

Arab Reform Initiative

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Security Sector Reform (SSR) in the Arab Region
“How to Promote Security Sector Reform Processes in the Arab Countries”

October 2007- October 2010

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SUMMARY

This three-year program (October 2007 - October 2010) aims at developing an under-researched field in the area of global political reforms. Due to the sensitivity attached to the issue, (but maybe also to other complex reasons) there is little or no discussion in the Arab countries on how to promote good governance, transparency and accountability of the security sector.

There is a general trend of expanding the security sector in most Arab countries to respond to security threats and challenges. These are not conducive to reform of the security sector towards downsizing, increasing transparency and promoting democratic practices. At the same time, demands for political reforms are increasing everywhere. Will the obstacles to SSR prove stronger and resist in face of the pressure from societies to achieve rule of law, respect for human rights, good governance and transparency of public institutions, and democratic social and political practices?

ARI's objectives through this project are 1/ to foster a domestic informed discussion on SSR, and promote the idea that citizens have a right to debate and question the role, the basic goals and the mode of operation of their security sector; 2/ identify the challenges and the political context in which this debate is occurring and define appropriate strategies to tackle the issue; 3/ build a community of practice among scholars, reform activists and practitioners involved in studying the security sector as well as former military and security representatives and civilian officials through well-framed dialogues on reforms issues; 4/ draw lessons from other developing countries and establish partnership with key Latin American, Asian and African think-tanks well versed in SSR research with a view to building an interactive network on the local, regional and international levels; 5/ lay the ground for future work on this area by other groups within Arab societies: universities, research centres and activists groups; 6/ formulate recommendations on patterns of reform and actors to involve in the process for a relevant and effective agenda for reform of the sector.

A specific conceptual framework: Given the realities of the Arab countries, this research will need to start with a key underlying question, namely the modalities of exiting from authoritarianism. Experiences in different parts of the world suggest that patterns vary from violent dismantling or collapse of political systems to negotiated processes of yielding prerogatives peacefully. Accordingly, the conceptual framework will explore the following themes: the different historical processes of state-building and the civil-military and security relations; whether state institutions are separable from the regime and hence if they can be considered 'reformable' without threatening stability and national cohesion; public perceptions of the security sector; the timing and sequence of reforms (at what stage is SSR likely to occur in the process of transition) and whether the decisive impulse comes as a result of domestic changes or from outside factors; how to cope with strong external and internal conflicts in a volatile region with conflict management, post-conflict contexts or peace negotiations playing the role of triggers for SSR; privatization and fragmentation of the security sector; rule of law, judiciary institutions and security sector accountability; gender aspects in promoting SSR; and the nature and relevance or effectiveness of external contributions to security reforms processes.

*ARI consortium will mobilize the research capacity, experience and access to policy-makers and members of the security sectors of Arab countries among its member institutes, and network within and beyond the Arab region. The research will draw primarily on the expertise of member-institutes already involved in SSR projects. Comparative analysis and

collaboration with foreign partners will also form a key area for investigating the sector and assessing implications of reform.

*ARI will set up an SSR Working Group (WG) whose role will be to develop empirically and scholarly a critical assessment of benchmarks and approaches to SSR. It will start by surveying and analyzing the security apparatuses in each country. It will also aim at promoting dialogue among SSR academics and practitioners and at working collaboratively with advocacy associations and other civil society organizations, as well as with networks involved in SSR studies.

*ARI will work to raise awareness within civil society through the use of media, a series of seminars and dialogues in the region, public lectures in think-tanks and Arab universities, conducting public opinion surveys and smaller more targeted surveys of elites involved in security.

*Activities will include a combination of small workshops and off-the-record meetings as well as more public seminars and a large international conference.

* Outputs will include: 1/ a conceptual paper to frame the issues and suggest approaches as part of ARI's thematic studies series; 2/ a special series of policy papers with policy recommendations; 3/ electronic outputs through the creation of a specific SSR section on ARI's website, a database of activities related to the security sector in the Arab countries and elsewhere to serve as a resource on the subject; 4/ reports with policy recommendations. 5/An edited scholarly book.

1- FRAMEWORK AND OBJECTIVES

Why a project on SSR in the Arab region?

This project aims at bringing a much needed contribution to the burgeoning debate on the SSR by filling a gap with regard to the Arab region. The security sector is the most neglected area of research in the field of analysis on reforms towards democratization in the region; which itself is an under-researched area, especially when compared to other developing regions that experienced political transitions. Due to the sensitivity attached to it, there is little or no discussion in the Arab countries on how to promote good governance, transparency and accountability of the security sector. Efforts to fill this gap in knowledge are currently initiated by a number of international research groups, donors and outside partners. While they provide valuable suggestions and bring expertise that can benefit the case of Arab countries, they are mostly built on approaches shaped to respond to the realities of other countries. The Arab Reform Initiative proposes to develop knowledge and design strategies built on inside understanding of the issues to define a home-grown agenda for reform of the security sector.

Given the reality of Arab states, a study on reform of the security sector is in large part a prospective analysis of the modalities for them to exit from authoritarianism.

It will be important for example to define from the outset whose security is currently ensured and whose security should be sought and guaranteed before assessing the demand side and the offer side for reform.

Patterns of change - whether protest from below by sectors of society or initiated from above by the ruling establishment – inevitably expose the security sector. In the first model, it draws the security sector agencies into direct contact/confrontation with society. In the second, new rules challenge the mode of operation and established prerogatives of the security sector representatives.

While the project will draw on experiences in other regions to develop good understanding of patterns and processes of reform, it sees the temptation to depoliticize the process as a major risk to be avoided. Attempts to foster security sector reform by aid agencies through a depoliticized approach might receive the support and willingness to cooperate on the part of certain governments, but it runs the risk of becoming an exercise in administrative and technical reforms and lead to formal modernization of the sector. One of the important objectives of the comparative dimension with other regions will be to inform this research on the *political context* in which reform of the security sector was carried out in other countries and to define the appropriate approaches in different contexts to tackle security sector reform: the political considerations that lie behind the distribution of power between the different branches of the security sector and therefore the political implications of reform, and the likelihood that the regime will have the political will to undertake reforms. A rights-based approach that stems from efforts to change public policies towards rule of law, and the involvement of human rights groups should also help us avoid the risk of a formal technical approach.

