



Yemen: Background and U.S. Relations

Jeremy M. Sharp

Specialist in Middle Eastern Affairs

April 10, 2012

Congressional Research Service

7-5700

www.crs.gov

RL34170

CRS Report for Congress

Prepared for Members and Committees of Congress

Summary

This report provides an overview and analysis of U.S.-Yemeni relations amidst evolving political change in Yemeni leadership, ongoing U.S. counterterrorism operations against Al Qaeda in the Arabian Peninsula (AQAP) operatives at large in Yemen's hinterlands, and international efforts to bolster the country's stability despite an array of daunting socio-economic problems. Congress and U.S. policymakers may be concerned with prospects for stabilizing Yemen and establishing strong bilateral relations with future Yemeni leaders.

On November 23, 2011, after eleven months of protests and violence that claimed over 2,000 lives, then President Ali Abdullah Saleh of Yemen signed on to a U.S.-backed, Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC)-brokered transition plan. In line with the plan, Yemen held a presidential election in February 2012 with one consensus candidate on the ballot—former Vice President Abed Rabbo Mansour al Hadi. He received 6.6 million votes and, on February 25, 2012, he was inaugurated before parliament.

Many Administration officials have declared that AQAP, the Yemeni-based terrorist organization that has attempted on several occasions to attack the U.S. homeland, is the most lethal of the Al Qaeda affiliates. In recent years, the Administration and Congress have supported an increased U.S. commitment of resources to counterterrorism and stabilization efforts there. Many analysts assert that Yemen is becoming a failed state and safe haven for Al Qaeda operatives and as such should be considered an active theater for U.S. counterterrorism operations. Given Yemen's contentious political climate and its myriad development challenges, most long-time Yemen watchers suggest that security problems emanating from Yemen may persist in spite of increased U.S. or international efforts to combat them.

For FY2013, the Obama Administration is requesting \$72.6 million in State Department-administered economic and military aid for Yemen. The Administration ceased outlays of previously appropriated aid for Yemen during the past year due to political unrest there, although the delivery of some aid resumed in September 2011.

Contents

Yemen's Tenuous Transition	1
"Reforming" the Yemeni Security Sector	2
President Hadi Asserts His Authority	4
Al Qaeda in the Arabian Peninsula (AQAP): Domestic Insurgency	5
U.S. Counterterrorism Policy in Yemen	6
Congressional Action and U.S. Foreign Assistance	8
U.S. Foreign Aid to Yemen	9
Military Aid	9
Economic Aid	12

Figures

Figure 1. Timeline of Yemen's Uprising and Transition	2
Figure 2. Map of a Divided Sana'a	3
Figure 3. Map of Yemen	4
Figure 4. Abyan Governorate	6

Tables

Table 1. 1206 Department of Defense Funding for Yemen FY2006-FY2011	11
Table 2. U.S. Foreign Aid Allocations to Yemen, FY2007-FY2012	13

Contacts

Author Contact Information	14
----------------------------------	----

Yemen's Tenuous Transition

On November 23, 2011, after eleven months of protests and violence that claimed over 2,000 lives (see **Figure 1** below), then-President Ali Abdullah Saleh of Yemen signed on to a U.S.-backed, Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC)-brokered transition plan.¹ In line with the plan, Yemen held a presidential election in February 2012 with one consensus candidate on the ballot—former Vice President Abed Rabbo Mansour al Hadi. He received 6.6 million votes and, on February 25, 2012, he was inaugurated before parliament. Southern secessionists and Houthi rebels in the north denounced the election. Protestors, who remain encamped in “Change Square” in the capital Sana’a, are torn between feeling satisfied with the resignation of former President Saleh and unsatisfied that Saleh and his family remain present in politics and security affairs. Many Yemenis opposed the element of the GCC plan by which parliament voted to grant Saleh and his political allies blanket immunity for “politically motivated” crimes. Nobel Peace Prize co-winner Tawakkol Karman has said, “Is this the democracy that we are struggling for, that we paid thousands of blood, killed people and injured in the street for this? Where is the accountability?”²

Former President Saleh, who had been receiving medical treatment in the United States for part of the 90-day transition period between November 2011 and February 2012, returned to Yemen immediately before the presidential election. Despite rumors that he will again leave the country, Saleh remains ensconced as president of the General People’s Congress party, the former ruling party now sharing power with the former opposition Joint Meetings Party (JMP). Over the past several months, there have been rumors of Saleh leaving the country permanently for Oman or Ethiopia, but these remain unsubstantiated.

