR as a critical part of future democratic development.

Gulf Cooperation Council Countries

While the Arab Awakening enveloped much of the MENA region, the Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC) countries, with the exception of Bahrain, contained or neutralized their internal protests. The GCC countries also mediated the terms of the transition in Yemen. Along with the Arab League, the GCC joined the consensus on Libya and has been actively involved with the United Nations and others in attempting to craft a solution for Syria. Saudi Arabia proposed a wagon-circling arrangement to include the two non-Gulf monarchies in the GCC and closer integration of Bahrain into the Saudi security net. There is little doubt that the Arab Awakening made the Saudis nervous, although most of the smaller Gulf States continue to enjoy a considerable degree of legitimacy bolstered by generous distributions of hydro-

carbon wealth to their citizenry. However, these states face demographic pressures and need to diversify their economies to provide greater employment opportunities.

Recommendations for the International Community

Although SSR must be an internal process generated by the region's transitional governments, the international community can provide resources that can play a decisive role in the success or failure of these processes. The role of the international community is to create the enabling environment where consensus on SSR can be fostered and achieved. In this connection, realistic assessments of the local situation will be important. International community involvement must be based on solid, well-informed assessments of what is achievable with a clear statement of goals, objectives, and specific courses of action. Quantitative and qualitative evaluations based on objective criteria must be articulated at the outset and replicated periodically to measure progress and to allow for program adjustments. Programming must be dynamic and must take into account field reporting on the cultural, social, economic, and political dynamics at work. Programming cannot be one dimensional or static. For effective delivery, it must be dynamic and integrated into the overall SSR goals of the country in question.

Connect SSR to Democratic Development

First and foremost, the international community, especially the United States and the European Union, should see SSR as a necessary component of developing democratic movements in the region. It should remind itself that there must be security sector reform to have democracy and vice versa. SSR cannot be set aside for action at some later date. The international community must visualize SSR in the context of the overall democratic development of the MENA countries. SSR must be part of long-term political, economic, and social development and cannot be divorced from these processes. Changing mind-sets about political participation, economic liberalization, and the role of civil society must include changing attitudes about security sector reform.

Whether the international community can obtain local "buy in" for SSR has important implications for overall development in the region. The biggest question relates to the financial resources available for transitional governments to pursue SSR. In the cases of Tunisia and Morocco, for example, economic assistance is a primary consideration when it comes to SSR. Unemployment is high in Tunisia, especially among youth, and there are increasing social tensions. Prices have risen, tourism is down, and the economy is in decline. The country needs foreign investment and reform of the concentration of wealth in the hands of a few families that typified the old regime. What is needed most is economic assistance to allow the transition to succeed. There is a feeling that counterrevolutionary forces are organizing and trying to derail the transition to democracy by arguing that conditions were better under the Ben Ali regime.

In Morocco, a very young population coupled with high unemployment and limited job opportunities combine to limit resources available for SSR. In thinking about prospects for SSR, underlying economic challenges should be addressed, such as the limits on natural resource production, the lack of educational opportunities, and the cost of food and energy. Civil society needs to be more involved in SSR from the beginning. International assistance programs often suffer from a lack of follow-up, adequate management, and evaluation. These conditions cannot prevail in the SSR arena without endangering the entire process. These are all areas where the international community will need to play a strong supportive role. The World Bank and the United Nations are assembling a sourcebook for SSR expenditure management, which could be a practical tool for countries engaged in SSR and the international organizations that are supporting them.

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Coordinate SSR Programming

Another area where the international community can help is through better coordination of SSR programming. Often SSR programming emanating from the United States, European Union, and international organizations is duplicative, wasting time and resources. This programming could be coordinated better and targeted on those countries most in need of assistance. Police training programs, for example, should be rationalized so that there is an overall strategic plan in place that identifies one country or organization as the lead with the others in a supporting role. The international community could create a SSR program coordinating committee in an effort to maximize resources for SSR programming.

Foster a Culture of Reform and Promote Institutional Development

The success of security sector reform in the MENA region has strategic implications for the United States. The United States needs to engage on key issues such as creating community-oriented police services, refocusing military forces on external defense, and reforming nefarious intelligence services. U.S. policy should be guided by two main principles: (1) fostering a culture of reform that will make long-term SSR reform possible and allow democratic governance to take hold, and (2) promoting institutional development that will undergird the new democracies and prevent the old order from reasserting itself. Implementation of the first principle puts a premium on urging transitional governments to proceed with SSR, no matter how difficult the challenges faced.

In Yemen, U.S. programming must deal with the dichotomy created by its training of *boutique* forces to combat Al Qaeda in the Arabian Peninsula (AQAP) that are outside the regular military structure. The United States will need to define how its counterterrorism approach in Yemen fits into overall SSR and the underlying problems of Yemeni society such as economic underdevelopment, crime, and threats to key infrastructure. In Yemen and in other countries in the region, the United States has narrowed the dialogue to counterterrorism issues. Unless the United States takes the root problems in the region into account and broadens the narrative beyond countering AQAP, democracy will continue to wobble and long-term security sector transformation will prove elusive.