ARI's approach is built on the assumption that if the process of reforms is to be a comprehensive one, involving social, political and economic aspects, systems and resources, a specific effort should necessarily be devoted to assessing the security domain. The consortium conducts several thematic studies every year as part of its regular activities. Among those

themes, some are considered as priorities that ARI chooses to focus on through more in-depth research conducted over a longer period of time. Security sector reform is one of those.

ARI is well equipped in terms of both research capacity, experience in networking policies beyond the Arab region, access to available local sources as well as adequate connections among political and military decision-making circles, to carry out such a project. Any SSR programme in the Arab region requires a set of basic pre-requisites that ARI has the means to fulfil, namely: involving members or former members of security institutions, collecting the needed information and defining the most appropriate approach in order to develop a SSR research area in the region. The prime common asset of ARI member-institutes as well as the scholars associated with its activities is in-house expertise based on an extensive fieldwork experience. In addition, each of these key Arab policy-research institutes are involved in international networking and work collaboratively with European and American think-tanks as well as NGOs (such as Human Rights organizations), United Nations and European Union specialized agencies involved in SSR issues worldwide. In line with ARI's action-oriented approach, methodologies and 'spirit', this three-year SSR programme aims at achieving the objectives defined below.

1.1 Understanding the geopolitics and political economy of the security sector in the Arab region: a research agenda

While ARI does not subscribe to the idea of Arab 'exceptionalism', the approach will need to integrate an important set of factors that constitute the specificity of Arab countries, namely:

- The security sector constitutes the backbone of the Arab political systems. Any discussion on reforming this sector exposes their inner vulnerability as well as their self-defence mechanisms. The interaction between the civilian and the military spheres shows that the military, whether professionalized or de-politicized, still retain a strong control over the political process and remain the ultimate protector of the regime. Yet security agencies have seen their role and numbers grow tremendously over the last decade, enhancing an increasingly complex triangular relationship between the political, military and security establishments.

- The Arab region is the epicentre of the current declared "war on terror";

- The history of its relations with outside powers, the security priorities and military doctrines of major Arab countries affect their readiness to conduct reform of the security sector in cooperation with outside powers. Contrary to Eastern Europe, few if any society in the region aspires to join NATO and no government, even if it sees advantages in doing so, would consider it politically feasible. Hence when cooperation exists, it is discreet or secretive and increases opacity.

- Reforming the security sector in a context of rising threats of terror on one side, and of rising strength of the Islamist movements on the other, is having important consequences that are still unfolding: increase in the role of the military, redefinition of security tasks and responsibilities, concentration of intelligence information, renewed equipments and increased budgets, creation of security zones made inaccessible to citizens (in Morocco, Saudi Arabia and Egypt). How to address SSR when the questions are about the efficiency of an anti-terror policy and the infiltration of the security sector with Islamists?

On the other hand however, the flaws in governance of the security sector, the fact that it is increasingly involved in illegal and criminal trafficking (drugs, immigration) expands rather than it reduces areas of insecurity in the social, political and economic spheres (Morocco, Algeria, Syria, Lebanon). These and other developments with their perverse effects reflect the complexity of the subject.

- Many Arab countries have powerful/mighty states that cannot be described or approached as failed states. Algeria and Iraq (before the overthrow of the Baathist regime), are two examples of regimes that relied on the security sector to hold the country together when other foundations of institutional and societal cohesion were destroyed. The pattern of Algeria's recovery from war indicates however that the regime still had the capacity, after more than a decade of all out war, to reassert its control on the political and security system and re-invent itself through an internal process that mobilized national means and did not resort to outside assistance:
- If the security environment is not conducive to improving transparency and democratic accountability of the security sector, the key point is to assess the extent to which an internal process is likely to promote or increase the role of civilian oversight bodies;
- A survey of the *political economy of the security sector* will inform us on the way it relates to the overall national context. The security sector often has its own schools, colleges, training institutions and higher education institutions as well as hospitals, social services that give it a high degree of autonomy and contribute to cultivating a special culture of security. What are the effects of this autonomy, should it be challenged in order to bring the security sector closer to society?
- Many Arab countries are rich. *Oil countries of the Gulf* are not dependent on development aid and have not established with donor countries the kind of relationships that exist for many developing countries. An approach that seeks to address SSR as part of a broader development agenda is not relevant in those cases. However these states depend heavily on military and security guarantees from outside partners and their security sectors are largely structured to ensure close cooperation with them. How does this relationship play out in attempts at reforming the security sector?

The first and major step of the project is to conduct an in-depth study of security apparatuses in each country, to investigate their social composition, political economy, political and ideological leanings as well as career incentives. Some complex issues need to be addressed: should the security sector agencies and their representatives be approached as a monolith with one single attitude towards reforms? How does the sector situate itself within and relate to the rest of society? What are the views of members of the security sector on ideological and political issues and their understanding of national interests? What is their understanding of security and whose security do they see themselves as serving? Do they approve dealing with governments 'that would do what the West wants them to do'? Are they full partners in the decision-making process, or is the security sector (or some key agencies) the actual decision-maker and the ultimate guardian of the regime's survival? What is the role of ex-military/security officers in public life? Is there a shift over time with aging leaders and/or with the change of leadership and regime?

The approach needs to be incremental and empirical. ARI will conduct a series of in-depth interviews with some approachable former military and security officers in some cases, and will organize closed meetings with a small number of key actors with a view to gathering accurate information.

1.2 Fostering public debate

Opening up the debate to the public on a still taboo but essential area of the political reforms processes in the Arab World will be facilitated by the regional scope of the project and ARI's image as a pan-Arab organization. Fostering debate will be done through:

- The participation of media representatives in the workshops and conference;

- The writing of informative and analytical pieces by investigative journalists. This will be prepared through prior agreement with editors in chief of independent newspapers;
- The participation of representatives from civil society organizations, members of special commissions such as the Equity and Reconciliation commission in Morocco, groups working on memory and reconciliation in Lebanon and Algeria, human rights organizations in Egypt, Tunisia, Syria and advocacy groups promoting rule of law, transparency, ;
- Public lectures by scholars and, when possible, by representatives of the security sector in universities, NGOs and think tanks. Latin American and other non-Arab representatives of the security sector (former or current practitioners) participating in a workshop in an Arab country will be invited to speak in open lectures about the case of their country and their own experience. Speakers from one Arab country will be asked to speak in another Arab country.
- Public opinion surveys conducted by ARI will include systematic questions on perceptions of the security sector and its evolution

1.3 Engage in dialogues and formulate recommendations

ARI is aware that reform of the security sector is not like any other area under discussion in the reform process. Building a community of practice is one way of establishing relations of trust with accessible officials or former officials and of giving legitimacy to the research conducted.