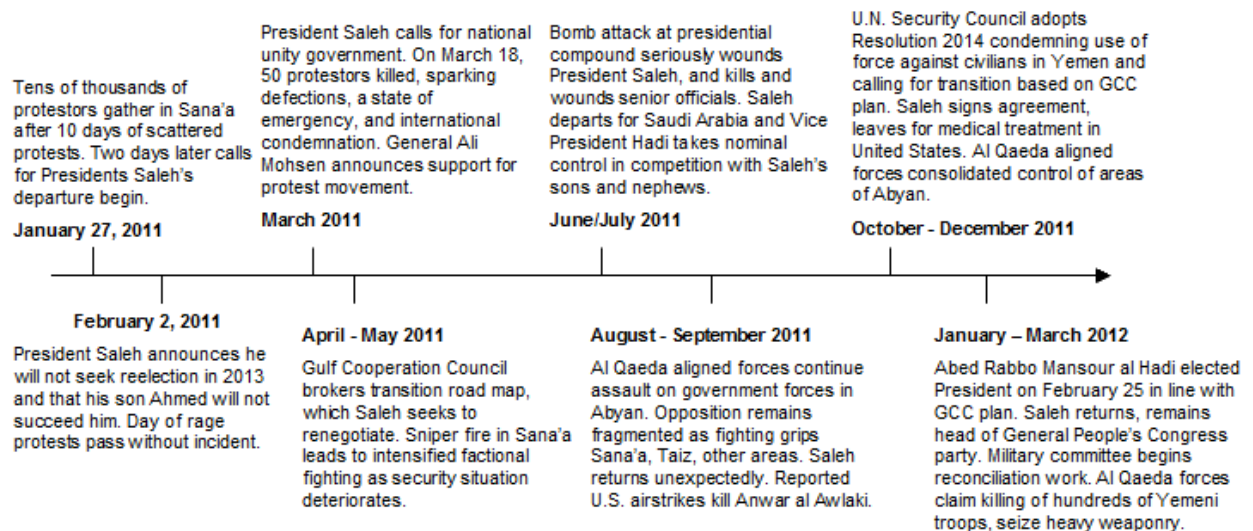
With the election concluded, attention has shifted toward the next phases of the GCC plan. For the next two years, the nascent unity government composed of the GPC and JMP parties must address difficult issues, including restructuring the military, convening a national dialogue, redrafting the constitution and holding a constitutional referendum, and parliamentary and/or presidential elections. Saleh, however, is already leveraging his still formidable domestic support by threatening to have the GPC withdraw from the unity government if these issues are not addressed to his satisfaction. Reportedly, he is still holding almost daily meetings with security and military officials in an office in Al Saleh Mosque around the corner from the presidential

¹ Former President Saleh had come close to signing similar proposals three separate times over the previous six months. This time, the combination of greater international pressure, as exemplified by the passing of United Nations Security Council Resolution (UNSCR) 2014 (which reaffirmed UN support for a political settlement as soon as possible), and defections from his loyalist security forces and their mounting losses on the ground to rival tribal militias, likely added a new sense of urgency to Saleh’s decision-making. Most analysts believe that when President Saleh signed the deal on November 23, it was in recognition of how his political position had become untenable. In early November, some European Union member states had begun to openly threaten sanctions, including asset freezes against the President and his family, if Saleh did not adhere to UNSCR 2014, which called for the signing and implementation of the GCC initiative “as soon as possible.” Then, just two days before the President traveled to Riyadh to sign the deal, press reports indicated that a strategically located Republican Guard base north of the capital that was controlled by the President’s son Ahmad had been overrun by tribal forces loyal to the rival Al Ahmar family. Additional reports suggested that some elite Republican Guardsmen had defected. Security forces loyal to the President appear to have been overstretched, fighting rival groups in a divided capital, tribesmen in the hills near the airport, protestors in the city of Taiz, and Al Qaeda in the Arabian Peninsula (AQAP) fighters in the southern province of Abyan. Some suggest that the Saudi Arabian government, perhaps sensing an opportunity to intervene, may have provided President Saleh and his rivals financial incentives to settle their differences and move to a cease-fire.

² “Nobel Winner Says Yemen Could Face Civil War,” *Voice of America*, December 15, 2011.

palace. Some fear that he may be plotting to return to power by undermining the new government and demonstrating to the public that the transition leaders are incapable of dealing with the country's multiple problems.³ President Hadi's effort to remove Saleh's relatives from important positions has only just started; in March, he replaced Saleh's son-in-law as chairman of the national airline Yemen Airways (Yemenia).

Figure 1. Timeline of Yemen's Uprising and Transition



Source: CRS

"Reforming" the Yemeni Security Sector

Military reform is perhaps the biggest immediate obstacle to creating a stable central Yemeni government. Saleh's family has retained control over Yemen's security forces: his son Ahmad Saleh controls the Republican Guard and his nephew Yahya Saleh controls the Central Security Forces. Other nephews, such as Tariq Saleh, commanded the Presidential Guard and Amar Saleh is deputy director of the National Security Bureau. In Yemen, soldiers receive their pay directly from division commanders rather than from the central government. This creates opportunities for corruption and divided loyalties.⁴ Some branches of the armed forces already are fraying. In the Air Force, officers have demonstrated against their commander, Mohammed Saleh, the former president's half-brother. Officers have called for pay raises, promotions, and the removal of Mohammed Saleh, with one subordinate asserting that Mohammed Saleh's continued leadership "is unfair. He's corrupt... He stole the money of his forces. He made his forces beg on the street for the past 22 years."⁵