Implementing the second principle means far more extensive U.S. programmatic engagement in SSR. A prime area of opportunity for Washington is the chance to support the development of professional law enforcement agencies throughout the Arab Awakening countries. Unlike the experiences in Afghanistan and Iraq, where police forces were trained on a paramilitary model in the midst of war, the Arab Awakening countries provide an opportunity for the United States to help with the development of civilian police services based on Western models. Law enforcement agencies would provide transitional governments with immediate support among the population and serve to jump-start the institutional framework for reform needed to underpin long-term development.

Reframe Relationships in the Region

SSR is also important in reframing U.S. relationships with many countries in the region. After 9/11, the United States emphasized counterterrorism in its relations with some regional states. As the Arab Awakening has illustrated, a security-centric policy toward the region has its limitations. In countries like Yemen, where security assistance is directed to counterterrorism operations, there have been questions concerning U.S. motives. Since the GCC-brokered agreement in Yemen includes military reform, SSR is an area where the United States could play a valuable and welcome role, one that maintains an emphasis on U.S. and Yemeni security interests while broadening that lens beyond counterterrorism. Yemen's new president has begun to restructure the military but needs continued financial support

and technical assistance. This effort presents an opportunity for the United States and the international community to build a long-term program that could become a model for SSR in the region. In this regard, the United States Institute of Peace has developed the capacity to organize and deploy SSR advisory teams to assist U.S. embassy country teams and combatant commands to conduct security sector evaluations and develop strategic plans for implementing comprehensive reform. These teams, which would include SSR and regional experts, could assist partner governments in developing effective programs that would meet popular expectations for meaningful reforms.

The European Union can also support SSR in the MENA region. The European Union brings a somewhat different worldview to the table, one centered on a more comprehensive approach rather than on attacking problems on a piecemeal basis. This approach stresses support for a broad, national strategy with an emphasis on the political process, including special attention to civil society engagement. The European Union is looking for a stronger partnership with the people of the region and to promote sustainable growth. It also links SSR to larger democratic reform and has held discussions with regional countries on how to support the development of more robust SSR. While any external activity such as providing SSR assistance requires the approval of all twenty-seven EU countries, stronger EU action both in the region and in cooperation with the United States would be desirable.

Both the United States and the European Union can do more to involve the United Nations and other multilateral organizations in SSR. While the European Union has an official policy of cooperation with like-minded partners, EU action is sometimes delayed in the process of consulting so many different actors. Both in the region and in capitals, there has been discussion of more extensive cooperation between the European Union and the United Nations, but action needs to be taken. On the other hand, the United States has worked with the United Nations on SSR and, generally speaking, the United States and the United Nations are on the same page.

Maintain Military-to-Military Relationships

Without doubt, military-to-military relationships are smoother between countries that share political systems. The U.S. military-to-military relationships with democracies are more compatible than similar relationships with authoritarian regimes. Nevertheless, military-to-military dialogues with former authoritarian regimes that are in transition produce benefits on a variety of levels. In the interplay of military-to-military conversations, the attributes of democratic systems come through as the two militaries discuss issues and compare experiences. While these talks may not list SSR as a specific agenda item, the contact helps spread basic values such as civilian authority over the military. Military-to-military relationships should be maintained and, if possible, upgraded. In fact, such dialogues can be natural entry points for stimulating movement toward SSR when the in-country timing is right. Cutting off the military-to-military dialogue serves no purpose other than to foster misunderstanding. If managed diplomatically, such discussions can produce important attitudinal changes on the desirability of introducing security sector reform in certain countries in the MENA region.

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Address Transitional Justice Issues and Reconciliation

Transitional justice and reconciliation are issues that must be addressed in any transition from authoritarianism to democracy and are related to overall security sector reform. Police reform is inextricably linked to reform of the entire justice sector, including courts and prisons. It is natural for citizens to seek redress for grievances stemming from actions by repressive regimes once those regimes pass from the scene. The trial of Hosni Mubarak and resulting verdict in Egypt is a manifestation of this sentiment. In Tunisia, victims of the Ben Ali regime want justice and reform of the security services, particularly in the countryside

where villagers were killed and brutalized by the police. Many individuals know the identity of the perpetrators of past crimes, which increases the desire for justice.

This demand brings another problem to the fore. Transitional justice will rely on judicial institutions that were part of the previous regime and are themselves in need of reform. Balancing justice with the need for peace and stability is a major challenge facing Tunisia. Tunisia's new Ministry of Human Rights and Transitional Justice is examining how to provide justice while advancing the spirit of reconciliation. Tunisia's current minister of interior, Ali Laarayedh, was a former political prisoner who spent sixteen years in jail, including twelve years in solitary confinement. As minister, he is now supervising the same people who tortured him. Nevertheless, he has told his former tormentors that he is trying to build a new Tunisia based on reconciliation and will work with anyone who shares that vision. The international community is well placed to support transitional justice programs through assistance with vetting, promoting transparency, and sharing "best practices" from around the world.

Focus on Restructuring

In most cases, existing institutions can be restructured and reformed, while remaining essentially intact.

