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A LASTING PEACE?

YEMEN'S LONG JOURNEY TO NATIONAL
RECONCILIATION

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BROOKINGS

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FINDINGS

The Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC)-brokered settlement signed in November 2011 successfully induced Yemeni President Ali Abdullah Saleh to step down and laid the foundations for a new transitional government. The deal, however, fell short of providing solutions to the massive and intractable problems facing unity and sustainable peace in Yemen. Yemen has not yet investigated and grappled with its past, including the numerous human rights abuses that occurred during Saleh's 33 years of dictatorship. Yemen's former ruling party, meanwhile, continues to be a major player in the country's politics without having engaged in serious internal reform.

These and other major underlying sources of conflict in Yemen have thus gone unaddressed. While the GCC initiative provided a framework for a political settlement in Yemen, more work must be done for it to be a transformative mechanism that brings lasting stability. If Yemen is to avoid another spasm of violence and war, the GCC initiative must be an opening to a broad national reconciliation process that reflects the following principles:

- In order to create the proper environment for national reconciliation, the process must be based on an equal partnership between all political parties that have renounced violence. While parties need not enjoy numerically equal representation in the process, they should feel free to express their positions without intimidation. There should be no one party that administers and dominates the reconciliation.
- Though there is no Yemeni consensus on the issue, dealing with the past is key to achieving a sustainable national reconciliation in Yemen. Yemen should employ a full array

of transitional justice mechanisms (in particular, a truth commission) to provide a full account of offenses committed under Saleh's rule. Avoiding the past because it is painful or controversial will only complicate the process of reconciliation and lead to instability in the future.

- The General People's Congress (GPC), formerly the ruling party, cannot be eliminated from the Yemeni political landscape; it has a role to play in achieving national reconciliation and, subsequently, sustainable peace and stability in the country. For the party to play a constructive role in the new Yemen, however, it should engage in deep internal party reform. Items that the party should consider reforming or changing include the party's name, charter, and some leadership figures. This will help the party itself, as well as the national reconciliation process.
- Reconciliation with Yemen's South requires acknowledgment of Southerners' legitimate social, political, and economic grievances. Southerners themselves must begin an internal dialogue over the type of relationship they want to build with the northern part of the country – that is, whether they seek unity, a federal system, or secession. Southerners should strive to see their flawed past experience of unity with the North as a product of the former regime's policies, rather than associating it with Yemen's newly emerging democratic and civil state. Unity or federalism that delivers justice for all is an achievable final status, and the Southerners should invest serious efforts in realizing that aim.

- The Houthis have legitimate grievances that must be recognized. The state, along with Yemeni political parties, should help the Houthis' military and organizational leadership transform into a political party that exercises its full and equal political rights. The Houthis must realize, however, that they cannot be a political party while maintaining arms and sovereign control of territories within Yemen.
- A credible, transparent, and well-defined role for the international community – channeled through the United Nations – will be pivotal in helping Yemen's national reconciliation process achieve its objectives. But while the international community should provide political, financial, and technical support to the national reconciliation process, it should also respect Yemen's independence. Turning Yemen into another front for a struggle between Iran on the one side and Saudi Arabia and America on the other will only serve as an obstacle to Yemeni reconciliation. As for the ongoing drone campaign against al-Qaeda, a large majority of Yemenis see the organization's presence in Yemen as a Yemeni problem and reject what they see as an infringement on their sovereignty.

INTRODUCTION

On November 23, 2011, Yemeni president Ali Abdullah Saleh signed a Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC)-brokered settlement that brought an end to his decades-long rule. Signed in a ceremony held in Riyadh and attended by King Abdullah of Saudi Arabia, the agreement mandated the transfer of presidential power to Saleh's deputy, Abd Rabbu Mansour Hadi. Saleh only surrendered the presidency, though, after being assured that the GCC initiative called on Yemen's parliament to "adopt laws granting immunity from legal and judicial prosecution to the President and those who worked with him during his time in office."¹

While the GCC initiative was successful in facilitating the departure of Saleh and forming a new transitional government, it fell short of providing solutions to the massive and intractable challenges threatening unity and a sustainable peace in Yemen. In particular, the GCC initiative ignored the country's past, including the numerous human rights violations that occurred during 33 years of dictatorship. It also allowed the ruling party to continue as a major player in Yemeni politics without engaging in any serious reform. As a result, the GCC initiative neglected to address major underlying causes and conditions of the conflict in Yemen. It opted for regime renovation – rather than regime change – which may carry with it the seeds of future instability.

Of course, completely removing the former ruling party from public life can itself lead to instabil-

ity, as was the case in Iraq after the "de-Baathification" of 2003. The decision of Paul Bremer, the Administrator of the Coalition Provisional Authority in Iraq, to expel Saddam's Baath party members from Iraqi public life – including the military and civil services – effectively wrecked the country's reconstruction, marginalized large segments of society, and fueled sectarianism. This raises more complicated questions of how to strike a balance between accommodating former ruling party members and completely removing them from public life.² In addition, thorny problems facing the unity of Yemen, such as the Southern separatist movement and the Houthi rebellion, were not directly addressed. In transition periods, wrong decisions can undermine the political process and stoke further chaos and instability. Therefore, for the GCC initiative to serve as a transforming mechanism that takes Yemen from crisis to sustainable peace and stability, it must be followed by a resilient and inclusive national reconciliation process. That reconciliation process must involve all relevant stakeholders and adequately address their past and present grievances.

In this context, national reconciliation can be defined as a process that addresses the grievances of parties in conflict with the aim of redefining their relationships and forging a new social contract. In so doing, national reconciliation in Yemen includes three components: national dialogue, a truth commission, and transitional justice.³

1. See Appendix 1, "The GCC Initiative for Yemen."

2. For more on the challenge of re-incorporating old regime elites, see Ellen Lust, "Voting for Change: The Pitfalls and Possibilities of First Elections in Arab Transitions," Brookings Doha Center – Stanford University Project on Arab Transitions, May 2012, <<http://www.brookings.edu/research/papers/2012/05/09-arab-democracies-lust>>.

3. For more on approaches used to achieve reconciliation, see Johan Galtung, "After Violence, Reconstruction, Reconciliation, and Resolution: Coping with Visible and Invisible Effects of War and Violence," in *Reconciliation, Justice, and Coexistence*, ed. Mohammed Abu-Nimer (Lanham, Md: Lexington Books, 2001), 3-23.

The signing of the GCC initiative by Yemen's key political actors does not guarantee its success; national reconciliation is necessary to support the agreement's implementation. Only one-third of settlements to civil wars negotiated between 1945 and 1993 have resulted in a stable and lasting peace.⁴ Countries like Bosnia, Cambodia, Rwanda, Angola, and Sierra Leone all reached negotiated agreements to their civil conflicts – agreements that followed an approach similar to that of the GCC initiative – and yet all continue to struggle to achieve a sustainable peace. A credible national reconciliation process for Yemen, therefore, is necessary for dealing with the root causes of instability before it is too late.

National reconciliation in Yemen is important because it allows the parties to not only resolve their standing disputes, but also to define their relationship in a post-conflict society. As J. Lewis Rasmussen puts it, a “social contract must be struck among the various groups within society; a state of reconciliation among these groups is necessary for maintaining such a social contract, itself necessary for a sustainable peace.”⁵

The GCC initiative takes a top-down approach to the resolution of the Yemeni crisis. National reconciliation, on the other hand, focuses on the direct engagement of primary stakeholders while attempting to address their differences. John Paul Lederach understands reconciliation as “dynamic, adaptive processes aimed at building and healing”⁶ and “a process of change and redefinition of relationships.”⁷ National reconciliation in the Yemeni context, then, provides an opportunity for healing and for the redefinition of the relationships between the country's various parties. At least since the formation of the opposition Joint Meeting Parties (JMP) in 2005, hostility and antagonism have characterized the opposition's relationship with

the General People's Congress (GPC), the former ruling party. National reconciliation may provide an opportunity to repair this relationship in a way that would eventually help achieve sustainability.

This study provides insights into how to deal with the challenges facing Yemen's national reconciliation process. The paper considers the flaws of the GCC initiative and their impact on reconciliation; the importance of dealing with the past; reforming the former regime and its ruling party; and potential responses to the Southern cause and the Houthi conundrum. The paper will advise on how agents of reconciliation – including political parties, non-governmental organizations, women, and tribes – can contribute to a successful reconciliation process. In addition, key steps in the reconciliation process will be discussed, such as setting the stage for reconciliation, national dialogue, transitional justice, and truth commissions. Finally, the paper will address how the international community can help foster an environment conducive to national reconciliation.

4. Roy Licklider, “The Consequences of Negotiated Settlements in Civil Wars, 1945-1993,” *American Political Science Review* 89, no. 3, 681-690.

5. J. Lewis Rasmussen, “Negotiating a Revolution: Toward Integrating Relationship Building and Reconciliation into Official Peace Negotiations,” in *Reconciliation, Justice, and Coexistence*, ed. Mohammed Abu-Nimer (Lanham, Md: Lexington Books, 2001), 121.

6. John Paul Lederach, “Civil Society and Reconciliation,” in *Turbulent Peace: the Challenges of Managing International Conflict*, eds. Chester A Crocker, Fen Osler Hampson and Pamela Aall, (Washington, DC: USIP, 2001), 841-854.

7. *Ibid.*, 847.

THE GCC ACCORD: A TRADE-OFF BETWEEN PEACE AND JUSTICE

Protests in 2011 divided the Yemeni military between Saleh loyalists, including the Republican Guards, Central Security, and the Air Force,⁸ and anti-Saleh units, which notably included the First Armored Division and its commander Major General Ali Mohsen al-Ahmar. While this shift in the balance of power made it difficult for any party to decisively win a military confrontation, it also polarized the conflict, with each side becoming steadily more entrenched. The stalemate lasted for almost a year.

Risking military confrontation would have likely led to a civil war whose outcome and consequences neither party could predict. The subsequent stalemate paved the way for the compromise brokered by the GCC. The Gulf document provided an “honorable exit” for the former president, including legal immunity, while at the same time removing him from power. From the point of view of the opposition JMP, the deal saved the country from a descent into all-out violence, making the compromise well worth accepting.