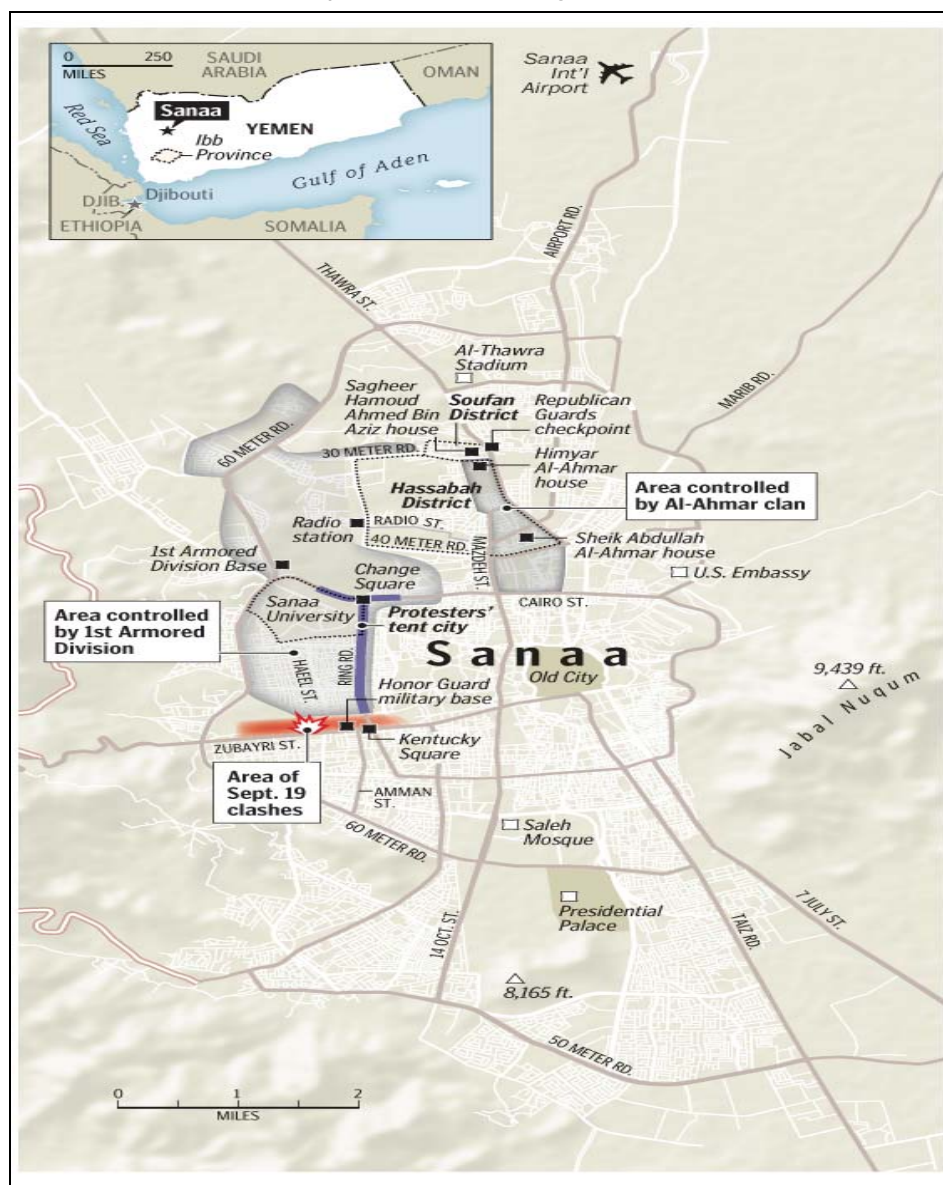
³ "Official: Yemen's New leader Mulls Dismissal of Government over Predecessor's 'meddling,' *Washington Post*, March 20, 2012.

⁴ "Yemen's Peaceful Transition," *Washington Post*, February 29, 2012.

⁵ "Yemeni Air Force Officers Protest, in sign of Coming Struggle," *Washington Post*, February 20, 2012.

Under the terms of the GCC plan, the interim government is mandated to form a “military committee” that will take control of the armed forces, oversee their withdrawal from urban areas, and restructure them. To date, the committee has managed to enforce a cease-fire between competing militias on the streets of the capital, but checkpoints erected by Saleh loyalists and their opponents reportedly remain in place. The committee has been unable to tackle more difficult tasks like removing the checkpoints largely because its membership is split between pro-Saleh loyalists and the opposition, virtually guaranteeing deadlock.

Figure 2. Map of a Divided Sana'a
Checkpoints Erected During 2011 Unrest



Source: Washington Post, November 10, 2011.

Notes: Although rival factions are no longer clashing in the capital, Sana'a remains a city divided between forces loyal to the First Armored Division Commander General Ali Mohsin and forces loyal to former President Saleh's son Ahmed Ali Saleh, the Commander of the Republican Guard.