The pursuit of SSR in the MENA countries does not require dismantling the existing security institutions. In most cases, existing institutions can be restructured and reformed, while remaining essentially intact. Such reforms do not need to produce carbon copies of Western models. While they should be democratic in nature, they will have their own unique regional attributes that will help make them sustainable. In this process, it will be important to locate and draw on current members of the security forces who favor democracy and who are anxious to professionalize their institutions. In many instances, these people have argued for reform even during the old regimes. They need to be identified and incorporated into the reform process under new political leadership. Tunisia is a prime case in point where there is a cadre of talented people in the security sector who share the values and objectives of the reform government and can be enlisted to lead a SSR process. In Egypt, under the old regime, reform-minded leadership in the national police sought U.S. training on community policing concepts and visited U.S. police departments to gain knowledge and experience.

Understand the Sociocultural Milieu

Security sector reform is difficult even in established democracies with strong institutions and developed political processes. It becomes a major undertaking in countries accustomed to authoritarian rule and repressive security services that are undergoing a sea change from one system of government to another. To be successful, SSR will require a fundamental change in the mind-set of key stakeholders and massive amounts of political will. Participants must accept that new approaches are required and that old ways of doing business no longer apply. Change in the security sector, where individuals are used to wielding decisive power, will not come easily. Public expectations must be managed; the popular belief is that the departure of the old regime will right all previous wrongs. Transitional governments must moderate public expectations by explaining clearly that reform of the security sector will take time. The key to success is to have a clearly identified start to the process and that the process continues, gaining momentum along the way. Public expectations will be tempered if the reform process is visible and the transitional government reports regularly on the progress achieved.

As democratic processes unfold, the international community should not lose sight of the stimulus behind the revolutions in the MENA region—the people. Popular pressure from below will be important because elites are unlikely to push the SSR process forward. Respecting the will of the people is a central tenet of democracy and the people must be involved in the process of change. The energy that citizens brought to removing the old regimes should be redirected to the rebuilding process. Coherent strategies should be

developed for citizen support of SSR and a dialogue started with the authorities governing the security sector. That said, transitional governments have to manage the military and the security services carefully to avoid a backlash; this will take patience and a great deal of work to secure meaningful change. Dialogue involving civil society can prompt agreement on change. The Syrian opposition is instructive in this regard; it is developing experts and plans on SSR to be deployed when a transitional government takes power. These experts can bring a citizen's perspective on SSR to the transitional government's work in the post-Assad era. There is also a need for public education on the role and responsibilities of the security sector in a democratic society. In the end, a sense of balance and proportion will be required, including the ability to see progress despite sometimes messy conditions.

Conclusions

Security sector reform entails transforming the three basic units of national security: the police, the armed forces, and the intelligence services. In each of these organizations, reform must reflect the will of the people and the public demand for transparency, accountability, responsiveness, and professionalism. Police forces that are antagonistic and abusive to the public must be replaced by police forces built on democratic, civilian models that can provide effective internal security while stressing community engagement, crime prevention, and service. Armies that subjugate civilian populations must be reassigned to protecting the territorial integrity and sovereignty of the nation. Intelligence services must be reduced in number and reconfigured to produce classic national security intelligence and to renounce any internal security role. Transitional governments should develop strategic plans for SSR that deal with the short-, medium-, and long-term challenges, including plans for the institutional development of these entities as pillars of the new democracy.

The international community, particularly the United States, the European Union, and the United Nations, should support SSR to the fullest as a critical part of the transition to democracy in the MENA area. The nature of international support will vary country by country, depending on the stage of the democratic transition. U.S. and EU assistance with SSR in Libya or Syria will differ from similar work in Egypt or Yemen.

Whatever form such assistance takes, it needs to be preceded by a careful assessment to assure it is attuned to the SSR challenges faced by the individual country. The assessment must be based upon careful dialogue and political negotiation, resulting in a broad consensus on how to proceed. Similarly, international assistance should be closely coordinated to avoid overlapping programs and duplication of effort. A special coordinating committee of SSR donors should be established to assure that programming is coherent in its approach and is implemented efficiently and expertly. This will maximize the application of financial and human resources in the current climate of fiscal austerity.

As SSR evolves, transitional justice and reconciliation issues need to be taken into account. Since the police function is part of the larger criminal justice sector, police reform should be attuned to reform of the rest of the justice system, including courts and prisons. The need to maintain public order and bring criminals to justice should be balanced with access to justice and respect for human rights.

It will be important to keep in mind the socio-cultural-historic context within which SSR takes place, in particular the need to understand that SSR is a long-term process and that changes will be incremental. Transitional governments should be open and communicative with publics on SSR, explaining the cumulative nature of reform over time. This government-public dialogue will be important to garnering and sustaining public support for SSR. Finally, civil society must participate strongly and visibly in SSR as part of its support for transitional governments and its engagement on the larger issues of democratic reform.

Of Related Interest

- *Security Sector Transformation in North Africa and the Middle East* by Mark Sedra (Special Report, November 2011)
- *The Politics of Security Sector Reform in Egypt* by Daniel Brumberg and Hesham Sallam (Special Report, October 2012)
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