All member institutes within ARI have special access and sometimes a working relationship with the security establishment within their country. The project will make use of these connections to:

- bring together scholars with former or current security and civilian officials to discuss some of the findings of the research and initiate a dialogue.
- the project's scholars will request meetings with members of the security sector for off-the-record exchanges
- scholars will propose to hold briefing sessions within the premises of security and military agencies which sometimes call on them for expertise on different subjects.
- Brief notes from workshops and meetings will be drafted and sent to the security sector agencies with a focus on policy recommendations discussed in the meetings

The project will explore the question of whether there is a useful role for outside partners to play. Can this role be more than technical training and assistance? Can it contribute to the political process? Which domestic players should they seek to involve, through which processes and strategies, at what point in time of the reform process, in what framework (bilateral or multilateral donors/aid agencies), directly with a government or involving other social actors? Is the approach to SSR most effective on a country by country basis? Can regional frameworks/organizations (Arab League, Gulf Cooperation Council, Maghreb Union) provide appropriate forums?

The project will also look at how international organizations can coordinate and enhance the coherence of their policies of aid and promotion of good governance in Arab countries. For example, the World Bank, UNDP and national aid agencies are seeking to promote practices that NATO and other security cooperation frameworks might well be weakening through enhancement of opposite measures. The project will suggest ways for outside partners to contribute usefully to the process of SSR.

1.4 Promoting exchanges and dialogue with other regions

The research project needs to draw lessons from others developing countries experiences and to establish partnerships with key Latin American and African research institutes well versed in SSR field research with a view to building an interactive network on local, regional and international levels. (see annex 4)

1.5 Streamlining SSR in all ARI's areas of work on reform using different entry points to address the security sector and draw the link between security and society: when conducting research on reform of public institutions, on constitutional reform, on human rights guarantees, conditions in prisons, on budget transparency, etc. ARI will integrate the security sector as one public institution among others in need of reform.

2- ACTIVITIES UNDER THE PLANNING PHASE

An eight-month planning phase allowed ARI to conduct consultations among its members, brainstorming and networking efforts.

- **A brainstorming meeting** hosted by the Center for Strategic Studies in Jordan on “How to promote security sector reform processes in the Arab countries” was held in Amman on 12-13 June, 2006, with the participation of a small group of Arab and international academics and experts. The purpose of this brainstorming meeting was to set the basis for the present project.

The meeting’s main objectives included fostering an informed internal discussion on SSR, identifying the challenges and promoting the idea that Arab societies have a right to debate and question the role and functioning of their security sector; while reasserting that this debate should be rooted within the region and reflect local concerns.

The discussion focused on the following topics: The evolving civil/military relations and their impact on SSR; The consequences of SSR on the stability of state institutions and national cohesion; How to foster a constructive debate on governance of the security sector; Civilian and institutional oversight on the security sector; The external factor in security sector reform processes; What can be learnt from other countries and regions. The wrap-up session was devoted to drawing the main conclusions of the workshop as to the selection of themes, case studies and the setting-up of a working group for the following phase of the project.

The workshop contributed to formulating a concrete research agenda including a range of thematic sub-issues and relevant case-studies. A tentative list of countries to be covered was suggested and subsequently refined (see section 4.2 below). As SSR research has just started to develop in the Arab world and the Middle-East at large, methodologies and instruments were discussed at length with the conclusion that empirical and incremental approaches should prevail.

- **Consultations within ARI** identified existing expertise and activities within the centers in view of building on these capacities for the project. ARI member institutes will each designate a point person to coordinate a network of experts and practitioners in their respective countries.

- **Building up a network** of research institutes, international organizations, institutions in other countries of the South and advocacy groups involved in SSR studies.

- **Creation of a working group.** A number of participants in the brainstorming meeting in Jordan will form the nucleus of the working group which will be expanded for the overall project.

- **Outcomes** 1/ Insertion of a set of specific questions on the security sector in the public opinion polls conducted by ARI in six countries (Morocco, Jordan, Egypt, Lebanon, Saudi Arabia, Kuwait) coordinated by the Centre for Strategic Studies in Jordan. The surveys are underway. The findings will be available in March 2007. 2/ a thematic study as part of ARI’s thematic studies series whose purpose is to define a conceptual framework for a critical assessment of SSR in the Arab region. 3/ A select bibliography

3- CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK FOR THE RESEARCH

In the course of the planning phase, key-issues have emerged as the most relevant to be addressed. These themes are to be studied either as transversal issues or as case-studies *per se*. In either case, the comparative approach whether intra regional or with other regions would be central to the project.

A preliminary list of countries was selected in order to represent the diversity of the political systems, the specific experiences in which the security sector was involved or exposed, and the state of advancement of the debate in general. **Algeria and Iraq** will provide a narrative on the collapse or protracted crisis of the security sector through the wealth of information available on both countries. An “autopsy” of Iraq’s security sector under Saddam Hussein, available since the system was dismantled, will provide critical information to understand the precise mode of operation of a security sector under an authoritarian regime. In Algeria, the opacity of the security sector was broken but the sector was restructured and survived. These case studies will be conducted early on in the project as historic narratives for the empirical information they will generate, to benefit the thematic and comparative analysis and studies. They will also serve to assess the impact of these two models - traumatic in many respects – on perceptions within other Arab societies and among reform activists of the risks involved in tackling security sector reform and the lessons learnt or to be learnt. Countries covered will be **Egypt, Jordan, Lebanon, Morocco, Palestine and Saudi Arabia**.