The settlement did more than avert a civil war in Yemen, however. It also established a forward-looking process of transition by guaranteeing an inclusive process involving all opposition parties,⁹ represented officially by the JMP. While the Yemeni parliament remained as it was, the deal produced a 35-member unity cabinet divided almost equally between opposition and loyalist ministers. Furthermore, the deal solidified international con-

sensus on the need for a transition in Yemen. As the Syrian uprising has shown, a divided international community can contribute greatly to the persistence of domestic instability and violence, and even proxy wars between conflicting international agendas.

Still, Yemen’s power transfer left significant unanswered questions that may have negative implications for the country’s future stability. The GCC initiative’s trade-off between peace and justice has led to what Johan Galtung calls “negative peace,”¹⁰ or the simple absence of violence. Negative peace tends to be fragile. It could crumble at any point during the implementation of a peace agreement. In order to achieve a “positive peace” that provides a foundation for subsequent political and social progress, the causes of instability must be dealt with.

The GCC initiative required that Ali Abdullah Saleh step down from his position as president but did not demand that he retire from political life altogether. As a result, Saleh was able to smoothly transition to a new political position as head of the GPC. With Saleh continuing to occupy a key political office, many Yemenis believe he is working to roll back the revolution¹¹ – manipulating the domestic political scene and seeking to undermine the settlement outlined in the GCC initiative. Saleh’s role has complicated national dialogue and, as a result, the reconciliation process.

8. These units were commanded by Saleh’s relatives: Saleh’s son Ahmed led the Republican Guards, his nephew Yahya Saleh led Central Security, and his half-brother Muhammad Saleh al-Ahmar commanded the Air Force.

9. The youth protesting in Change Square were not part of the agreement; rather, they publicly opposed it. While the youth are not a distinct political party, they are to some extent represented through official political parties, including Islah and the Socialist Party.

10. Johan Galtung, “Theories of Peace: A Synthetic Approach to Peace Thinking,” International Peace Research Institute, Oslo, 1967, 12.

11. See Ibrahim Sharqieh, “Yemen Can’t Do it Alone,” *The New York Times*, June 1, 2012, <http://www.nytimes.com/2012/06/02/opinion/yemen-cant-do-it-alone.html?_r=1>.

In addition, the GCC deal gave unilateral immunity to Ali Abdullah Saleh and his allies yet did not mention the opposition, leaving the door open for future disputes between the two parties. In particular, Saleh used the June 2011 attack against him in the presidential mosque¹² as justification for prosecuting several members of the opposition, accusing them and certain tribal leaders of orchestrating the attack in an effort to assassinate him. Granting full immunity to one party while allowing it to pursue legal action against the other makes it almost impossible for the country's parties to work together and trust each other.

Furthermore, the immunity clause may fail to comply with international humanitarian law. Amnesty International considers the law in breach of Yemen's international legal obligations, saying: "Under international law, including the Convention against Torture and Other Cruel, Inhuman or Degrading Treatment or Punishment, to which Yemen is a state party, Yemen is obliged to investigate and prosecute anyone suspected of such crimes where there is sufficient admissible evidence."¹³ UN High Commissioner for Human Rights Navi Pillay criticized the law when it was in draft form, saying that if it became law it would violate Yemen's international human rights obligations.¹⁴ It is not clear what entitles the opposition's representatives (the JMP) to agree to immunity from prosecution for Saleh and his allies, as the JMP by no means represents all victims and their families. The GCC initiative's immunity deal is, in any case, only a partial solution, as it only shields individuals from prosecution inside Yemen – they remain vulnerable to prosecution on human rights charges in countries that claim universal jurisdiction. To achieve something close to a resolution of these issues, the country is in need of transitional

justice laws that will guarantee each side fair and equal treatment within Yemen.

Finally, Yemen's political settlement has addressed justice only in terms of those who were directly affected by human rights violations. The focus has been on victims and their families in particular. Even on this, however, the process has raised questions. One activist noted that "the general public also suffered seriously during the eleven-month uprising and for decades under the reign of Saleh."¹⁵ During months of street protests, almost all Yemenis underwent a loss of basic services (including water and electricity), freedom of movement, and employment opportunities. This is in addition to the many who were exposed to extreme stress and, in some cases, trauma. While the political settlement may provide justice to those who were directly affected by the country's unrest, it fails to address the general suffering of the Yemeni people. An effective national reconciliation process will have to address this hardship in several ways, including the state's acknowledgment of that suffering and potentially an apology for the Yemeni people's experience under the previous regime. Acknowledgment and apology can have a powerful emotional impact and could be effective tools in helping move the country towards reconciliation.

12. An explosion in the mosque on June 3, 2011 wounded Saleh and a half-dozen other government officials. Saleh blamed the attack on the powerful Ahmar tribe, which had been fighting his troops for two weeks prior. See Robert F. Worth and Laura Kasinof, "Yemeni President Wounded in Palace Attack," *The New York Times*, June 3, 2011, <<http://www.nytimes.com/2011/06/04/world/middleeast/04yemen.html?pagewanted=all>>.

13. Amnesty International, "Yemen: Immunity Law Deals Blow to Victims of Abuses," January 24, 2012, <<http://www.amnesty.org.au/news/comments/27686/>>.

14. Ibid.

15. Author's interview with Sarah Ahmed, Sanaa, May 2011. All interviews were conducted in Arabic and have been translated into English by the author.

ISSUES OF NATIONAL RECONCILIATION

A national reconciliation process in the post-Saleh era must address the below issues in particular. Avoiding them will only further complicate the country's transition process.

GRAPPLING WITH THE PAST

Dealing with the past in a Yemeni context is important for tackling three major issues: abuses by government or other power-holders, the fate of the disappeared, and the truth of what happened during Saleh's reign.

Saleh first came to power in the Yemen Arab Republic (North Yemen) in 1978. An attempted coup and assassination attempt by Nasserists followed soon after, triggering what was to be the first of several waves of executions and disappearances.¹⁶ In 1990, Saleh's Yemen Arab Republic united peacefully with the Socialist regime of the People's Democratic Republic of Yemen (South Yemen), which had seen its own bloody internal war in 1986. When South Yemen attempted to secede in 1994 amid disputes over power- and revenue-sharing, war erupted between the North and South. The war ended with the North's capture of the Southern capital of Aden in July 1994, resulting in the "forced unity" of the North and South, the flight of the South's political leadership, and another round of disappearances.

Since then, Yemen has faced a persistent rebellion by Houthi militants in its northern provinces, which sparked the first of six bloody wars in 2004.

The country has also struggled with a persistent al-Qaeda-linked jihadi presence. Under Saleh's 33-year reign (1978-2011), as well as under the Socialist regime in the South (1970-1990), many members of the opposition disappeared without explanation. Even in times of relative peace and stability under Saleh, political prisoners were held for long periods, tortured, and exiled, while others' whereabouts remain unknown.¹⁷ A campaign of state terror and the disappearances of political opponents are all deeply ingrained in the Yemeni collective memory.

It is unrealistic to expect these memories to fade simply as a result of the signing of the GCC initiative in Riyadh. At least in theory, dealing with the past is necessary to achieve meaningful national reconciliation. Victims of repression and their families deserve to know the truth – what happened, why it happened, and who was responsible for it. Knowing what happened in the past can help victims and loved ones come to terms with their long-held grievances. That closure can then allow them to move forward in cooperation with the party responsible for abuses. Knowledge of the truth of what occurred can also help prevent similar abuses from happening again. The alternative – pretending that past violations did not happen or that people can simply forget and move on – will only complicate victims' mourning and sow the seeds of future crimes.

The alternative to forgetting the past – as expressed by the GCC immunity laws – should not necessarily be understood to be public trials and

16. See "Nasserists demand disclosure of bodies of those who attempted coup against President Saleh," Mareb Press, October 16, 2009, <http://marebpress.net/news_details.php?sid=19416>. (Translated from Arabic.)

17. Author's interviews and conversations with Yemeni activists in Sanaa, May 2012.

the execution of former regime officials. A middle-ground solution could be what Desmond Tutu, Chair of the South African Truth and Reconciliation Commission, called the “third way” between Nuremberg and national amnesia.¹⁸ Truth commissions, as discussed later in this paper, have been established in more than 20 countries that went through similar experiences. These commissions range from “abortive or half-hearted efforts in Sri Lanka and Haiti [to] rather more substantial attempts in El Salvador, Chile[,] and Guatemala.”¹⁹

The failure to deal properly with past grievances has fed instability in a transitioning Yemen. Resentment and alienation persists among the families of the disappeared and the supporters of their cause, some of whom recently graffitied the faces of their lost loved ones throughout Sanaa as part of a 2012 protest campaign.²⁰ Meanwhile, Southern grievances, including the sacking of thousands of the former South Yemen army officials after the 1994 unification war, are major threats to post-Saleh unity. Based on their past experience, many Southerners continue to insist on secession from a government in Sanaa that they do not trust.

Dealing with the past is not simple, which is why it is often avoided or ignored. The first challenge that parties encounter is finding a starting point or defining the timeframe for any investigation. When asked for their opinions on the appropriate starting point for a truth commission, interviewees gave answers that included the following:

- Limiting truth-seeking to the 11-month uprising that began in 2011 in order to make the duration more manageable;
- Starting with the first war against the Houthis in 2004. Six wars have taken place overall with the group, and this starting point would help ensure that the Houthis take part in the

national reconciliation process;

- Beginning with the 1994 war with the South, as this was the biggest war since the South’s independence and is related to the present-day Southern cause;
- Starting with the first unification of the North and South in 1990, as that date marks when the South and the North came together on a voluntary basis;
- Going back to 1978, when Ali Abdullah Saleh came to power, as Yemenis deserve to know the full extent of the crimes for which Saleh was responsible;
- Beginning with 1962, which marked the death of Imam Ahmad and the resulting civil war between Saudi Arabia-backed royalists and republicans supported by Egypt.