President Hadi Asserts His Authority

In recent weeks, newly elected President Hadi has taken several major steps to dismiss high ranking officers in the Yemeni military who are relatives of or loyal to former President Saleh. On April 6, he issued a decree to reassign 20 top military leaders, including the head of the Air Force Mohammed Saleh. The President also replaced the governors of four provinces. He also reassigned the former president's nephew, Tariq Saleh from the head of the Presidential Guard to a Brigade commander. A day after his decree, the U.S. State Department issued a press release in support of President Hadi's actions, stating that "In spite of those who seek to derail the transition, President Hadi has demonstrated strong leadership by steadfastly implementing the agreed-upon political settlement. We join the diplomatic corps in Sana'a in urging all parties to cooperate fully with the presidential decree so that Yemen may continue to pursue a peaceful and orderly transition."⁶

Figure 3. Map of Yemen



Source: Map Resources. Adapted by CRS (July 2010).

⁶ U.S. State Department, Mark C. Toner Acting Spokesperson, Office of the Spokesperson Washington, D.C., April 7, 2012.

Al Qaeda in the Arabian Peninsula (AQAP): Domestic Insurgency

Since the killing of U.S.-citizen/extremist cleric Anwar al Awlaki on September 30, 2011, U.S. officials have continued to warn against AQAP's intention to strike at the U.S. homeland and have cautioned against complacency. In January 2012, Secretary of State Hillary Rodham Clinton stated that "We remain focused on the threat posed by Al-Qaeda in Yemen and we continue to work with our partners there and elsewhere to insure that Al-Qaeda doesn't gain a foothold in the Arabian Peninsula through actions that would undermine the stability of Yemen and the region."⁷ A month earlier, during a visit to the Camp Lemonier military base in Djibouti, U.S. Secretary of Defense Leon Panetta said that "the fact is AQAP, Al Qaeda still remain dangerous."⁸

Though AQAP may still be plotting international terrorist attacks, the group's leadership has clearly decided to launch a wide scale domestic insurgency and transform AQAP from an Al Qaeda-affiliate to a more Taliban-like movement as well. With the Yemeni government still in the midst of a political transition that limits its effectiveness in maintaining security, AQAP-affiliated tribal militias continue to wage war in Yemen's southern governorates, specifically in Abyan, Shabwa, Bayda, Lahj, and Aden (see **Figure 2** below). Fighters who call themselves Ansar al Sharia (partisans of sharia, or Islamic law) are believed to be part of AQAP's effort to create an army capable of seizing territory. Over the past several months, Ansar al Sharia has continued to skirmish with government troops, attacked small towns (Rida, Jaar), attacked army and air force installations, and attempted to assassinate government officials. According to the UN Refugee Agency (UNHCR) more than 150,000 people have been displaced from Abyan since May 2011.

In February and March 2012 alone, AQAP claimed that its attacks against military bases have killed hundreds of government troops. The group also claims to have seized heavy equipment, such as tanks and artillery. In March, Jamal Benomar, the U.N. special envoy for Yemen, said that "The scale of these attacks serves as a stark reminder of the security threat posed by Al Qaeda.... Despite all counterterrorism efforts, Al Qaeda in Yemen has not retreated."⁹ Various reports indicate that AQAP fighters have been applying sharia-based justice in areas under their control and have declared an Islamic Emirate in the governorate of Abyan. One of the known leaders of Ansar al Sharia is Tariq al Zahab, whose sister was the wife of the recently deceased Anwar al Awlaki.

AQAP Targets Americans

- On March 1, 2012, AQAP claimed to have assassinated a Central Intelligence Agency officer working in Yemen. The U.S. Defense Department has rejected this claim, though it acknowledged that gunmen opened fire on a U.S. security training team operating in southern Yemen.¹⁰ Though a gunman fired several shots at a U.S. armored vehicle, U.S. officials reported that no one was injured.

⁷ "Clinton says Yemen unrest a 'major concern,'" *Agence France Presse*, January 17, 2012.

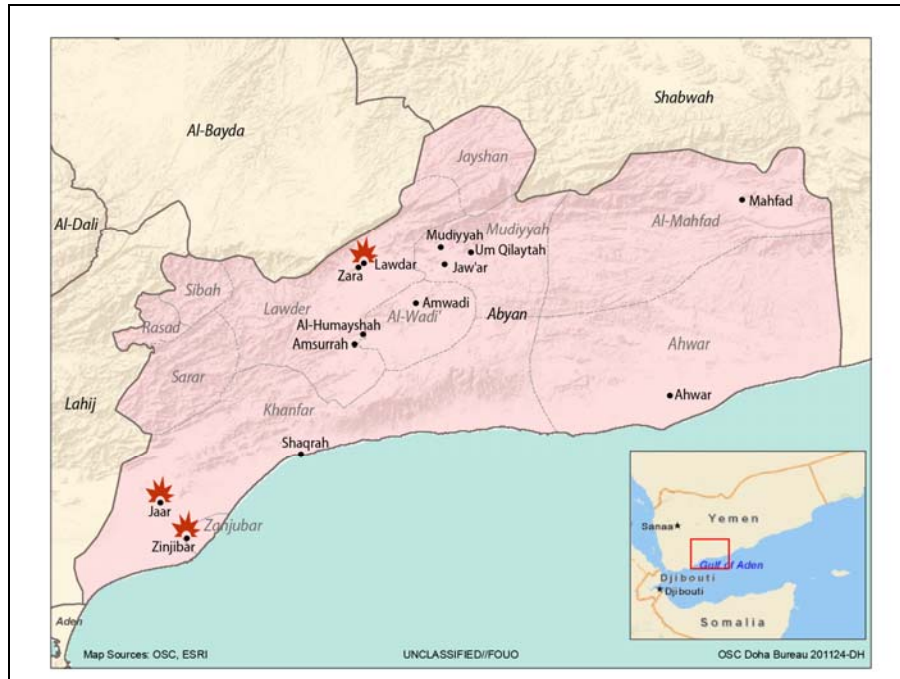
⁸ "US Defense Chief in Djibouti for Counterterrorism Talks," *Agence France Presse*, December 13, 2011.