3.1 SSR working definition

Within the ARI programme, the SSR working definition includes: intelligence agencies, military intelligence, police forces, the army in its domestic role, praetorian guards (republican, royal or presidential) by far the most loyal and therefore reliable agencies that guarantee the security of the political system. The financing of these agencies, the way in which they interact, their hierarchy chain, who they report to, are vital sources of information on the internal mechanisms of the security sector in each country and a necessary starting point for each case study. In Egypt for example, the security agencies indicate the multi-level structure of the security sector. In Jordan, the intelligence services are largely perceived as stronger than the armed forces. Jordanian security forces see themselves as the guardians of national interests. In Saudi Arabia, a preliminary organizational map of the security sector (prepared during the planning phase) shows the importance of starting to identify who the security sector agencies and representatives are.

3.2 Sequence and timing of security sector reform processes

This section of the research is both analytical and prescriptive. It will seek: a) to analyse the specificity of civil/military/security relations in the Arab region through an in-depth assessment of each state’s national cohesion and institutional stability; b) to carefully define the different sequences and stages of SSR processes.

Given the interaction between the political and the military/security spheres, a distinction needs to be made between the Arab countries where political and military authorities can be separated and where the security sector is the guardian of the state’s interest on one hand (Egypt, Morocco), and countries where the security sector’s main function is to protect the regime or the leaders’ interests on the other hand (Syria, Saudi Arabia, Algeria). Algeria is

one of the most significant examples of a political and military/security systems symbiosis. Shaped by the 1957-1962 Independence war, the symbiosis was reinforced by the 1991 events and the ensuing years of civil war during which the army played a decisive role in protecting and securing the regime's survival. Any attempt to reform the Algerian security sector to introduce the rule of law, transparency and accountability, will inevitably lead to an overall re-assessment of the very political structures of the state. Another major obstacle to SSR in some Arab countries is when the regime relies heavily on the security sector to promote stable social and political order and to maintain the structures of the nation-state. These regimes combine a powerful security apparatus with the potential for social decomposition typical of failed states. At different levels, Sudan, Iraq, and to a lesser extent Syria are the most vulnerable Arab states in terms of risks of national and territorial fragmentation, a scenario which could ultimately lead to the disintegration and the privatization of the security sector.

The second part of this study will attempt through a prescriptive approach to define the **sequence of SSR processes** in the Arab region and to determine which comes first: political change or military/security reforms? The reform process that seems to be the common norm in other parts of the world reflects the same sequence: first a decisive political reform process (governance, transparency, free elections); second, reform of the security sector engineered by accountable political authorities in order to gradually impose civilian oversight over security sector agencies. However, the process of reforms might happen simultaneously on all fronts or through phases in a chaotic manner in some countries, as in some other regions affected by conflict such as South Africa which had undergone an empirical experience of reforms.

In the Arab region, security sector reform is occurring in Palestine, Lebanon, Iraq but the circumstances are very special in each case. All have in common a powerful outside - negative - factor. The question that arises becomes: can SSR happen without a crisis to trigger it, as a gradual opening of the political system leading to breaking the shell around the security sector? Morocco seems to be the only nascent experience for the moment. It offers a promising example of possible approaches to SSR as an advanced step in a gradual reform process. The Equity and Reconciliation Commission is an example in which civil society is involved (human rights groups, lawyers, the media) and has led to questioning the regime's practices; another is trials for human rights violations as they lead to unveiling not only responsibilities but also the operating mode of the various agencies, leading in Morocco to introducing a code of ethics for the army and the security agencies.

3.3 Public perceptions of the security sector: distrust and estrangement

This topic constitutes a benefit to ARI/SSR research in the Arab region. For a number of reasons, ranging from the dramatic implications of the 9/11 attacks and the ensuing 'war on terror', to the growing domestic insecurity concerns, public perceptions are bound to become more important in the Arab world. For the first time, there is public challenging of security regimes in certain countries. This is mainly due to different and often interrelated types of crises erupting simultaneously: crisis of state, civil strife, crisis of identity, crisis of legitimacy and redefinition of state-citizens relations, crisis of relations with non-Arab countries. So far, there is no massive uprising, no revolt against security regimes --compared to the revolutionary situation in 1979 Iran-- but there are situations of a widespread popular criticism of the security sector: In Lebanon where the people took to the street (the March 14, 2006 demonstration) openly criticizing the Syrian/Lebanese intelligence apparatus; In Palestine where mass demonstrations were more than often directed against the corruption that pervades the security agencies. Arab societies have always been ambivalent towards the military and the security agencies as a whole but the feelings of distrust and estrangement

have never been as strong. The ‘war on terror’ --the epicentre of which is the Middle-East region-- contributed to reviving profound feelings of insecurity at all levels: individual, community, national, regional and global. Arab citizens are at a loss on whether they are the target, the victim or the beneficiaries of this war. At this level, there is a growing awareness that security alone does not bring stability just as wealth cannot bring security and that the lack of political freedom, human rights and state accountability is leading to the rise of extremism or fragmentation of the societies.

In this context, reform of the security sector involving an overall reassessment of the entire security apparatus is not likely to be initiated by Arab societies as long as the nature and objectives of this process are not well understood. Who defines the concept of national security, who formulates national strategy, who identifies the threats are questions that the project will need to answer.

In Morocco, Egypt, Jordan for example, addressing the topic of democratic control over the sector faces a strange fact on the ground, namely that the political players seem to be deliberately avoiding to make the security sector a priority of their reform agenda, focusing instead on constitutional reforms, reform of the state or human rights. This needs to be fully understood through surveying the views of reform activists on the reasons for it and their approach to reform of the security sector.

The annual public opinion surveys conducted in six countries and coordinated by the Centre for Strategic Studies include a specific and targeted set of questions on public perceptions of the security sector.