Clearly, Yemenis hold widely differing opinions about the proper point of departure for truth-seeking. Yasin Saeed Noman, head of the country’s Socialist Party, recognizes such diverse viewpoints, but suggests that 1990 would be most reasonable. Earlier abuses – for example, the Nasserists’ executions and disappearances of 1978 – could be treated on a case-by-case basis. “Going beyond 1990 makes the process difficult to manage,” Noman explains.²¹

Not everyone agrees that national reconciliation should dig into the past, however. Vice Chairman of the GPC parliamentary bloc Yaser al-Awadi argues: “Yemen’s political legacy shows that reconciliation was built on burying the truth, not openness. In the past, there was a victorious party and a defeated one. This time, both parties are equals, with no victorious and no defeated. This makes it more necessary for the two parties to move on and

18. Desmond Tutu, *No Future Without Forgiveness* (London: Rider, 1999), 10-36.

19. Oliver Ramsbotham, Tom Woodhouse, and Hugh Miall, *Contemporary Conflict Resolution*. Cambridge, UK: Polity Press.

20. Andrew Hammond, “Yemenis paint disappeared activists on Sanaa streets,” Reuters, September 25, 2012, <<http://www.reuters.com/article/2012/09/25/us-yemen-disappeared-idUSBRE8800YG20120925>>. Examples of graffiti can be found in Appendix IV.

21. Author’s interview and discussion with Yasin Saeed Noman, Sanaa, May 2012.

22. Author’s interview and discussion with Yaser al-Awadi, Sanaa, May 2012.

look toward the future, not the past.”²² Those opposed to uncovering past abuses fear that, in a tribal society like Yemen, knowledge of past crimes and their perpetrators could lead to social strife. Indeed, outbreaks of fighting in Yemen are often motivated by traditional tribal values of retaliation and revenge.

The problem, however, is political as well as social. Most of Yemen’s current leaders are part of the very history that would be uncovered. Opposition leader Ali Mohsen al-Ahmar, for example, led military operations against the Houthis in the North; today, the Houthis demand that al-Ahmar be held accountable for those “unjust wars” as a condition for their participation in the national reconciliation process. The Islamist Islah Party, the most powerful party in the opposition JMP, was part of Saleh’s government during the 1994 war with the South. During the 1980s, moreover, Islah party head Mohamed al-Yadoumi served under Saleh in the notorious Political Security apparatus, which was allegedly responsible for torturing political prisoners.

Despite lingering suspicions about the wisdom and practicality of truth-seeking, Yemenis should not shy away from trying a different approach this time. Yemen’s ongoing conflict is itself evidence that previous efforts at long-term conflict resolution – which have not incorporated truth commissions – have failed. Truth-seeking is a springboard to begin a process of acknowledgment, apology, forgiveness, and, importantly, the application of broader transitional justice laws. Abdulhakim Helal, a Yemeni journalist and managing editor of Al-Masdar Online, suggests that “forgiveness is necessary for national reconciliation but should be preceded by truth and confessions.”²³ Mahmoud Nasher, a civil society activist from South Yemen, explains that the state owes its people two things: the truth and an apology. He argues that the regime “should apologize to the entire Yemeni peo-

ple ... and not just to political prisoners or other segments of the society. The entire nation should know what happened, as knowing reinforces the rights of citizenship among the people.”²⁴ Certainly, acknowledgement of and apology for past wrongdoing would go a long way toward building popular support for national reconciliation, increasing Yemenis’ trust in the country’s post-Saleh leadership, and making any political settlement more credible in the eyes of the Yemeni people.

DEALING WITH THE OLD REGIME

Some revolutionaries would like to see a democratic transition that excludes old-regime political figures; however, this is not possible in Yemen for a number of reasons. First, the very nature of the political settlement brokered by the GCC emphasizes power-sharing between parties rather than a zero-sum settlement. Second, former President Saleh’s GPC remains in control of key political positions, especially in the military and the security apparatus, and has retained popular support within certain constituencies. Third, the former ruling party is the most familiar with the machinery of the state. As the ones occupying most public sector positions, they know how to administer the country’s civil service and are needed if the bureaucracy is to continue functioning. While seeing the value of a “ban on regime figures practicing politics for at least ten years,” Mahmoud Nasher concedes that a “complete departure from the past regime cannot be implemented, as the leaders of the transition in Yemen [including some among the revolutionary forces] were part of that regime.”²⁵

Total exclusion of the GPC, then, is not a viable solution. Rather, giving the GPC an opportunity to take part in the rebuilding process will force the party to work within the system rather than outside or against it. Al-Awadi suggests that, “The former ruling party remaining as an important part

23. Author’s interview with Abdulhakim Helal, Sanaa, May 2012.

24. Author’s interview with Mahmoud Nasher, Sanaa, May 2012.

25. Ibid.

of the Yemeni political landscape ... will provide balance with the Islah Party. Without the GPC, Islah will dominate the political landscape and totally control the state's institutions."²⁶

Still, to play a constructive role in the transition to democracy, the party must engage in wide-ranging internal reform. The GPC should realize that serious reforms are helpful not only for the country's reconciliation, but also for the party itself as it seeks to survive in a new political era. The GPC may even choose to look at how other countries' former ruling parties adapted to dramatic political change.

The GPC itself must decide which internal reforms to prioritize. One example of reform would be changing the party's name; many Yemenis will be reluctant to reconcile with a party whose name was long linked to repression, corruption, and human rights violations. "The name of the former ruling party is associated with an era that the Yemeni people want to put behind them and from which they want to move on," Nadia al-Saqqaf, member of Yemen's National Dialogue Committee, noted. "Individuals can still practice their political rights, but the party itself should probably change."²⁷

Serious reforms to the party's charter are another option. Certainly, the GPC must objectively assess the policies and practices it implemented over the course of 33 years in power. In determining what went wrong, it can establish new party bylaws and regulations. For example, the GPC should adopt strict policies to fight the corruption that plagued the party over recent decades. It may also want to consider removing a number of its leading figures, particularly the more notorious names associated with corruption and repression. The party must recognize that it owes the people serious sacrifices in order to be genuinely accepted as a part of Yemen's future politics. Al-Saqqaf suggests that "the best way to move forward is to completely remove

the top regime figures from the entire political scene." She points to a proposal, the 'ten-ten initiative,' that "called for removing the top ten figures from both sides [government and opposition] and excluding them from the political process."²⁸

Finally, the Yemeni opposition must realize that serious reform within the former ruling party burdens the opposition with a responsibility of its own. The opposition must be willing to take part in an inclusive reconciliation process that welcomes the newly reformed GPC. Engaging in genuine partnership with the GPC will improve the prospects of a wider national reconciliation. Revolutionaries should avoid repeating the mistakes of the former ruling party and steer clear of exclusionary policies and the monopolization of power.

THE SOUTHERN CAUSE

The socialist state of South Yemen lasted from the end of British rule of Aden in 1967 until the South's unification with the North in 1990. Upon the Northern capture of Aden in the 1994 civil war, the South's leadership, including former president Ali Salim al-Beidh, fled the country.

There seems to be widespread agreement even within North Yemen that Southerners endured serious social, economic, and political injustices under the Saleh regime and that their suffering must be acknowledged. The ill-treatment of the South escalated after the 1994 defeat in particular. Examples include the sacking of 20,000 military personnel immediately after the end of the 1994 war, layoffs of large numbers of public sector employees, and the subsequent marginalization of Southerners in state institutions. Even in the industrial sector, the number of factories that operated in the South dropped from 75, prior to 1994, to only three after. Under privatization policies adopted by the Saleh regime, Southern activists claim, large properties

26. Author's interview and discussion with Yaser al-Awadi, Sanaa, May 2012.

27. Author's interview and discussion with Nadia al-Saqqaf, May 2012.

28. Ibid.

were given to army generals, especially those who had participated in the 1994 war.²⁹

A settlement with the South continues to be a serious challenge to Yemen's long-term stability. In April 2012, Yemen's Socialist Party, the former ruling party of South Yemen, released a statement on what it called the "determinants and outcomes for dialogue and the resolution of the Southern issue." This document outlined 12 confidence-building measures to create an environment conducive to dialogue, among them that Southerners killed in the 1994 civil war be considered martyrs; the return of seized properties to their original owners; and the rehiring of employees and military personnel who were forced into early retirement in 1994.³⁰

Still, Southerners themselves disagree on two major issues: what exactly would constitute a fair solution for the South, and who would rightfully represent Southerners in any national reconciliation process. This disagreement even divides members of the Southern separatist movement known as "al-Harak,"³¹ or simply "the Southern movement." After Saleh's removal, Yemen saw three possible answers to the Southern question emerge. The first calls for complete separation from the North and is represented primarily by the last pre-unification president of the South, Ali Salim al-Beidh. The second, represented by Ali Nasir Muhammad and Haidar Abu Bakr al-Attas,³² supports federation with the North. (Al-Beidh, Muhammad, and al-Attas are all leaders of al-Harak.) The third option, with no prominent Southern advocates, calls for the addressing of the South's grievances and continued unity with the North; it would entail no federalist expansion of Southern autonomy.

With this in mind, a transparent dialogue within the South, either prior to or in the context of the broader national dialogue, may be needed to resolve the issue of Southern representation in national reconciliation. Successfully defining South Yemenis' goals will provide a significant boost to the larger national dialogue and, subsequently, national reconciliation.

Furthermore, the Southerners should distinguish between unity by force – as happened in the 1994 war – and unity that comes by choice. What the Southerners have experienced since 1994 is a forced unity with Saleh's regime, but not with the broader society in the context of a democratic and pluralistic process. The new Yemeni state will hopefully represent a break from Yemen's pre-revolution past. As Southerners participate in the country's transition and help shape a government founded on mutual consent, they should withhold judgment on a unity or federal system with the North.