⁹ Colum Lynch, "Al-Qaeda makes 'alarming' advances in Yemen, U.N. envoy warns," *Washington Post*, March 10, 2012.

¹⁰ "Yemen: American Trainers Attacked," *New York Times*, March 3, 2012.

- On March 11, AQAP gunmen on motorcycles shot to death a 29-year-old American teacher working in Taiz, Yemen named Joel Shrum. He had been an employee of the non-governmental organization International Training Development. Locals protested the shooting.

Figure 4. Abyan Governorate
(Yemeni Clashes with Ansar Al Sharia)



Source: Map Resources. Adapted by CRS (September 2011).

U.S. Counterterrorism Policy in Yemen

U.S. counterterrorism efforts against Al Qaeda in the Arabian Peninsula (AQAP) are ongoing amidst an uncertain political transition that may or may not produce a stable Yemeni central government capable of partnering with U.S. forces. For most of 2011, protests directed at the rule of then-President Saleh raged, and intra-elite clashes between loyalists and opposition forces paralyzed the country. These developments led to serious security vacuums in more remote areas of Yemen. For example, in May 2011, at the height of anti-Saleh protests, central government troops and civilian administrators abandoned the southern province of Abyan's capital city, Zinjibar, to an AQAP-affiliated militia. Commanders subsequently deployed to reclaim the town complained of abandonment by the central government and publicly credited the United States with providing unspecified assistance to their efforts. With Saleh's forces fighting to preserve their power, the central government lacked the manpower and perhaps the will to combat AQAP insurgents. As noted above, the legacy of these lapses is the fact that large areas of southern Yemen are now in the hands of Al Qaeda sympathizers and allies.

The unwillingness or inability of the Yemeni government to effectively combat the AQAP threat has led U.S. officials to work to restore counterterrorism cooperation and to take other steps to

deal with AQAP.¹¹ Over the course of the past year, during Yemen's political crisis, U.S. military and intelligence activities directed against AQAP appear to have increased; one media report asserted that "Yemen has become a template for growing CIA [Central Intelligence Agency] and JSOC [Joint Special Operations Command] counterterrorism collaboration."¹² Reported CIA-JSOC cooperation in Yemen may have led to the operation against Anwar al Awlaki in September 2011. According to a study conducted by The Bureau of Investigative Journalism, a not-for-profit organization based at City University, London, as many as 35 U.S. military attacks have taken place in Yemen since May 2011.¹³

Since the Awlaki strike, U.S. counterterrorism operations in Yemen have continued, and multiple news reports have stated that the United States has expanded unmanned aerial surveillance and air strikes over and inside Yemen against AQAP targets.¹⁴ In early February 2012, an air strike was carried out against AQAP targets that killed, among others, Abdul Monem al Fahtani, a mid-level AQAP leader who reportedly participated in the 2000 attack on the USS Cole.¹⁵ According to one report, "Because it operates under different legal authorities than the military, the CIA may have greater latitude [than the military] to carry out strikes if the political climate shifts in Yemen and cooperation with American forces is diminished or cut off."¹⁶ In April 2012, the U.S. reportedly carried out a missile strike against Qassim al Raimi, the third-highest member of AQAP, but missed his vehicle.¹⁷

After Saleh left Yemen for Saudi Arabia in early June following an assassination attempt against him, unnamed U.S. officials were cited in media reports as suggesting that relying more heavily on the CIA to conduct counterterrorism operations inside Yemen would also allow for operations to be carried out as "covert action," which does not require the support of the host government.¹⁸ According to one source on the September 2011 killing of Awlaki, in tracking Awlaki the United States only dealt with Yemen's National Security Bureau, and the "operation was so closely guarded that the CIA didn't involve Gen. [Yahya] Saleh or his U.S.-trained counterterrorism units."¹⁹ Moreover, it is unclear how much U.S. officials continue to trust Yemeni leaders with close ties to former President Saleh. One report suggests that Yemeni intelligence provided to U.S. officials in a May 2010 strike may have been intentionally skewed in order to kill a political rival of the Saleh family.²⁰

¹¹ In essence, the United States was forced to act more unilaterally. Once political infighting began between Yemeni elites at the height of unrest in the spring of 2011, the United States withdrew around 75 trainers from Yemen. According to U.S. Ambassador to Yemen Gerald Feierstein, "There are some things we couldn't do last year because of the political crisis.... There has been a hiatus. We have not done training because the Yemeni units were not in a position to continue with the training. They had other priorities." See, "U.S. Teaming With New Yemen Government on Strategy to Combat Al Qaeda," *New York Times*, February 26, 2012.