3.4 Private interests, privatization or fragmentation of the security sector

Privatization seems to be one of the developing trends today, which implies that the security sector reform cannot be solely a state-controlled process in the Arab region. The growing feelings of insecurity -as described above- have not created so far the local impetus and incentives needed for it. On the contrary, in many countries, regimes and societies alike seem to increasingly rely on security-provider substitutes to state institutions and agencies considered as inefficient, weak or unreliable. Conversely, in others, the once powerful state security apparatus, and especially the military, are mainly concerned with promoting their private interests. This process of “security privatization” follows three specific patterns all of which are potential obstacles to security sector reforms.

a) *The privatization of the security sector through financial means.* This is the case of the wealthy Gulf Arab countries (Saudi Arabia, United Arab Emirates) where the regime’s sense of vulnerability in terms of internal and external threats runs deep. It largely explains the leaders’ reluctance to build strong armies and their use of financial power as a way both to control the security agencies and to ensure their unconditional loyalty (Recruiting army mercenaries, hiring private security agencies, funding paramilitary Islamic activist groups etc.) In that perspective, the privatization of the security sector is a state-engineered self defence strategy.

b) *Sub-national forces and fragmentation of the security sector.* In other Arab countries (Lebanon, Sudan, Yemen), the security sector is privatized because it is linked with sub-national groups’ dynamics. In the context of growing instability, people have come to rely on tribes, militias, families, local neighbourhood and informal gangs to ensure physical as well as social and economic security as a substitute to central authority. The case of Hizballah in Lebanon may be considered as an exception, given the fragility of the country’s state and

security institutions and the vulnerability of its multi-sectarian national fabric to external pressures. Yet Hezbollah's growing audience that goes beyond the Shi'a community has much more to do with its role as a 'security needs provider' in the broader sense through an extensive network of social services, than to its regional prestige as a resistance movement against Israeli occupation. Although an under-researched country, Yemen is the most telling example of the process of security 'tribalisation' in Arab societies. Yemen and Lebanon share this in common that the State's inner weakness, lacking a strong coercive security sector plays the role of a mediator between –or negotiating partner with- tribes or sectarian groups. The Sudanese case is different in the sense that the rebellion in the south and the Darfur conflict reflect the failure of the Northern central power at achieving nation-building process through the use of military force.

c) Security sector and private interests. In Egypt, Algeria, Morocco and Tunisia where the army remains the backbone of the regime, its involvement in industrial and commercial activities came as a kind of compensation for its withdrawal or disengagement from the political process. As a result, the de-politicisation and the resulting professionalism of the military have led to the overgrowth of a private economic sector from within the state-servant security sector. The most telling example is Egypt where the Army controls a large industrial and contracting sector and where the promotion of its own private interests has led some intelligence agencies to interfere in deals with foreign investors. In Morocco, a security market has developed where different private actors and security agents conclude deals, sometimes with encouragement from the State itself.

The project working group will decide how best to address this topics, as a transversal aspect of the research or to be addressed as a theme drawing on specific and relevant case studies.

3.5 Rule of law, judiciary institutions and security sector accountability

The role of the judiciary being critical in delimitating boundaries and setting rules for the security sector, this project will closely look at constitutions and basic laws and more especially as to the definition and justification of **emergency laws**. It will also map existing laws regarding security sector practices and claims formulated by human rights groups including women's groups, concerning misbehaviours by security agents.

In all Arab countries, the lack of transparency and accountability of the security sector is primarily due to the constitutional and institutional ambiguities with regard to the distribution of power between the executive, legislative and judicial branches. Ideally, security services should be held accountable according to an existing legal framework with a capacity of enforcement.

The regulation of SSR is also crucial in justice and penal systems. Individual security cannot be based on the security forces alone. It should be regulated through a civilian oversight system that includes parliaments, ministries of justice and finance, political parties, civil societies.

In the Palestinian case, the institutional and constitutional flaws partly explain the lack of good governance and rule of law ever since the establishment of the Palestinian Authority (PA), and the structural imbalance between an all-powerful executive branch which has a monopoly over the security sector and the legislative and judiciary ones. A first study conducted on political corruption in Palestine concluded that the security apparatuses were on top of the list. The specificity of the Palestinian experience with regard to civilian oversight is that the security sector grew there in a context of national resistance followed by a project of nation-building; its members were militants and activists. In sum, the Palestinian experience shows the need for a balanced redistribution of power in controlling the security sector among

the three branches of government and for engaging the civil society in order to reduce abusive penetration of the security sector in every realm of life. The danger remains that the Palestinian security sector, which is not yet separated from factional militias, gets caught in a civil strife.

The contribution of local and international Human Rights organizations and advocacy groups will be essential in this specific research area.

3.6 Gender aspects in promoting SSR in the Arab region.

The cultures of authoritarianism and chauvinism are closely intertwined. They reflect a common feature of most security sectors in Arab countries. Hence, attempts at reforming the security sector to promote a democratic culture and a new understanding of security requires a deliberate strategy to engender the process from the start.

So far, very few studies, if any, addressed the issue of the linkages between gender and SSR in spite of its numerous entry points. This project will rely partly on the comparative aspect with other regions, and on engaging Arab women's groups from civil society, to develop a gender-sensitive agenda of reform. It will address questions such as:

- women's access to criminal justice systems, abuses against women in prison, honour crimes, rape, and the targeting of women by security sector forces for destabilizing opposition movements (as happened in Egypt more than once over the last two years)
- Moral rules and practices and how they are used by the security agencies, resulting in discrimination against women. This is a particularly important area given the rising practice of citing religion and moral integrity of society as a pretext to suppress citizen's freedoms and violate privacy, with women invariably paying a heavier price.
- The role of women as professionals in police and security services: while they are present in the security agencies of some countries (Jordan, Syria, Libya), these remain exceptions and are not at a level that opens the prospect of engendering the security culture.

The latest Arab Human Development Report on women in the Arab world is contributing to opening public debate on discrimination against women. **This project will coordinate with the authors of the report and will build on the momentum that media coverage is providing to women's issues to bring the subject of women and the security sector to the forefront.**

The Working Group will rely on collaboration with human rights and women's rights groups for data collection and for formulating a few media messages to raise awareness in society on these practices.

3.7 Conflicts, security risks and SSR

This theme epitomizes the link between the democratic reform agenda and the security agenda and subsequently, the challenges facing the implementation of SSR in Arab countries. The culture of 'hard-security' (power-politics rules) is still dominant in the Arab Middle-East -and beyond when it comes to regional conflicts (Israel, Iran and to a lesser extent Turkey) - as opposed to a security sector serving citizens and society's needs.

Issues related to domestic stability are no less challenging since internal and external threats are closely intertwined, as exemplified since the late seventies by the rise of Islamist opposition movements, including violent groups that resort to terror or are affiliated with trans-national terrorist groups.

In the present context, intensifying conflicts and growing security risks contribute to maintaining the opacity and the lack of accountability of the security sector.