THE HOUTHİ CONUNDRUM

The origins of the Shi'i Houthi movement trace back to the early 1980s and to a religious movement centered around Zaidi religious leader Hussein Badreddin al-Houthi. The Houthis have evolved into a militia based in the Northern district of Saada. A rejection of American hegemony is key to the group's resistance agenda. Saleh's government launched the first of several wars meant to crush the Houthis in 2004, when he accused them of aiming to topple the central government and implement Shi'i religious law. The group, however, proved resistant to state efforts to uproot it. No official statistics are available on the

29. Author's conversations with Southern activists, Sanaa, May 2012.

30. The Socialist Party, "The Socialist Party Lays out a Set of Determinants and Outcomes for Dialogue and the Resolution of the Southern Issue," May 3, 2012, <http://www.aleshteraki.net/news_details.php?sid=12741>. (Translated from Arabic.) A translated copy of this statement can be found in Appendix II.

31. Al-Harak, which literally means "mobilization," is a coalition demanding greater independence for South Yemen, either through increased autonomy or secession.

32. Muhammad twice served as president of South Yemen before being ousted after 1986's bloody infighting in Aden. Al-Attas succeeded Muhammad as president prior to the 1990 unification; he also served as prime minister of pre-unification South Yemen, post-1990 unified Yemen, and the secessionist Democratic Republic of Yemen in 1994.

group's size, but estimates ranged from 2,000 to 10,000 members as of 2009.³³

Like the Southerners, the Houthis have their own set of grievances. They believe that Saleh's regime subjected them to hardships including: political and religious discrimination; economic marginalization; a lack of services to Houthi-controlled territories; the exclusion and removal of Houthi preachers and imams; the confiscation of Houthi mosques (especially in the districts of Hajja and Thamar); combating Houthi rituals, particularly the feast of al-Ghadeer,³⁴ including the imprisonment of some individuals for their participation in the feast; and the issuance of fatwas by some religious leaders designating the Houthis as infidels and sanctioning war against them as jihad.³⁵

While the al-Harak have a clear set of options – separation, federation, or unity – the Houthis have struggled to communicate their political agenda clearly. In fact, perhaps the most difficult question when conducting field research was determining what exactly the Houthis wanted. The Houthis have set down specific conditions for their participation in Yemen's national dialogue; in a May 2012 document, their ten demands included recognizing the just cause of the South and the North, ensuring a comprehensive agenda for the national dialogue, releasing political prisoners, and rejecting any outside intervention in the dialogue.³⁶ Beyond participation in the dialogue, however, the Houthis' ultimate objectives remain ill-defined. When a number of Houthi interviewees – including one of their most senior representatives in Sanaa – were pressed on the movement's political goals, their answers tended to be hazy: "We want to be treated like other Yemenis."³⁷

The vagueness of the Houthis' political agenda and Yemenis' suspicions of the group's goals represent major obstacles to successful reconciliation. Indeed, there are fears that the Houthis hope to revive the political legacy of the Yemen's Zaidi community by restoring the "Imamah," in which the cleric Ahmed Ben Yahya governed between 1948 and 1962. The Shi'i Houthis have also been accused of receiving financial and military support from the Iranian government. Of course, if some Houthis do have an Iranian agenda or seek to reclaim control of the country, this would seriously endanger reconciliation.

In addition to reconciling with the broader Yemeni public, Houthis must also resolve intra-party disputes. The Houthi leadership owes its community and the broader Yemeni public an explanation of what they achieved through six devastating wars. Justifying the fighting will only be more difficult if they ultimately compromise on demands for autonomy and accept the authority of Yemen's central government.³⁸

The most significant obstacle to Houthi reconciliation will likely be convincing the group to relinquish its effective control of parts of the country's North and transform into a political party. In the process, the Houthis stand to lose power and even popular support. They may end up with only small representation in parliament, whereas they now control large areas of the provinces of Saada, Amran, and al-Jouf. Still, other political parties participating in the national reconciliation process will never accept the Houthis keeping their arms. According to Muhammad Qahtan, spokesperson of the powerful Islah Party, "The Hizballah model in Yemen is completely rejected. Under no circumstances should the Houthis keep their weap-

33. Mohammad Odwan, "Pity Those Caught in the Middle," *The Economist*, November 2009, <http://www.economist.com/node/1492009?story_id=1492009>.

34. Al-Ghadeer is a festival day observed by Shia Muslims on the 18th of the month of Dhu al-Hijja in the Islamic calendar. It commemorates what Zaidi Shias see as Prophet Muhammad's appointment of his cousin, Ali ben Abi Talib, as his immediate successor.

35. Author's interview with Houthi representatives in al-Sumoud Tent (the Houthis' information center), Change Square, Sanaa, May 2012.

36. See "The Houthis Issue Ten Conditions for Participation in National Dialogue," Al-Hadath, May 10, 2012, <<http://www.alhadath-yemen.com/news19308.htm>>. (Translated from Arabic.) A copy of this statement can be found in Appendix 3.

37. Author's interview with Houthi representatives in al-Sumoud Tent (the Houthis' information center), Change Square, Sanaa, May 2012.

38. Author's interview with Muhammad Azzan, former member of the Houthi movement's youth arm, the Believing Youth, Sanaa, May 2012.

ons and be part of the political process at the same time. We support recognizing their grievances, compensation, apology, whatever they need, but no weapons.”³⁹

Indeed, there seems to be widespread acceptance among most political parties that the Houthis have legitimate social, political, and economic grievances. Rehabilitation of the Houthis’ war-torn Saada district and even an apology for the wars fought against them may be achievable, but the Houthis must be willing to disarm and enter the political process.⁴⁰

39. Author’s interview with Muhammad Qahtan, Islah leader and JMP spokesperson, Sanaa, May 2012.

40. Author’s interview with Abdulkarim al-Iriani, former Yemeni prime minister (1998-2001), current advisor to the president and head of Yemen’s Technical Preparatory Committee for the Comprehensive National Dialogue Conference, Sanaa, May 2012. In another May interview, a Yemeni journalist said that political figures – including General Ali Mohsen al-Ahmar – may be willing to apologize if the Houthis prove willing to take part in the political and national reconciliation process.

THE ARCHITECTURE OF NATIONAL RECONCILIATION

Sustainable and successful national reconciliation is dependent primarily on two variables: the agents and process of reconciliation.

AGENTS OF RECONCILIATION

In general terms, the domestic context determines which figures can be the most influential agents of reconciliation. This section sheds light on the key agents who can aid the country's reconciliation process.

Political Parties

Real and potential political parties expected to play key roles include the GPC and al-Harak. Also expected to play a decisive role is the Islah Party, which holds considerable financial, tribal, and political power. Islah is an Islamist opposition coalition comprised of three different, but overlapping, political blocs: the Muslim Brotherhood, tribal leadership, and a Salafi component. It is also known for its close traditional alliance with Yemen's merchants and other business leaders. Hameed al-Ahmar, a financial tycoon who is also known for his alliance with Islah, played a significant role in funding major activities of the uprising against Saleh. The most powerful tribal leader in Yemen's recent history, Abdullah al-Ahmar (1933-2007), was the sheikh of both the Hashid tribal federation and the tribal confederacy that is one of the three blocs that make up Islah. Politically, Islah is considered the country's largest opposition party and is expected to acquire greater power in the post-Saleh transition.

A transitional process that leads to Islah becoming the country's most powerful party will give the party less incentive to reconcile with its traditional rival, the GPC. A more powerful Islah will also further antagonize the Houthis, another traditional rival. The Houthis perceive Islah to be a major threat to their influence in Yemeni politics, both because of sectarian divisions and because they see Islah as tainted by its 1990s participation in the Saleh government. The shifting balance of power among Yemen's political parties, then, is likely to complicate the national reconciliation process. A more even and diffuse balance of power between Yemen's political parties is necessary to improve the prospects of reconciliation. A balance to the increasing power of Islah can derive from two sources: credible and serious reform of the GPC (as discussed earlier) and the formation of new political parties with real constituencies.

Free of the burden of historical grievances, new parties can play a bridging and mediating role between seasoned political parties grappling with years of bad blood and divisive grudges. The Justice and Development Party, for example, was formed after the signing of the GCC initiative.⁴¹ It advocates the building of a modern civil state and is expected to be the third-largest party after the GPC and Islah, giving it an important role in national dialogue and reconciliation.

Non-governmental Organizations (NGOs)

NGOs are capable of advising on reconciliation processes and providing participants with knowledge, expertise, and technical assistance from –

41. While the English translation of the party's name is similar, the Yemeni Justice and Development Party is, in Arabic, differently named and entirely distinct from the Turkish and Moroccan Justice and Development Parties.

arguably – an unbiased perspective. Many NGOs in Yemen have experience in documentation – including the recording of the revolution’s casualties and past and present rights violations – and the facilitation of dialogue. Past efforts by Yemeni NGOs House of Peace and the Yemen Organization for Development and Social Peace (YODSP) offer clear examples of relevant NGO expertise in conflict resolution. These organizations have “attempt[ed] to utilize tribal mediators and arbitrators in order to document and implement often esoteric tribal codes as widely acceptable processes of conflict transformation.”⁴² In addition, the YODSP has engaged in efforts to modernize and urbanize tribal conflict mediation to make it suitable for non-tribal contexts.⁴³

In addition to their technical expertise, NGOs also benefit from their grassroots connection to the Yemeni people, including populations that are otherwise marginalized. Yemeni NGOs have unique access to remote and rural districts, some of which are unsafe or unstable; they are among very few organizations which can access the governorates of Shabwa and Maarib, for example. NGOs have strong working connections to the people in these areas and have, in part, assumed key responsibilities of the state like peace-building and relief. Any reconciliation process will require broad public acceptance and support to succeed. Yemen’s NGOs can contribute to the substance of the reconciliation plan while also staging awareness campaigns about any resulting agreements and the importance of public participation. In Lebanon, whose 15-year civil war ended in 1990 with the Taif accords,⁴⁴ many NGOs engaged in wide-ranging grassroots peace-building and training campaigns. These included the Permanent Peace Movement, which conducted training in a total of 90 villages,

involving hundreds of trainees.⁴⁵ Other relevant examples were the “Memory for the Future” project, which focused on the documentation of the war, and the Association of the Disappeared, focused on uncovering what happened to the 17,000 Lebanese who disappeared during the conflict.⁴⁶

NGOs in Yemen face challenges, however, that may limit their effectiveness. The country’s political leadership and public have a limited awareness and appreciation of the role of NGOs. To increase their collective impact, various NGOs in Yemen could form an association of civil society groups, allowing the disparate organizations to contribute to national reconciliation as a single coherent entity with clear roles and responsibilities. If NGOs can display strong organization and an active public presence, other parties to the reconciliation will be encouraged to bring them into the process and provide them with a larger role.