¹² This CRS analysis is based entirely on open source material. "U.S. airstrike targets al-Qaeda in Yemen," *Washington Post*, February 1, 2012.

¹³ Bureau of Investigative Journalism, "Covert War on Terror, Arab Spring Brings Steep Rise in US Attacks in Yemen," March 29th, 2012.

¹⁴ For example, *Washington Post*, September 21, 2011.

¹⁵ *Washington Post*, op.cit.

¹⁶ *Washington Post*, June 14, 2011.

¹⁷ "Al Qaeda Militant Escapes Strike," *Wall Street Journal*, April 9, 2012.

¹⁸ *New York Times*, June 15, 2011.

¹⁹ "Yemen, U.S. Split on Terror Priorities," *Washington Post*, October 6, 2011.

²⁰ "U.S. Doubts Intelligence That Led to Yemen Strike," *Wall Street Journal*, December 29, 2011.

Perhaps the most difficult challenge for U.S. counterterrorism efforts in Yemen is differentiating among various types of threats. Some media reports suggest that the Administration is wary of becoming entangled in Yemen's tribal insurgencies and is attempting to focus U.S. efforts on combating high value targets only. According to one report, in the summer of 2011 President Obama admonished a general in a Situation Room meeting who had casually referred to the military's "campaign" in Yemen, asserting that there was no campaign and that the United States is not at war in Yemen.²¹

With the election of a new Yemeni president, the Administration is eager to resume cooperation while trying to boost the legitimacy of newly elected President Hadi. According to Deputy National Security Advisor for Homeland Security and Counterterrorism John Brennan, "We're trying to ensure that the [U.S.] aid is very tailored, so it goes to those units that are professional, that fall within a command and control structure that reports to Hadi, that are addressing Al Qaeda and domestic threats to Yemen, and are not engaged in any political shenanigans."²² Marine General James Mattis, the head of U.S. Central Command, has said that with the successful ascent of President Hadi, the United States plans to resume its training program.²³

Congressional Action and U.S. Foreign Assistance

For FY2013, the Obama Administration is requesting \$72.6 million in State Department-administered economic and military aid for Yemen. The Administration ceased outlays of previously appropriated aid for Yemen during the past year due to political unrest there,²⁴ although the delivery of some aid resumed in September 2011. Yemen did not receive any U.S. Section 1206 Department of Defense (DOD) assistance in FY2011, also due to the uncertain political situation and concern that U.S. weaponry could be misused. Recently, Administration officials have said they plan to provide Yemen with \$75 million in training and equipment aid, a possible reference to the resumption of 1206 funds.

P.L. 112-74, the Consolidated Appropriations Act, 2012, states that "None of the funds appropriated by this Act may be made available for the Armed Forces of Yemen if such forces are controlled by a foreign terrorist organization, as defined by section 219 of the Immigration and Nationality Act."²⁵

Congress also placed restrictions on U.S. aid to Yemen in the National Defense Authorization Act for Fiscal Year 2012. According to Section 1207(n), the Secretary of Defense may, with the concurrence of the Secretary of State, provide "to enhance the ability of the Yemen Ministry of Interior Counterterrorism Forces to conduct counterterrorism operations against al-Qaeda in the Arabian Peninsula and its affiliates." Section 1207 (n)(2)(C) states that no Defense Department-administered Section 1206 funds for Yemen may be used "until 30 days after the date on which

²¹ "Obama's Lean, Mean SEAL Machine; The rescue of two aid workers in Somalia and the president's bold, new strategy," *Newsweek*, February 6, 2012.

²² op.cit, "U.S. Teaming With New Yemen Government on Strategy to Combat Al Qaeda," *New York Times*, February 26, 2012.

²³ "U.S. to Resume Yemen Training," *Wall Street Journal*, March 7, 2012.

²⁴ "U.S. Halted Record Aid Deal as Yemen Rose Up," *Wall Street Journal*, April 8, 2011.