The analysis of relevant countries in that perspective will largely draw on surveys of elites to assess security perceptions, and on monitoring domestic debates to understand the evolving notion of security (or lack thereof) within society and state institutions, and how this affects the readiness to engage in SSR processes.

3.8 Contribution of outside parties to security sector reform processes

If and how outside partners can contribute to promoting security sector reform processes depends on several factors:

- Whose security is sought? The region is experiencing tensions in its relations with outside parties over security cooperation between on the one hand responding to requirements that are designed to enhance local capacities to confront hard security threats (terrorism, illegal migrations, money laundering) and on the other hand, measures designed to promote democratic rules and practices within the security sector.

- Distrust of foreign parties reaches its highest level in the area of security sector either because the intervening power is seen to promote its own interests or because of the foreign power's alliance with and support for the authoritarian regime against society.

Yet, while the most likely scenario for all Arab countries is one of decisive domestic impulse, external contribution is essential in sustaining the process. How can this external contribution be designed in order to increase the efficiency of domestically engineered SSR?.

This section will look at adequate approaches, appropriate international forums and mechanisms, and assistance packages that can serve as a basis for engaging in a constructive dialogue over SSR. This theme will benefit from the experiences in Latin America where external support contributed in very different ways to promoting SSR.

4- NETWORK and METHODOLOGY: Partnerships, organization and outputs

4.1 Network and Partnerships

ARI members

The research will draw primarily on the expertise and access of ARI's Arab member-institutes currently conducting SSR projects at country level: The Lebanese Centre for Policy Studies (Lebanon); The Centre for Strategic Studies (Jordan); le Centre d'études et de recherches en Sciences Sociales (Morocco); Al Ahram Centre for Political and Strategic Studies (Egypt); The Palestinian Centre for Policy and Survey Research (Palestine) and the King Faisal Centre for Islamic Research (Saudi Arabia).

They will conduct public opinion and elite surveys in their country; they will identify practitioners/ scholars involved in the security sector and identify individuals and draw on a broad network of civil society groups at the national level to engage them in the project. Saudi Arabia is a case in point. The 'King Faisal Centre for Research and Islamic Studies' exemplifies the case of politically constrained Arab think-tanks whose contribution in terms of local networking is invaluable.

ARI will rely on its European and American partner institutes for international networking and outreach to western and international organizations. The Hellenic Foundation for European and Foreign Policy (ELIAMEP) and FRIDE in Spain are two key-partner institutes with whom ARI has already engaged in different activities with regard to the SSR programme.

Civil Society Organizations

The working group (described below) will collaborate with Human Rights groups, women groups, members of the judiciary, advocacy organizations, transparency/public integrity outfits from the region, as well as with the media to develop a dialogue between civil and military/security representatives.

Policy-makers, practitioners and other stakeholders

ARI will use its extensive network of relations to bring in government officials, Arab parliamentarians, members of political parties and members (or former members) of the security establishments into the activities, in addition to legal experts and leading scholars within the working group. These meetings will allow us to establish regular interaction between them.

- Representatives of organizations and networks involved in SSR studies (DCAF, UNDP, NSI, INTERPEACE, etc.).

- Collaboration with think-tanks in Latin American and African countries will be key for building knowledge and a convenient entry point to start addressing the topic in the Middle East. This will allow us to draw on the existing body of research on security sector reform in other regions. In Santiago de Chile, Inter-Societas will serve as the institutional partner for collaboration with Latin America. ARI has also initiated contacts with the North South Institute in Canada and the African Security Dialogue and Research in Ghana.

- The involvement of members of the security sector from other developing regions in dialogues with their counterparts in the Arab countries will be established to allow a fruitful exchange and serve as a learning exercise.

- ARI has agreed to join the *Global Security consortium* as the institutional partner for the Arab world. The network is currently coordinated jointly by IDS in Britain and the Centre for Ethnic Studies in Sri Lanka.

4.2 Taskforce and Working Group (WG)

A small **taskforce** of scholars from the five ARI member institutes (mentioned above) and the director of ARI will be responsible for the coordination of the overall activities. The taskforce will commission papers, identify relevant people and institutions in their countries as participants or contributors to the project papers, and ensure follow-up of events and the timetable.

ARI is keen to combine two tasks: to contribute to the debate while conducting the project through short-term output and media outreach on one hand, and to produce longer term research papers that will serve as a reference on security sector transformation in the Middle East.

Thus papers will be entrusted to senior scholars who will be asked to write two versions of their papers: one to be published as a policy paper in the course of the project, and a longer version with full references for the edited book.

A working group¹ (WG) composed mainly of contributors to the research will develop a critical assessment of benchmarks and approaches based on a combination of empirical and scholarly criteria. The WG will discuss drafts and other outputs and serve as an advisory group for the project. The working group will meet once a year.

a) Investigative phase Researchers from the WG will collect as much information as possible on security apparatuses in each country. ARI intends to invest substantial effort in empirical research on how Arab security systems actually function.

b) Dialogues among SSR academics and practitioners: the Working Group will engage civil society groups (mentioned above), government officials and members of political parties and media representatives in civil-military/security dialogues. A delegation of members of ARI from the Working Group will request meetings with officials and practitioners to present the outcomes and recommendations from the research and the discussions.

The project will rely on a combination of closed and open activities to optimize the gathering of information. Seminars open to scholars, civil society groups, the media and an interested public will be held on a periodical basis. Closed, off-the-record meetings with no direct publishable output will also be necessary. In the case of Algeria, Morocco, Lebanon and Palestine, former government officials who were involved in the reform program will provide off the record testimonies in closed meetings. Division of labour and collaboration with local advocacy groups might be necessary to establish relations and build trust among representatives of the security sector.

c) Dialogue with security sector officers from other regions A seminars will be held in the region between representatives of military and security agencies from the Middle East with their counterparts from other regions that experienced SSR (Latin America, Africa and

¹ See Annex 3

possibly Turkey). These will be organized with the help of our institutional partner in Santiago de Chile and with scholars from Latin American countries already involved with ARI in collaborative work on other areas of reform, as well as the African centres (see annex 4).

d) A delegation of security sector representatives and experts from Latin America to visit countries of the region It was initially thought that a group from the Arab world would travel on a learning trip to Latin American countries. However, we have now decided that bringing Latin American experts and practitioners to the region would have greater impact as it will allow for contacts with a broader community in the region, both security sector representatives and civil society groups. Delegates from Argentina, Chile, Guatemala, Brazil will be invited. The trip will be organized in partnership with Dr Augusto Varas, director of Inter-Societas and an expert on the security sector in Latin America.

e) Public education and raising awareness on security sector related issues through articles in the media, the website, lectures in universities. The taskforce will explore the possibility of developing post-graduate teaching and research programs in Arab universities, possibly through collaboration with foreign universities that have developed such programs, with a view to making the security sector a legitimate field of research and knowledge. This will contribute to ‘reverse embedding’ the sector from allegiance and protection of regimes to embedding the security sector in civil society. ARI will organize these public events bringing experts from one Arab country to another.