Women

Yemeni women played a significant role in initiating and sustaining the uprising against President Saleh from the beginning. They can play a similarly significant role in supporting the reconciliation process. Yemeni women, who have long suffered from social marginalization, took on leadership roles in the early days of the uprising. In fact, their involvement gave street protests momentum by playing on deeply rooted social norms among Yemeni men, who were expected to take to the streets and protect their women. Muhammad Qahtan explained, “To see those endless waves of women protesting in the streets left no option for Yemeni men but to rush to the streets as well and to do their part in supporting the uprising and demanding regime change.”⁴⁷ The most prominent

42. Oussama Safa, “Conflict Resolution and Reconciliation in the Arab World: The Work of Civil Society Organizations in Lebanon and Morocco,” Berghof Research Center for Constructive Conflict Management, 2007.

43. Ibid.

44. Sponsored by the Arab League and negotiated in the city of Taif in Saudi Arabia, the Taif National Reconciliation Accord was designed to end the civil war, grant amnesty for past political crimes, dissolve militia groups, reclaim Lebanese authority in South Lebanon, and withdraw Syrian troops from Lebanon.

45. Safa, “Conflict Resolution and Reconciliation in the Arab World.”

46. Ibid.

47. Author’s interview and discussion with Muhammad Qahtan, Islah leader and JMP spokesperson, Sanaa, May 2012.

example of the role of women in the uprising is Takwul Karman, the first Arab woman and youngest person to date to win the Nobel Peace Prize.

Yemeni women paid a heavy price for their participation in the uprising, with large numbers imprisoned, wounded, killed, and tortured. During the six wars in Saada, many women were widowed and became responsible for fully supporting their families. Fighting between the Yemeni army and al-Qaeda in Arhab district throughout 2011 and 2012 left an estimated 30,000 women internally displaced. For these reasons and others, Yemeni women must be part of the national reconciliation process. Activist Sarah Ahmed reasoned, “Women made up approximately 50 percent of the participation in the revolution and must be represented with at least 30 percent in the national dialogue.” She argued that a role for women could prove critical to reconciliation: “Women tend to forgive when they become part of a process.”⁴⁸

Tribes

Tribes are widely – and unfairly – perceived as spoilers in reconciliation efforts. Yemen’s tribes have been described as “fiercely independent”⁴⁹ entities, competing with the state and focusing primarily on their own narrow interests. This perception was reinforced by President Saleh’s relationship with the tribes, according to which the government outsourced security in large areas of the country to the local tribes. The state intervened only when the regime’s interests were at stake.

Tribal leader Sheikh Mifreh al-Bahabeih, however, rejects this perception, arguing that tribes in fact suffer the most in a difficult security situation that the state has failed to address. He explains, “Tribes are tired of fighting and doing the state’s job of security. They find themselves in a vicious arms race with each other, and all that comes at the expense of their children’s food and education. We want the state to come maintain security so we can take care of our own matters.”⁵⁰

National reconciliation in Yemen can benefit from the tribes’ involvement in four important ways. First, the weakness of the central government and its inability to guarantee security outside Sanaa make it necessary for the state to involve independent actors like the tribes, as security is an essential element to begin and sustain a national reconciliation process. As political scientist Daniel Corstange puts it, tribes are “second-best substitutes for an absent or weak state.”⁵¹

Second, tribes possess robust conflict resolution, mediation, and reconciliation systems that can technically support a larger national reconciliation process.⁵² Studies conducted by local organizations in Yemen indicate that 90 percent of conflicts are prevented and resolved using the tribes’ Customary Law system.⁵³ Time and time again, tribes have succeeded where the state failed in resolving political standoffs. In January 2012, for example, an estimated 200 al-Qaeda militants seized control of the town of Radaa in Hajja district, leading the Yemeni army to withdraw from the area.

48. Author’s interview with Sarah Ahmed, Sanaa, May 2012.

49. Daniel Corstange, *Tribes and the Rule of Law in Yemen* (College Park, Md.: Department of Government and Politics, 2008), 13. See also, Nadwa al-Dawsari, *Tribal Governance and Stability in Yemen*, Carnegie Endowment for International Peace Middle East, April 2012, 4.

50. Author’s interview with Sheikh Bahabeih, Sanaa, May 2012. Sheikh Bahabeih used the term “tribal arms race” to describe how fighting between tribes begins with pistols, then escalates to the use of automatic rifles, RPGs, and even missiles. This type of fighting compels Yemen’s tribes to engage in this arm race in order to combat other tribes if necessary and protect their own interests.

51. Corstange, *Tribes and the Rule of Law in Yemen*, 13. See also al-Dawsari, *Tribal Governance and Stability in Yemen*, 4.

52. A tribal conflict resolution system was described to me by tribal leader Sheikh Bahabeih as follows: “Whenever a conflict erupts, each tribe chooses someone from the other tribe – with whom they have a conflict – called an arbitrator, who serves as negotiator on behalf of his tribe. Both arbitrators ensure they have bonds and guarantees (e.g., cars, cows, weapons) to ensure implementation of any agreements reached. If the two arbitrators don’t reach an agreement, then they resort to a third arbitrator from a neutral tribe that can contribute to the negotiation. They keep coming up with new ways until they reach an agreement, after which they ensure full implementation.” Author’s interview with Sheikh Bahabeih, Sanaa, May 2012.

53. German Development Corporation (GIZ), “Conflict Resolution in Yemen Today, a Report for the German Development Corporation,” GIZ discussion paper, 2006. See also al-Dawsari, *Tribal Governance and Stability in Yemen*, 4.

Only through successful mediation conducted by a group of tribal leaders were the al-Qaeda militants persuaded to withdraw from Radaa.⁵⁴ In another instance, a different group of tribal leaders was able to negotiate the release of 73 military men in Abyan province in April 2012.⁵⁵

Third, there is the simple fact that Yemeni society remains largely tribal, so the tribes cannot be ignored if national reconciliation is to have popular support. In this regard, tribal leaders can use their legitimacy and power within their tribes to validate any agreements and create public momentum to support them.

Fourth, the tribal value system encompasses not just vengeance, but also, according to Sheikh Bahabeih, “justice and forgiveness.”⁵⁶ The tribal code revolves not around retribution, but rather around maintaining the honor and reputation of the tribe, and thus mandates fairness in the tribe’s external and internal affairs. The ideals of justice and forgiveness are central for a national reconciliation process meant to facilitate the resolution of previously intractable conflicts. To be successful, the reconciliation process must foster a new culture of forgiveness, an end to which Yemen’s tribal value system can contribute.

It is worth noting that tribal leaders are participating in the process of dialogue and reconciliation, not as tribal representatives but through various political parties. For example, the leader of the Hashid tribe, Yemen’s most powerful, is participating as part of the Islah party, while the sheikh of the Bakeel tribe is contributing as a member of the Justice and Development Party. Still, the inclusion of more tribal leaders – not as tribal leaders per se, but rather in their capacity as political or social leaders – could provide a significant boost to the process.

PROCESSES OF NATIONAL RECONCILIATION

The question of how to establish a process that guides national reconciliation differs vastly from one place to another. National reconciliation processes do not follow one rigid model, but rather should respond to the particularities of the local context.

In the context of the Arab Spring and Yemen, in particular, national reconciliation should consist of four linked mechanisms: setting the stage, national dialogue, truth commissions, and transitional justice. Some should take place consecutively, while others are mutually reinforcing and should occur simultaneously.

Setting the Stage for National Reconciliation

A transition from dictatorship to democracy usually leaves deep mistrust between old and new elites. The major dynamics driving transition are still fundamentally those of a zero-sum game; both new- and old-regime figures consider the new leaders winners and the old regime losers. Leaders of the transition process, then, must assure all parties that the political dynamics are now different. Former regime elements who were not involved in human rights violations must feel they are part of the transition process and that they are not excluded simply because of their past associations. Although an Iraq-style de-Baathification has not been discussed seriously, many Yemenis still need to be assured that the Iraqi experience will not be repeated in Yemen. Tribes loyal to the former regime should also not be penalized or excluded.

It is equally important that those who suffered under the former regime be assured that the reconciliation process will take their grievances seri-

54. Fawaz al-Haidari, “Qaeda Gunmen Quit Yemen Town Under Tribal Pressure,” AFP, January 25, 2012, <<http://www.google.com/hosted-news/afp/article/ALeqM5hO4Bn9AJRksn248Ka8DUdAMF5jbw?docId=CNG.fbd256f622bb0f408ea3f47dcdf4896b.6a1>>.

55. Ali Saeed, “Captured Soldiers in Abyan Released,” *Yemen Times*, April 30, 2012, <<http://www.yementimes.com/en/1568/news/777/Captured-soldiers-in-Abyan-released.htm>>.

56. Author’s interview with Sheikh Bahabeih, Sanaa, May 2012.

ously and address them fairly. Marginalized groups under the former regime usually harbor serious doubts about whether a new process – even with the removal of certain regime figures – will produce a just outcome and be fundamentally different from the past.

Setting the stage to address such a sharp contrast of expectations between former regime leaders and supporters and the groups marginalized by those same regime elements is certainly challenging. Acknowledgement of the social, political, and economic grievances of marginalized groups and perhaps an apology for what the state allowed to happen can be effective gestures. Already, there have been some positive steps in this direction. Yemen's Technical Preparatory Committee for the Comprehensive National Dialogue Conference, led by Abdulkarim al-Iriani, delivered an apology to the Southerners for the war of 1994 and to the Houthis for the six wars that President Saleh fought against them. At the same time, well-respected figures from the GPC have taken on leadership roles in the national dialogue process; al-Iriani was himself still an official member of the GPC when he was elected head of the committee in August 2012. Also contributing to the credibility of the dialogue process are moves like President Hadi's November 2012 assertion of presidential authority over of the Saleh-aligned Republican Guard and Central Security.