²⁵ Section 219 of the INA created the State Department-administered list of Foreign Terrorist Organizations (FTOs). AQAP is a designated FTO.

the Secretary of Defense and the Secretary of State jointly certify in writing to the specified congressional committees that the use of such authority is important to the national security interests of the United States. The certification shall include the following: (i) The reasons for the certification; (ii) A justification for the provision of assistance; (iii) An acknowledgment by the Secretary of Defense and the Secretary of State that they have received assurance from the Government of Yemen that any assistance so provided will be utilized in manner consistent with subsection (c)(2).”²⁶

U.S. Foreign Aid to Yemen

In annual foreign operations legislation, Congress does not typically earmark aid to Yemen. Instead, after the passage of a foreign operations appropriations bill, federal agencies, such as the Department of State and USAID, allocate funds to Yemen from multiple aid accounts and then submit a country allocation report (653a Report) to Congress for review. Unlike much larger regional recipients of U.S. assistance such as Israel, Egypt, Jordan, and the Palestinians that receive funds from two or three main aid accounts, U.S. aid to Yemen in any given fiscal year can come from as many as 17 different aid programs managed by multiple agencies, such as the Department of State, USAID, and the Department of Defense.

Under the Obama Administration, U.S. aid to Yemen has increased. Between FY2006 to FY2008, total aid allocated for Yemen averaged approximately \$36 million. Between FY2009 to FY2011, total aid averaged approximately \$185.3 million. In 2009, the Obama Administration initiated a major review of U.S. policy toward Yemen. That review, coupled with the attempted airline bombing over Detroit on Christmas Day 2009, led to a new U.S. strategy toward Yemen referred to as the National Security Council’s Yemen Strategic Plan. This strategy is essentially three-fold, focusing on combating AQAP in the short term, increasing development assistance to meet long-term challenges, and marshalling international support in order to maximize global efforts to stabilize Yemen.

Military Aid

Foreign Military Financing

The United States provides Yemen’s conventional armed forces modest amounts of FMF grants mainly to service aging and outdated equipment. The FMF program is managed by the Defense Security Cooperation Agency (DSCA). According to documentation provided to CRS by DSCA, FMF grants help Yemen’s Air Force to sustain their two C-130H aircraft originally purchased in 1979, as well as a handful of their serviceable F-5 fighter aircraft. The United States also has provided Yemen’s Coast Guard, which was partially developed and trained by the United States, with fast response boats (Archangel and Defender Class) using FMF grants. FMF also funds Yemen’s regular purchase of small arms ammunition, spare parts, and power generators. It also covers overseas transportation of equipment to Yemen, the costs of which can be high due to piracy attacks in nearby waters.

²⁶ P.L. 112-81

FMF funds also are used to supplement training for Yemen's Ministry of Interior Forces, specifically from the U.S.-funded Counterterrorism Unit (CTU) inside the Central Security Force, an internal unit controlled directly by General Yahya Mohammed Abdullah Saleh, the former president's nephew.

Nonproliferation, Antiterrorism, Demining, and Related Programs Funds (NADR)

Managed by the State Department, the NADR account, funds police training programs, export control and border security programs, conventional weapons destruction and demining, and antiterrorism training.

International Counter Narcotics and Law Enforcement (INCLE)

Managed by the State Department, INCLE funding provides technical assistance, training, and equipment to Yemen's civilian law enforcement and judicial institutions.

International Military Education and Training (IMET)

Like most recipients, Yemen uses IMET funds to send its officers to the United States to study at select military colleges and institutions. IMET funds also have paid for English language instruction from the Defense Language Institute for Yemeni officers, including the construction of a language lab in Yemen. IMET funds typically support the training of between 10 to 20 students per year.

1206 Defense Department Assistance

In recent years, the Defense Department's 1206 train and equip fund has become the major source of overt U.S. military aid to Yemen. Section 1206 Authority is a Department of Defense account designed to provide equipment, supplies, or training to foreign national military forces engaged in counterterrorist operations. Between FY2006 and FY2007, Yemen received approximately \$30.3 million in 1206 funding. In the last two fiscal years, it has received \$221.8 million. As of mid-FY2010, Yemen is the largest global 1206 recipient, receiving \$252.6 million. Pakistan is the second-largest recipient with \$203.4 million.

In general, 1206 aid aims to boost the capacities of Yemen's air force, its special operations units, its border control monitoring, and coast guard forces. Approximately \$38 million of the FY2010 1206 assistance will be used to provide Yemen's Air Force with one CASA CN-235 medium-range twin-turbo-prop aircraft to transport its special operations units. The United States also has used 1206 funds to provide special operations units with training, helicopters with night-vision cameras, sniper rifles, secure personal radios, and bullet-proof jackets. Yemen's Coast Guard has received through 1206 funding patrol boats and radios and border security personnel have received armored pickup trucks.

Some observers and lawmakers have concerns regarding increased U.S. military aid to Yemen. Some fear that, despite required U.S. human rights training and vetting of Yemeni units, abuses committed by security forces may still occur or even increase. Others, particularly lawmakers, are concerned that U.S. equipment could be diverted by the Yemeni government away from

combating terrorism and toward fighting domestic insurgencies. One January 2010 Senate Foreign Relations Committee report concluded that it was “likely that U.S. counterterrorism assistance had been diverted for use in the government’s war against the Houthis in the north and that this temptation will persist.” The report stated that