ARI will select a number of media outlets to publish articles that will contribute to lifting gradually the taboo on the subject and to promoting awareness of security issues at the public level in order to build the ground for public debate beyond elites, create a constituency for SSR, and achieve a better understanding of the poor and marginalized communities’ needs in the area of security.

4.3 Outputs and publications

In line with ARI’s mission of producing accurate and timely analysis to foster an informed debate, the outputs from this project will be in the form of policy papers published periodically (every four months on average) and disseminated widely.

- A first general paper has already been commissioned under the planning phase to frame the SSR issues as they are posed in the Arab world (authored by Yezid Sayigh).

A series of **eight** country papers and **four** thematic papers will be produced to ensure timely dissemination of the findings.

a) Country Studies: Iraq, Algeria, Egypt, Morocco, Saudi Arabia, Lebanon, Jordan, Palestine

b) Thematic Papers. Provisional titles are:

- 1 - Timing, Sequencing and Foreseeable Implications: SSR within the larger transition process and in contexts of conflict and insecurity
- 2 - Public perceptions of the Security Sector: Distrust, Estrangement, Participation (with a special section on the gender dimension and women’s perceptions)
- 3 - Privatization, Fragmentation and Private Interests
- 4 - Rule of Law and Accountability of the Security Sector

c) A conference report with policy recommendations will be produced within six weeks after the final conference of 2010. It will include a section on the role of outside actors and potential contribution to SSR in the region (foreign governments, development agencies, etc.)

d) Electronic output

- A special section on ARI's *website* will be created featuring a selection of relevant studies from the Middle East and other regions.
- The website section will monitor activities related to the security sector in the Arab countries and will be designed to serve as a *resource* (establishing trends, statistical indicators, constitutional provisions and other relevant legislative texts in the Arab region and monitoring reform-makers in other areas). An interactive "chat line" will be established in the second year.

e) Dissemination in the media

Given ARI's mission of fostering public debate and engaging policy-makers and various groups within society, the effort will be focused on media outreach in the Arab region and outside. A media expert will be commissioned to produce short versions of the research papers in the form of press articles and will conclude an agreement with newspapers for their simultaneous publication in several Arab countries.

After the final conference and the final report, ARI will arrange with one of the major satellite television networks to organize a debate around the findings of the project.

f) An edited scholarly book will be published in Arabic and English as the culminating output of the research.

ELIAMEP in Greece will be responsible for the English version

LCPS in Lebanon will be responsible for the Arabic version

The exact content of the book will be decided one year into the project. It is likely to include

- A historic chapter on practices of the security sector in recent history based on archival research and published memoirs
- One chapter on lessons learnt from Algeria and Iraq
- Four country studies: Egypt, Morocco, Lebanon, Palestine
- Four thematic studies in full version

4.4 Foreseeable risks and ethical considerations

Due to the high sensitivity of the topic, the taskforce will ensure close monitoring and guidance for all field researchers to agree on the appropriate approach and attitude.

This issue was discussed at length during the preparatory phase. To minimize those risks, it was agreed that the researchers should adopt an attitude of self-confidence, openness about the nature of the project, the sources used and the participants, and solid preliminary information gathering on the subjects before approaching officials or going public. Enlisting members or former members of the security sector will facilitate access to information and relations of trust. Discretion, attitudes of composure will be necessary to convey a sense of responsible approach to the subject. Subjects that might arouse suspicion will not be discussed in the early phases. For example, the issue of outside players will be kept for discussion in the final conference and published in the final report.

4.5 Evaluation

Outside Evaluation

ARI usually submits its publications to several experts to ensure quality control of its publications. For this project, in addition to submitting the output to regional experts for quality control, a consultant specialized in SSR in other regions of the world will be hired to conduct an evaluation of the overall project and activities. The consultant will be invited to attend a meeting of the Working Group.

Self-evaluation

ARI will measure the impact of the project through

- Its ability to engage other civil society institutions in its activities;
- Its ability to draw members or former members of the security sector into its discussions
- the number of articles in the Arab media;
- a growing number of Arab researchers investigating and writing on the security sector;

The taskforce will present a report to all ARI members at each annual plenary meeting in 2008, 2009 and 2010 for discussion and suggestions.

TIMETABLE (October 2007- October 2010)

<i>October 2007</i>	*Publication of the first thematic study commissioned in the planning phase * Creation of the website section
<i>November 2007</i>	* First meeting of the taskforce * Commissioning of country studies
<i>January 2008</i>	* First meeting of the Working group
<i>January/ July 2008</i>	* Research phase
<i>September 08</i>	* 2 nd meeting of the WG to discuss first draft of the country papers, questionnaire for elite surveys and commissioning of thematic studies
<i>Sept 08/Jan 09</i>	* Two Elite surveys to be conducted
<i>March 2009</i>	* 3 rd meeting of the WG to discuss revised papers and new research papers
<i>March 09/October 09</i>	* Two sessions of civil/military/security dialogues
<i>December 09</i>	* Taskforce Meeting
<i>May 2010</i>	* International conference
<i>July 2010</i>	* Conference report
<i>September/ October 2010</i>	* Preparation of the edited book * Evaluation

Publication of the outputs will be scheduled as follows:

- 2 in the first year
- 5 in the second year (mainly country studies)
- 5 in the third year (country studies and thematic studies)
- Edited book will be handed in to publisher four months after the end of the project

ANNEXES

Annex 1:

About ARI

The Arab Reform Initiative is a network of independent Arab research and policy institutes, with partners from the United States and Europe. Its goal is to mobilize the Arab research capacity to advance knowledge and develop a program for democratic reform in the Arab World which is realistic and home grown. The Initiative also aims to produce policy recommendations that can help promote reform in the region.