Nonetheless, and despite the positive steps taken by al-Iriani in particular, this initial phase of reconciliation will only be completed when all parties agree to participate in a comprehensive dialogue.

National Dialogue: A Roadmap to Reconciliation

In practice, Yemen's dialogue will consist of an

ongoing series of meetings and working groups administered through a parliament-like dialogue conference. The distribution of the dialogue's 565 delegates was announced on November 27, 2012, and includes 112 members for the GPC, 85 for al-Harak, and 50 for Islah.⁵⁷ The delegate makeup was produced by UN envoy to Yemen Jamal Ben Omar in collaboration with the Yemeni government and various political parties and, in a sign of progress, seems to have met with general acceptance.

The ultimate goal of a national dialogue process is the establishment of a mutually agreed upon framework or roadmap to deal with fundamental issues facing the country in its transition from dictatorship to democracy. In Yemen, that would include the Southern cause, the Houthis' grievances, and institutional reform. Before dealing with the core issues, however, parties must accept certain principles.

First, equal partnership among all participating parties should be an essential feature of the national dialogue.⁵⁸ This does not mean that each party should be granted an equal number of seats; rather, that all parties to the dialogue, regardless of their relative size or strength, should have the right to voice their positions without fear of intimidation. The exclusion that underpinned the value system of the former dictatorship must be replaced with a spirit of inclusion, forgiveness, and acceptance of the other, and there should be no one party able to control or dominate the process. National dialogue should also include all active political parties representing the country's various constituencies, including: the GCP, Islah, the Socialists, the Nasserists, the Baathists, the Justice and Development Party, the South (separatists, federalists, and unionists), the Houthis, and even jihadi militants Ansar al-Sharia⁵⁹ if the group is willing to lay down arms and become part of the political process.

57. Other delegate counts include 62 appointees of President Hadi, 40 for independent youth, 40 for (non-political) women, 40 for civil society, 37 for the Yemen Socialist Party, 35 for the Houthis, 30 for the Nasserist Party, and seven for the Justice and Development Party. See Haykal Bafana, "The National Dialogue of Yemen," Blog.Haykal.sg, <<http://blog.haykal.sg/w/22.lp.ye.nationaldialogue/>>.

58. For more on this, see "Pillars of National Dialogue, the Vision of the Justice and Development Party," February 13, 2012.

59. A number of interviewees supported involving Ansar al-Sharia if they disarm and become part of the political process. Ansar al-Sharia has been linked to al-Qaeda in the Arabian Peninsula; see Sudarsan Raghavan, "Militants linked to al-Qaeda emboldened in Yemen," Washington Post, June 13, 2011, <http://www.washingtonpost.com/world/middle-east/militants-linked-to-al-qaeda-emboldened-in-yemen/2011/06/12/AG88nISH_story.htm>.

Equally important, parties should avoid coming to the national dialogue process with set conditions or demands. Setting public and explicit pre-dialogue conditions will only impede a successful dialogue and hold parties to rigid positions they may later find difficult to abandon, even if the national interest requires it. The Houthis' and the Yemeni Socialist Party's announced conditions for their participation understandably reflect their concerns about a process that they fear is stacked against them.⁶⁰ Still, while parties must articulate their respective positions and make their voices heard, there must be a recognition that there is no Yemeni government with the mandate to meet these hard conditions. To whatever extent possible, the initial phase of setting the stage for the dialogue should entail symbolic gestures – along the lines of the dialogue committee's apologies – that encourage trust in the process and obviate the need for these conditions and demands.

The end of dictatorship, especially when it comes through a popular uprising, entails the collapse of the social contract between the state and its people. A primary task of an inclusive national dialogue will be forging consensus on the way the social contract – the constitution – will be written. Only through the agreement and blessing of all parties to the national dialogue can the mechanisms and institutions for the drafting and ratification of the constitution be put in place.⁶¹

Despite the involvement of UN envoy Ben Omar in the arrangements and preparations for the national dialogue, holding the conference has proved to be a serious challenge. The national dialogue was initially planned for July 2012 but has been delayed several times. It is now planned for March 2013, although that could again change. Further-

more, the participation of relevant stakeholders has faced some alarming setbacks. The Houthis are officially committed to the dialogue, although they have periodically vacillated on participation; they first issued ten conditions for joining,⁶² then withdrew from preparatory meetings because of the U.S. Ambassador's presence and ruled out the laying down of their arms. Meanwhile, the Southern movement, and especially the separatist wing represented by Ali Salim al-Beidh, has boycotted the conference. To bolster the perception of Southern participation, conference organizers have invited other Southern participants and even argued that President Hadi is himself from the South. Without al-Harak, though, there are serious questions regarding the legitimacy and completeness of the South's representation.

The conference will also be an important test of the unity of the JMP – which has now held together for over ten years – and, by extension, the future political landscape of Yemen. The JMP has not formulated clear positions on a number of issues that will be discussed in the national dialogue, among them the Southern cause. In addition, disagreements between the Islamist Islah and the Socialist party are likely to emerge, particularly on the constitution and the structure of the state.⁶³ The extent to which Islamic sharia is a source or the source of legislation, for example, will probably be divisive. These concerns threaten to derail the conference. A collapse of the national dialogue process will take Yemen to a very uncertain future and threaten not only broader hopes for national reconciliation but also basic security and stability in the country.

60. See "The Houthis Issue Ten Conditions to Participate in National Dialogue," Barakish.net, May 10, 2012, <<http://barakish.net/news.aspx?cat=12&sub=12&id=30061>> (Translated from Arabic). See also the Socialist Party's conditions in Appendix II.

61. For some discussion of how the GCC initiative lays the framework for a new Yemeni constitution, see "Next Steps in Yemen's Transition," International Foundation for Electoral Systems, March 2012, <http://www.ifes.org/~media/Files/Publications/White%20PaperReport/2012/Next_Steps_in_Yemens_Transition_paper.pdf>. At this early stage of the national dialogue, the exact process of drafting and approving the constitution remains unresolved.

62. See Appendix III.

63. Saqqaf Omar al-Saqqaf, "Conflicting Agendas Approaching Decisive Dialogue in Yemen," Al Jazeera Center for Studies, November 2012.

Truth Commissions: A Necessity for Sustainable Reconciliation

As discussed earlier, a truth commission will provide important answers, as one of Yemen's most persistent and dangerous problems is the absence of any shared understanding of what took place under the Saleh regime. In contrast with other mechanisms of transitional justice (discussed below), a truth commission can also clarify the broader narrative of events like the country's 1994 war and the past decade's various wars with the Houthis. A truth commission can fill gaps in the country's collective memory, a task important enough in the Yemeni context to merit considering a truth commission as a reconciliation process in its own right.

By addressing the pressing questions of Yemenis like the country's Southerners or the families of the disappeared, all of whom suffered under conditions that were opaque or went unexplained, a truth commission could give them an important stake in a continuing reconciliation process. Concerns about the discovery of past abuses leading to revenge in a tribal society like Yemen are legitimate. For this very reason, an effective truth commission is needed to search for the facts and regulate the release of information. Managed transparency is among the central goals of a truth commission – it must decide what facts to publicize, as well as when and under what conditions the truth should be communicated. Furthermore, public awareness campaigns can help ensure that the population at large is prepared to delve into a difficult past, or at least part of it.

Transitional Justice: A Vital Step in a Larger National Reconciliation Process

The very notion of transition requires closing a dark chapter in the country's history and moving to a new phase where something closer to justice and equality prevails. Transitional justice is traditionally understood to consist of four steps, including: truth commissions; reparations to victims; accountability for rights violators; and institutional reform, particularly of the judiciary. Establishing

transitional justice laws will help adjudicate the individual cases and issues that will emerge as part of a truth commission, and in so doing help ensure support from aggrieved communities for Yemen's transition. These mechanisms are important for reinforcing a value system that holds human rights violators to account and establishes the rule of law as the legitimate alternative to calls for revenge. Particularly in Yemen, where the uprising ended with a tentative peace at the expense of justice, transitional justice is a key requirement for moving forward and is something that is clearly called for in the GCC initiative.

THE ROLE OF THE INTERNATIONAL COMMUNITY IN YEMEN'S NATIONAL RECONCILIATION

The international community played an undeniably significant role in facilitating the departure of President Saleh. The GCC initiative's provision of the framework for a political process proves what Saudi Arabia – backed by the United States and the rest of the international community – is capable of doing in Yemen. In fact, the signing of the GCC initiative in Riyadh in the presence of King Abdullah represents a continuation of Saudi Arabia's traditional role in Yemen and its ability to forge solutions to political challenges facing the country. However, we must keep in mind that Saudi Arabia would have been unable to move forward in Yemen without international consensus and the international community's firm support for the power transfer deal. In addition, a credible UN presence in Yemen backed by Security Council Resolution 2014⁶⁴ has allowed envoy Jamal Ben Omar to work effectively with the involved parties throughout the transitional process.

One can therefore reasonably state that the international community's commitment to a peaceful transition contributed to removing Saleh from power, if not necessarily effecting fundamental regime change. In so doing, it helped prevent the uprising from devolving into civil war. However, the international community should be aware that signing the power transfer deal is only the first step in a lengthy political process from which parties may defect at any stage in favor of confrontation and violence.