This potential misuse of security assistance underscores the importance of enhancing the current end-use monitoring regime for U.S.-provided equipment. Indeed, the existing end-use monitoring protocols in place have revealed discrepancies between U.S. records of security assistance and those that are in the possession of Yemeni defense forces. The Defense Security Cooperation Agency (DSCA), the Department of State, and Embassy’s Office of Military Cooperation (OMC) should work to reconcile these differences. In addition, they should conduct a thorough review of physical security and accountability procedures at the Yemeni Special Operations Forces (YSOF) compound.²⁷

Table 1. 1206 Department of Defense Funding for Yemen FY2006-FY2011
(\$ in millions)

1206 Program	FY2006	FY2007	FY2008	FY2009	FY2010	FY2011
Cross Border Security and CT Aid	4.3	—	—	—	—	—
Yemeni Special Operations Capacity Development to Enhance Border Security	—	26.0	—	—	—	—
Air Force Aerial Surveillance Initiative	—	—	—	5.9	—	—
Coast Guard Maritime Security Initiative	—	—	—	29.9	—	—
Increased Border Security CT Initiative	—	—	—	25.4	—	—
Explosive Ordnance Disposal Initiative	—	—	—	5.8	—	—

²⁷ U.S. Congress, Senate Committee on Foreign Relations, *Following the Money in Yemen and Lebanon: Maximizing the Effectiveness of US Security Assistance and International Financial Institution Lending*, committee print, 111th Cong., 1st sess., January 5, 2010 (Washington: GPO, 2010).

I 206 Program	FY2006	FY2007	FY2008	FY2009	FY2010	FY2011
Special Operations Forces CT Enhancement Package	—	—	—	—	34.5	—
Fixed-Wing Aircraft and Support for Yemeni Air Force to Support CT Units	—	—	—	—	38.0	—
Rotary-Wing Aircraft (4 Huey II) and Support for Yemeni Air Force to Support CT Units	—	—	—	—	52.8	—
Upgrades and Parts for approx. 10 existing Yemeni Air Force Helicopters	—	—	—	—	30.0	—
Total	4.3	26.0	0	67.0	155.3	0

Source: CRS Report RS22855, *Security Assistance Reform: “Section 1206” Background and Issues for Congress*, by Nina M. Serafino.

Economic Aid

Yemen receives U.S. economic aid from multiple accounts, the largest of which are typically the Economic Support Fund (ESF), the Development Assistance (DA) account, and the Global Health Child Survival account (GHCS). USAID’s country stabilization strategy for Yemen features, among other activities, two main programs, the Community Livelihoods Project (CLP) and the Responsive Governance Project (RGP). The CLP seeks to work with NGOs in local communities in Yemen’s rural governorates in order to expand access to freshwater, healthcare, and education. The RGP seeks to work with, according to USAID, “key Yemeni ministries, including Health, Education, Agriculture, Planning, Industry & Trade, among others, to address related but broader government policy, institutional, and capacity issues that will help the Government of Yemen be more responsive to the needs of its citizens.”²⁸ The governance program was awarded to Counterpart International. In addition to USAID programming, Yemen also receives U.S. humanitarian assistance. Current U.S. funding supports shelter, food aid, emergency relief supplies, safe water supplies, sanitation assistance, camp coordination and management,

²⁸ USAID, *Fact Sheet: USAID New Strategy for Yemen*, February 5, 2010.

protection, health and nutrition, and medical supplies for refugees and internally displaced persons.

Table 2. U.S. Foreign Aid Allocations to Yemen, FY2007-FY2012

\$s in millions

Account	FY2007	FY2008	FY2009	FY2010	FY2011	FY2012
I206 (DoD)	26.0	0	67.0	155.3	0	0
FMF (DoS)	10.0	4.0	3.0	13.0	20.0	20.0
INCLE (DoS)	0	.50	0	1.0	1.8	11.0
NADR (DoS)	3.004	2.534	2.225	6.025	6.757	0
IMET (DoS)	1.06	.945	1.00	1.153	1.100	0
ESF (DoS)	9.0	2.0	20.0	5.0	27.0	27.0
DA (USAID)	1.0	5.0	11.0	35.0	0	0
GHCS (USAID)	0	3.0	3.0	8.0	9.0	6.0
Food for Peace (USAID)	0	2.0	2.0	13.0	20.0	0
CCF (DoS)	0	0	0	12.807	0	0
MRA (DoS)	1.0	3.0	10.0	13.0	23.0	0
ERMA (DoS)	.650	2.950	0	7.800	0	0
IDA (DoS)	0	0	.599	10.928	20.212	0
TI (DoS)	0	0	0	5.492	3.850	0
I207 (DoS)	8.845	0	0	10.034	0	0
MEPI (DoS)	1.055	0.167	1.958	0.332	n/a	0
CMM (USAID)	0.300	0.200	1.600	1.200	0	0
DCHA (USAID)	0	0	0	0	1.250	0
Total	61.914	26.296	123.382	299.071	133.969	64.000

Source: Government Accountability Office, Report Number GAO-12-432R

Notes: Allocations for FY2012 are incomplete..

Author Contact Information

Jeremy M. Sharp
Specialist in Middle Eastern Affairs
jsharp@crs.loc.gov, 7-8687