The broad consensus on the need for reform of Arab socio-economic and political systems has created a momentum that can be seen as a progress in and of itself. However, the content and the modalities of this reform process have yet to be defined: how to start? Which forces to mobilize? What obstacles are to be overcome? How to prevent various forces - governmental, opposition or outside parties - from instrumentalizing it to serve narrow or short-term interests? How to avoid mistakes? How these and other challenges will be met is largely a function of who produces the knowledge and formulates the issues, both conceptually and practically.

The initiative is based on three main principles:

- 1- The Arab world needs to develop its own conception of reform, based on its present realities and rooted in its history. While there are basic universal criteria that apply to a process of democratic reform in any given society, the initiative seeks to generate knowledge by those who are the prime targets of reform.
- 2- Reform is a comprehensive process which can only succeed if the interaction between the political, economic, societal and cultural spheres is fully recognized. In the quest to build free, just and democratic societies, the initiative privileges issues of democratization and good governance, socio-economic and cultural transformations, and social justice.
- 3- The network's conception of reform fully recognizes that Arab countries present very diverse situations and that this diversity is likely to become more salient as societies engage in a path of liberalization. Thanks to its composition, with member institutes and scholars from all countries of the region, the initiative is well positioned to produce analyses and recommend diverse solutions relevant to the specificities of each society.

The role of each member institute within its own national context is to foster an informed debate on reform inclusive of a wide range of representatives from various sectors of society and government. Policy options produced by the Arab Reform Initiative will be addressed to political leaders, elites and civil society groups in the Arab world with a view to generate knowledge and deepen the ongoing debate in the region. The Initiative also aims to promote a dialogue between policy institutes in the Arab world, the United States and Europe with a

view to forge a shared vision which can advance the understanding of western different groups on issues of reform in the Arab world.

Finally, the Arab Reform Initiative aims to raise awareness in the Arab world about successful transitions to democracy in other parts of the world, and of the mechanisms and compromises which made such successful transitions possible.

The network's recommendations will be formulated by experts and scholars from the Arab region. Partner institutions from the United States and Europe will serve to facilitate the collaboration through organizational backing for the project and will help convey the message of the network to the relevant constituencies in their own countries.

The initiative engages in a range of activities, all conducted collaboratively between its members. Its agenda includes producing policy briefs, thematic and country studies, conducting comparative public opinion surveys, organizing workshops and conferences, and sponsoring occasional task forces, all with the aim of formulating policy recommendations that can advance reform in the Arab world.

Arab Reform Initiative receives funds primarily from Arab sources as well as international charitable foundations, research institutions, banks, companies and individual donors.

Annex 2: List of ARI's Member and Partner Institutes

Arab Founding Institutes

- *Al-Ahram Centre for Political and Strategic Studies, Egypt.
- *Centre d'Etudes et de Recherches en Sciences Sociales, Morocco.
- *King Faisal Centre for Research and Islamic Studies, Saudi Arabia.
- *The Arab Reform Forum at the Bibliotheca Alexandria, Egypt.
- *The Centre for Strategic and Future Studies, Kuwait.
- *The Centre for Strategic Studies, Jordan.
- *The Centre for Sudanese Studies, Sudan.
- *The Lebanese Centre for Policy Studies, Lebanon.
- *The Palestinian Centre for Political and Survey Research, Palestine.
- *The Gulf Research Centre, Dubai, United Arab Emirates.

American and European Partner Institutes

- *The Centre for European Reform, UK
- *The US-Middle East Project, USA
- *Fundacion Para Las Relaciones Internacionales Y El Dialogo Exterior, Spain.
- *Hellenic Foundation for European and Foreign Policy, Greece.
- *The European Institute for Security Studies, Paris.

Annexe 3: SSR Working Group

Bassma Kodmani, Director, Arab Reform Initiative

Salam Kawakibi, Senior Consultant, Arab Reform Initiative

Abdallah Saaf, Centre d'Etudes et de Recherches en Sciences Sociales, Morocco

Arnold Luethold, DCAF, Switzerland

Azmi Shu'aibi, AMAN, Palestine

Ezzedin al-Asbahu, Human Rights Information and Training Centre, Yemen

Pascal Ménoret, IREMAM, Aix-en-provence

Mohamed Kadri Said, Al Ahram, Egypt

Nawaf el Tell, Centre for Strategic studies, Jordan

Yassar Katarne, The Regional Centre on Conflict Prevention, Jordan

Expert to be confirmed, Algeria

Nicole Ball, Centre for International Policy Washington DC, USA

Omar Nachabé, American-Lebanese University, Lebanon

Oussam Safa, Lebanese Centre for Political Studies, Lebanon

Mustapha Adib, Centre for Strategic Studies for the Middle East Lebanon

Peter Gills, Liverpool John Moors University, UK

Stephen Baranyi, North-South Institute, Canada

Steven A. Cook, Council on Foreign Relations, USA

Thanos Dokos, ELIAMEP

Yezid Sayigh, King's College, UK

Annexe 4: List of international Collaborating Organizations

- * The North-South Institute (NIS)- Canada.
- * INTERPEACE, International Peace Building Alliance- Switzerland.
- * The Geneva Center for the Democratic Control of Armed Forces, (DCAF)- Switzerland.
- * UNDP POGAR, Programme on « Governance in the Arab Region ».
- * Transparency International, (TI).
- * The Euro-Mediterranean Study Commission (EuroMeSCo).
- * Euro-Mediterranean Human Rights Network (EMHRN).

LATIN AMERICA

* Inter-Societas, Santiago de Chile. A recently established think tank, headed by Dr Augusto Varas, with a broad network of connections and experience in collaborative work with military and security experts and practitioners across Latin America

AFRICA

- * African Security Dialogue and Research (ASDR)- Ghana
- * Institute for Security Studies (ISS)- South Africa

In addition to the above mentioned international institutions, ARI will draw on a very broad network of civil society organizations in the different Arab countries and will rely on each member institute of ARI to engage civil society groups at the national level. There are more than 50 such organizations that will be associated in various manners.