As is the case in a number of other Arab countries facing political unrest (particularly Syria, Lebanon, and Bahrain), national reconciliation in Yemen has a regional dimension. Iran has previously been accused of supporting both the Southern movement and the Houthis – with some reports mentioning even military support⁶⁵ – while Saudi Arabia has supported the regime and various tribal leaders in the past. In addition, American military presence in Yemen is keenly felt and suggests that any future confrontation with Iran might well impact the country. Troublingly, the effect of these international players on domestic parties has already been seen in the national reconciliation process. On September 17, for example, the Houthis boycotted a national dialogue session in protest of the attendance of U.S. Ambassador Gerald Feierstein.⁶⁶ Because regional players are likely to continue to compete, it becomes the responsibility of the Yemeni parties themselves to enter the national dialogue independent of external agendas. This would be the most solid guarantor of national reconciliation in the post-Saleh era.

Just as importantly, regional rivalry, interference, and promotion of external agendas must not be confused with legitimate international support for the national reconciliation process, something which Yemen needs. Among international actors, the United Nations in particular has earned legitimacy among even the groups most sensitive to external intervention. The Houthis, for example, welcomed a national dialogue under the auspices

64. This resolution was unanimously adopted on October 21, 2011. It expressed concerns over the deteriorating security and humanitarian situations in Yemen and called for Saleh to step down according to terms of the political settlement.

65. See Eric Schmitt and Robert F. Worth, "With Aid to Yemen Rebels, Iran Reaches for Regional Power," *The New York Times*, March 25, 2012.

66. "Houthis boycott national dialogue session in Yemen in protest of attendance of U.S. Ambassador Gerald Feierstein," *al-Qabas*, September 17, 2012, <<http://www.alqabas.com.kw/node/111079>>.

of the United Nations, saying it would be “a dialogue that is free from any foreign or domestic guardianship.”⁶⁷

A related threat to successful national reconciliation is the continued violation of state sovereignty. The ongoing American war against al-Qaeda in Yemen represents exactly the type of violation that undermines central authority, making the various political parties less willing to work with the Yemeni government and cooperate towards reconciliation. For activist leader Sarah Ahmed, respect of state authority is a top priority. “First and foremost,” she says, “stop the drones!... You can’t dialogue and reconcile in the midst of being bombed by drones.”⁶⁸ It should be noted that the Yemeni government – previously Saleh, and now Hadi – has long collaborated with the United States in its drone campaign. This relationship has enflamed popular anger at the Yemeni state in recent years. Reflecting what seems to be the overwhelming majority opinion in Yemen, head of the Justice and Development Party Muhammad Abu Luhum said, “The issue of al-Qaeda is strictly a Yemeni problem and should be dealt with entirely by Yemenis. We will be fully responsible for the outcomes.”⁶⁹ The current transition in Yemen could be an opportunity for both the Yemeni and U.S. governments to reassess the current approach and its impact on security, stability, and reconciliation.

Another critical way in which the broader international community can help the reconciliation process succeed is by applying diplomatic pressure to those who may attempt to sabotage it or hinder its progress. For example, it may be necessary to remind parties of the international consensus on the need for a peaceful transition. By articulating and emphasizing a unified international position

through, for example, United Nations Security Council resolutions, the international community can prevent parties from backsliding into obstructionism. International actors must also be clear on whether they are only interested in replacing Saleh with a “reliable strongman” – who can deliver on security – or are truly committed to a democratic transition in the country. The international community’s commitment to a genuine Yemeni democracy has not yet been tested, as transition in Yemen is still in its early stages. Furthermore, the nature of the GCC accord and the structure of the government – a combination of the former ruling party and opposition – suggest that a return to a “reliable strongman” or a democratic transition are both possible. Reconciliation will provide an opportunity to test where the international community is truly heading.

Providing financial assistance to what may become a very costly reconciliation process is another area where the international community becomes indispensable. After six wars with northern Saada province and a major war with the South in 1994, a compensation package for victims’ families and the wounded and displaced, the rehabilitation of ex-political detainees, and the disarmament of former rebel groups will lead to a massive financial burden that Yemen simply cannot afford. Indeed, in order for a tribal leader to encourage members of his tribe to forgo retaliation and reconcile, he would be expected to offer compensation to families who lost their primary bread-winners. Most international funds pledged so far (the majority by Arab Gulf states) have yet to be delivered. Of \$7.9 billion pledged by the “Friends of Yemen” in September 2012, only a \$1 billion loan from Saudi Arabia had been delivered by January of this year.⁷⁰

67. “The Houthis put forward ten conditions to enter national dialogue,” *al-Hadath*, May 5, 2012, <<http://www.alhadath-yemen.com/news19308.html>>.

68. Author’s interview with Sarah Ahmed, Sanaa, May 2012.

69. “What’s Next for Yemen,” a public event held at the Brookings Doha Center, March 2012.

70. Mohammed Ghobari, “Yemen receives promises for more aid from Gulf states,” Reuters, January 21, 2013, <<http://english.alarabiya.net/articles/2013/01/21/261697.html>>. Ongoing negotiations over how to allocate and channel aid, as well as security concerns, have held back delivery of international funds. For more, see “Yemen’s Recovery Plagued by Delays,” *Yemen Post*, January 26, 2013, <<http://yemenpost.net/Detail123456789.aspx?ID=3&SubID=6462&MainCat=7>>.

Another important contribution could be the provision of a neutral location for party dialogue and reconciliation when needed. This is not to suggest that the dialogue process should take place entirely outside Yemen, but at some point the parties may feel that Sanaa does not provide the best environment for talks. This could be for a variety of reasons, including questionable security and suspicions about former regime influence. Furthermore, participants may be more prone to intraparty wrangling in Sanaa or may be tempted to hold to uncompromising positions in order to appeal to a polarized domestic media and play to their base. Providing a neutral location for dialogue would limit the pressures of domestic politics.

Finally, the international community can play a unique role by providing the parties with technical expertise in mediation, group facilitation, best practices, and national reconciliation success stories to be used as models. Comparisons with other countries that went through a similar experience could be particularly helpful. The challenges to Yemeni reconciliation as discussed in this paper include some shared with these countries and others unique to the Yemeni context. Still, with this and other forms of assistance, the international community can contribute to building a Yemen that can break with its history of conflict and enjoy, more so than any other time in its modern history, a degree of unity and lasting stability.

APPENDIX I: THE GCC INITIATIVE FOR YEMEN

THE GULF COOPERATION COUNCIL INITIATIVE, UN TRANSLATION

The signatories to this Agreement, desirous of achieving a political settlement of the crisis in Yemen, acting in accordance with the terms of the initiative proposed by the Gulf Cooperation Council on 21 April 2011 and pursuant to the following basic principles:

- That the solution resulting from this Agreement shall preserve the unity, security and stability of Yemen;
- That the Agreement shall fulfil the aspirations of the Yemeni people for change and reform;
- That the transfer of power shall be smooth, secure and based on national consensus in order to avoid a descent into anarchy and violence;
- That all parties are committed to removing the sources of tension in political and security terms;
- That all parties are committed to ending all forms of reprisals, pursuit and prosecution by extending guarantees and pledges towards that end;

Have agreed on the following implementation steps:

1. On the first day of the Agreement, the President of the Republic shall request the opposition to form a government of national unity with 50 per cent representation from either side. That government shall be formed no later than seven days after his request.
2. The newly formed government shall create the appropriate atmosphere in order to achieve national consensus and put an end to the sources of tension in political and security terms.
3. On the 29th day after the Agreement enters into force, Parliament, including the opposition, shall adopt laws granting immunity from legal and judicial prosecution to the President and those who worked with him during his time in office.
4. On the 30th day after the Agreement enters into force, once Parliament, including the opposition, has adopted the law on safeguards, the President of the Republic shall tender his resignation to Parliament. When Parliament has accepted his resignation, the Vice President shall become the legitimate President by appointment.
5. The President by appointment shall call for presidential elections within 60 days in accordance with the Constitution.
6. The new President shall establish a constitutional committee to oversee the preparation of a new constitution.
7. When complete, the new constitution shall be submitted to a popular referendum.
8. If the constitution is approved by referendum, a time frame for parliamentary elections shall be determined in accordance with the new constitution.
9. After the elections, the President shall request the Chair of the party that has gained the greatest number of votes to form a government.
10. The States members of the Gulf Cooperation Council, the United States of America, the European Union and the Russian Federation shall be witnesses to the implementation of this Agreement.
11. This Agreement has been prepared in four original copies in the Arabic language.

It shall enter into force on the date when all parties have signed it.

International Crisis Group, “Yemen: Enduring Conflicts, Threatened Transition,” Middle East Report No. 125, July 3, 2012, <<http://www.crisisgroup.org/~media/Files/Middle%20East%20North%20Africa/Iran%20Gulf/Yemen/125-yemen-enduring-conflicts-threatened-transition.pdf>>.

APPENDIX II:

THE GUIDELINES FOR YEMEN'S NATIONAL DIALOGUE AND A RESOLUTION OF THE SOUTHERN ISSUE, AS LAID OUT BY THE SOUTH'S SOCIALIST PARTY

The Socialist Party lays out a set of determinants and outcomes for dialogue and the resolution of the Southern issue.

The Secretariat-General of the Yemeni Socialist Party has, in its recent regular meetings, taken up a number of internal organizational issues, as well as the national political developments that the country is undergoing. These developments are linked to the facts and results of the implementation of the GCC initiative and its operational mechanism. This is in addition to the ongoing preparations for the national dialogue stipulated by both the initiative and its operational mechanism and the positions taken by the country's various parties on that dialogue.

The Secretariat-General has been following all administrative, political and military developments [in Yemen], especially after early presidential elections were held and the new President, Abd Rabbu Mansour Hadi, secured popular legitimacy. It was that legitimacy that enabled him to make a number of crucial decisions to meet the aspirations of the people for change; for the liberation of the country from the yoke of rule by a single family; and for the preparation of the appropriate conditions for a comprehensive national dialogue in which the country's parties will participate without exceptions and without preconditions. That dialogue aims to arrive at serious solutions for all the issues facing the country, with the Southern issue at their forefront.

In this regard, the Secretariat-General of the Yemeni Socialist Party has saluted the masses involved in the popular resistance in Abyan Province and their heroic response, alongside the security forces, to armed groups affiliated with the terrorist organization al-Qaeda. That organization has pushed a number of cities and regions in Abyan into a vortex of uncontrollable violence. This is in addition to what it represents in terms of a threat to political and social stability and the dragging of the entire country into a pit of total chaos, collapse, and disintegration.

The Secretariat-General believes that the fight against terrorism and the elimination of the armed remnants of al-Qaeda require concerted popular and official efforts. It requires a comprehensive confrontation at all levels to eliminate this dangerous epidemic and eradicate it once and for all.

As the Party prepares to participate in the comprehensive national dialogue, the Secretariat-General emphasized the extraordinary importance the Party gives to this dialogue. It is an opportunity to save the country from the crises under which it is being crushed, to prepare the means for a peaceful transition from its current situation, and to addressing the worsening issues with which it has been burdened. It should aim for practical and fundamental solutions that create appropriate conditions for Yemen's future resurgence, insofar as that helps realize the political and socioeconomic aspirations of its people. From this vantage point, the Secretariat-General urged the Party's team, made up of several of the Secretariat-General's members, to prepare the party's positions on all issues to be raised during the dialogue.

The Secretariat-General believes it necessary to produce a constructive atmosphere that will help the comprehensive national dialogue make real progress in reaching effective solutions for the issues to be raised. Especially regarding the Southern issue, a number of political and administrative steps must be taken by President Abd Rabbo Mansour Hadi and the national unity government led by Muhammad Salim Basindwa. These steps would eliminate all doubt over the state's seriousness about the dialogue and the results that can be achieved. They would likewise confirm that the country, in its new state, cannot accept the evasions long practiced by the former regime, a regime that the revolution of February 11, 2011, came to eradicate and do away with its destructive methods and policies.

APPENDIX II (CONTINUED):

THE GUIDELINES FOR YEMEN'S NATIONAL DIALOGUE AND A RESOLUTION OF THE SOUTHERN ISSUE, AS LAID OUT BY THE SOUTH'S SOCIALIST PARTY

In this regard, the Party's Secretariat-General highlighted the importance of the new President and the national unity government undertaking a number of decisions and preparatory measures aimed at building an atmosphere of confidence and ensuring [the dialogue's] seriousness. The decisions and steps that would pave the way for a serious dialogue to address the Southern issue include the following:

1. The immediate restoration of civilian and military employees who were displaced, arrested, sent to forced retirement, or migrated abroad due to the war of summer 1994 to their jobs, as well as the payment of anything legally entitled to them.
2. The payment of salaries and amounts due to those who lost their sources of income due to the theft or privatization of public institutions and companies in which they had been working.
3. The formation of a national body for reconciliation and justice whose members would be representatives of those detained, injured or otherwise concerned. This body would resolve the complaints and grievances of detainees and deportees, and its decisions and actions would be binding for related government agencies.
4. The return of properties and money seized after the 1994 war, whether they belonged to individuals, parties, unions, or the state; a halt to the seizure of lands; and the return of lands disposed of without right, with priority given to the people of the South's provinces in making use of these lands.
5. The prosecution of corrupt figures involved in the manipulation of the state's lands, properties and resources, as well as any public money and cooperative properties. The prosecution should begin with those most responsible for plundering the South and should return everything stolen.
6. The restoration of the *falaheen* (peasants) who were driven from the lands of which they were making use and who lost possession of their lands in the South due to the war and its subsequent repercussions to their homes and lands.
7. The treatment of all victims of the 1994 war as martyrs and the treatment of the injured and their families and the families of martyrs equally in terms of rights and care.
8. Communication with the parties of the Southern Movement's peaceful struggle, as well as with its leadership abroad, and inviting them to take part in the national dialogue.
9. The abolition of a culture of glorifying civil wars and calling for retaliation and political revenge in educational curricula and in media and cultural outlets; the removal of any manifestations of injustice, degradation and exclusion directed against the cultural, artistic and social heritage of the South; and the restoration of the South's political history, which has been subjected to obliteration and abolition since the 1994 war.
10. A formal apology to the people of the South for injuries to them as a result of the 1994 war and for oppression and pains inflicted upon them by the regime's destructive post-war policies.
11. The immediate release of all political prisoners arrested for their participation in the revolution and the peaceful Southern Movement and a halt to the suppression of peaceful political and popular activities.
12. Permission for *Al-Ayyam* newspaper to resume publication, compensation for damages to it and its editorial board, and a lifting of the ban imposed on Southern websites irrespective of their orientation.

April 29, 2012

Sana'a

"The Socialist Party lays out a set of determinants and outcomes for dialogue and the resolution of the Southern issue," Aleshteraki.net, May 3, 2012, <http://www.aleshteraki.net/news_details.php?sid=12741>.

APPENDIX III:

THE HOUTHIS' TEN CONDITIONS FOR PARTICIPATION IN YEMEN'S NATIONAL DIALOGUE

The Houthis set ten conditions for entering “the national dialogue”

The Houthis have expressed their willingness to enter the national dialogue to be launched in Yemen. They have, however, set conditions that they indicated were sound foundations and rules for the dialogue. These guidelines do not allow for the dialogue’s direction to be imposed either from inside or outside Yemen, which would negate the substance of the dialogue and hijack the convictions of the participants. The Houthis’ conditions include:

Based on the fundamentals of the people’s revolution and the national interest, and out of loyalty to the dear blood that was shed to overthrow the oppressive regime and build a just civil state: we present this vision which, we believe, represents a foundation for a true dialogue, one that ensures that the revolution’s goals be met and the intense suffering of the Yemeni people be alleviated.

We do not reject the language of dialogue; rather, we consider it to be a sound method if used properly and without its course being dictated by forces inside or outside the country. That sort of imposition violates the principles of dialogue and partnership, negating the substance of the dialogue while hijacking the convictions of others.

Based on that and on the deliberations between political forces and representatives of elements of the revolution in Saada province from May 3 to May 5, 2012, we present the following vision:

1. The need for the revolution to continue, not to end with the dialogue. The continuation of the revolution is both a necessity and a guarantee that the revolution’s objectives be achieved. This must happen amid continued efforts by foreign forces and their agents within the country to steer events and impose a political agenda, taking into account only those foreigners’ interests and hijacking the revolution’s objectives and the demands and interests of the people.
2. The preparation in advance of an atmosphere conducive to the dialogue through the following:
 - a. An admission by the forces involved in the war against the South and the Northern provinces that the war was a mistake, that those regions’ causes were just, and that Taiz and Tehama were oppressed, as well as any rights consequent to those admissions.
 - b. A halt to inflammatory rhetoric and sectarianism, as well as an end to all wars and to attacks on rallies, demonstrations and other peaceful activities.
 - c. The impartiality and patriotism of state media such that it deals equally with all parties in its objective presentation of the facts. It should not be inclined toward one party against another and should end its exclusion of free revolutionary forces.
 - d. The immediate release of all revolutionary prisoners and those detained for their work in politics or journalism, the treating of the injured, care for the families of martyrs, and a halt to violations against journalists.
 - e. A reduction in the prices of petroleum products and essential commodities to ensure a dignified and secure life for the people.
3. That the revolution and its objectives are treated as the reference point of the dialogue, such that the dialogue helps achieve the revolution’s goals and relies on it for its legitimacy.
4. That the dialogue is not held under any foreign or local trusteeship. There is no problem, however, if it is held with United Nations support that helps it succeed without interfering by imposing its direction or resolutions.

APPENDIX III (CONTINUED):

THE HOUTHIS' TEN CONDITIONS FOR PARTICIPATION IN YEMEN'S NATIONAL DIALOGUE

5. That the dialogue addresses all national issues, without exception. This includes the establishment of a true transitional period that lays the foundation for a future based on justice; the equality of opportunities and rights; citizenship; the restructuring of the army, security [services], and electoral system; and other important issues.
6. That the bases, mechanisms and frameworks of the dialogue and its arrangements be balanced and not inclined in favor of one party against the others. This is so that the dialogue doesn't become a vehicle for opportunistic, authoritarian and exclusionary forces whose only concern is attaining power at any cost; it is also so that the forces who take part have the right to help shape its mechanisms, frameworks and bases.
7. That decisions are made by consensus, that the dialogue is held publicly in a round-table [format], and that the dialogue conference is based on fair grounds involving all parties, with no exclusion and marginalization. In addition, if any of the popular forces refuse to enter the dialogue, that their cause is addressed and their demands and the reasons for their boycott of the dialogue are heard.
8. The neutrality of the military and security establishments and their commitment to non-interference in political affairs, including the dialogue, in their capacity as national institutions that must be on equal terms with all.
9. The removal of regime members implicated in killings and involved in corrupting the political landscape. Their cases should be referred to a Transitional Justice Law, which must be among the resolutions taken in the national dialogue on a progressive basis.
10. That the parties calling for the dialogue specify their position on the continued violations of Yemen's sovereignty by the United States and other countries on land, sea and air, the killing of the [Yemeni] people, and the entrance of U.S. soldiers into Yemen's regions and provinces, given that all this represents a violation of the dignity of the Yemeni people.

"The Houthis set ten conditions for entering the national dialogue," *Al-Hadath*, October 5, 2012, <<http://www.alhadath-yemen.com/news19308.html>>.

APPENDIX IV: GRAFFITI IN SANAA

Graffiti throughout Sanaa, painted as part of a campaign called “The Walls Remember.” The stencils, meant to pressure the Yemeni government into investigating cases of “enforced disappearance,” demonstrate how the issue has remained with Yemen over the course of its modern history. As can be seen below, the disappearances date not only to Saleh’s arrival to power in 1978, but also throughout the more than three decades that followed.



Images I-VI: “كلنا الشهداء والمخفيين قسراً (حملة مناصرة)”, Facebook Page. <<https://www.facebook.com/yemen78>>.

Image VII: *The Daily Thawra*, <<http://www.dailythawra.com/items/fbphoto/916552>>.

Image VIII: “عين اليمن الإخبارية”, Facebook Page. <<https://www.facebook.com/yennews>>.

APPENDIX V (CONTINUED): MAPS OF YEMEN



Middle East Map. Wikimedia Commons, <commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Middle-East-map.gif>.

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