BRIEF

A New Approach to Security and Justice Sector Assistance

AN ENHANCED PARTNERSHIP PLANNING MODEL

Political uprisings in the Middle East and North Africa (MENA) region along with policy shifts within the United States have triggered calls to reshape security and justice sector assistance programs. RAND examined the current security assistance model, considered its strengths and weaknesses in light of political and policy developments, and designed a new approach—an Enhanced Partnership Planning Model that can be tailored to partner-nation needs and particular U.S. strategic interests.

U.S. Leverage Is Limited

The Arab uprisings have demonstrated that authoritarian regimes are ultimately unstable because they refuse to be responsive and accountable to populations that are increasingly unwilling to remain silent. Meaningful political, economic, social, and security sector reform is the cornerstone of long-term regional stability. So, it is in the United States' interest to encourage these countries down the path of more effective and legitimate governance, which will enhance stability and security as well as advance U.S. goals in the region.

But how much leverage does the United States really have? To date, much of the debate about how the United States can promote political and security sector reforms in the region has centered on providing or withholding security assistance—an approach that has been less than successful.

RAND's research on current approaches to providing security assistance reveals insights that may help explain this lack of leverage. One issue involves the importance of U.S. sales of military equipment and services to foreign partners (see figure). Another is the fact that many MENA countries receive more economic assistance than security assistance. Finally, countries that receive high levels of U.S. security assistance are especially important to achieving other U.S. objectives in the region, such as deterring Iran and cooperating in counterterrorism. RAND's analysis also found no clear relationship between security assistance and improvements in stability or good governance. Regardless of the levels of security assistance both before and after the Arab uprisings, RAND found little evidence in state fragility, rule of law, or human rights measures that U.S. actions were influencing partner stability or reform efforts.

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How much leverage does the United States really have?

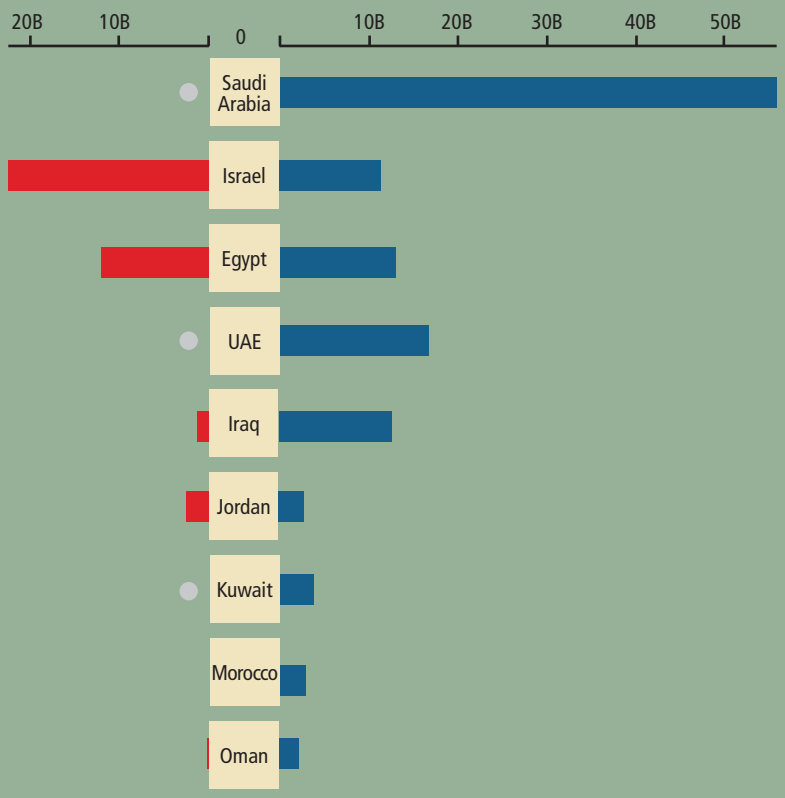
Many nations in the MENA region spend more on foreign military sales than they receive in foreign military financing, thereby making them important cash customers and not simply eager-to-please grant recipients.

Foreign Military Financing (FMF), amount of grants received by each country to acquire U.S. military goods and services

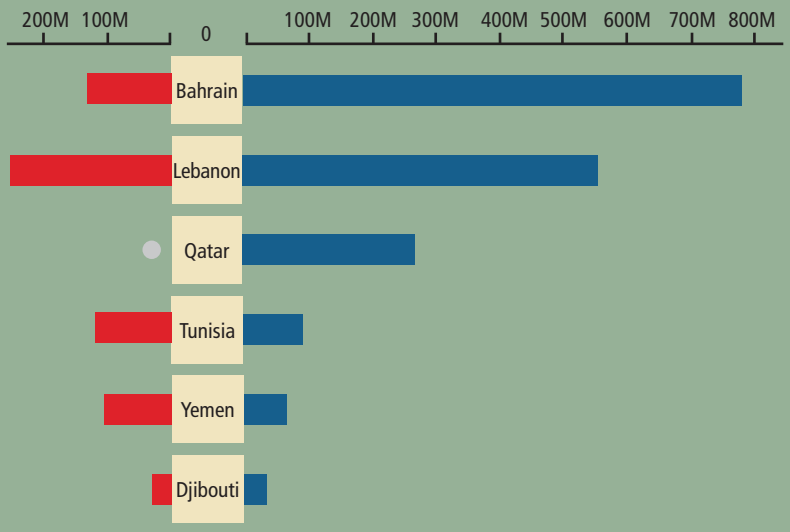
Foreign Military Sales (FMS), amount of military goods and services each country purchased from the U.S. Government

A country that, by policy, receives no FMF

Larger countries
(scale in billions of dollars)



Smaller countries
(scale in millions of dollars)



Lack of Government Integration Produces a Transaction-Based Approach

It is the combination of ad hoc actions and the expectation of leverage that makes the current security assistance approach a transactional one—the United States provides assistance and the partner nation takes some action in return that furthers U.S. security interests in the region.

This transaction-based approach is a function, at least in part, of the fact that the United States lacks a coordinated approach that goes beyond rhetoric and truly integrates the actions of its many government stakeholders toward common strategic goals. As a result, individual agencies conduct transactions that it believes will achieve a particular set of organizational goals. Government-wide strategic objectives may serve as broad guidelines, but they are not necessarily prioritized or mapped to planned activities.

In the end, the lack of an integrated approach across multiple stakeholders can lead to a number of unintended outcomes: planning disconnects where similar types of programs are executed by different agencies, assistance efforts that may not best meet partner-nation needs, and little understanding of program performance and effectiveness by either the United States or partner nations.

These challenges notwithstanding, RAND found examples of effective efforts across the U.S. government that could inform improvements more broadly. RAND's analysis of these efforts ultimately led to development of an Enhanced Partnership Planning Model (EPP)—an approach that shifts the security assistance mindset from grantees or customers to partners.

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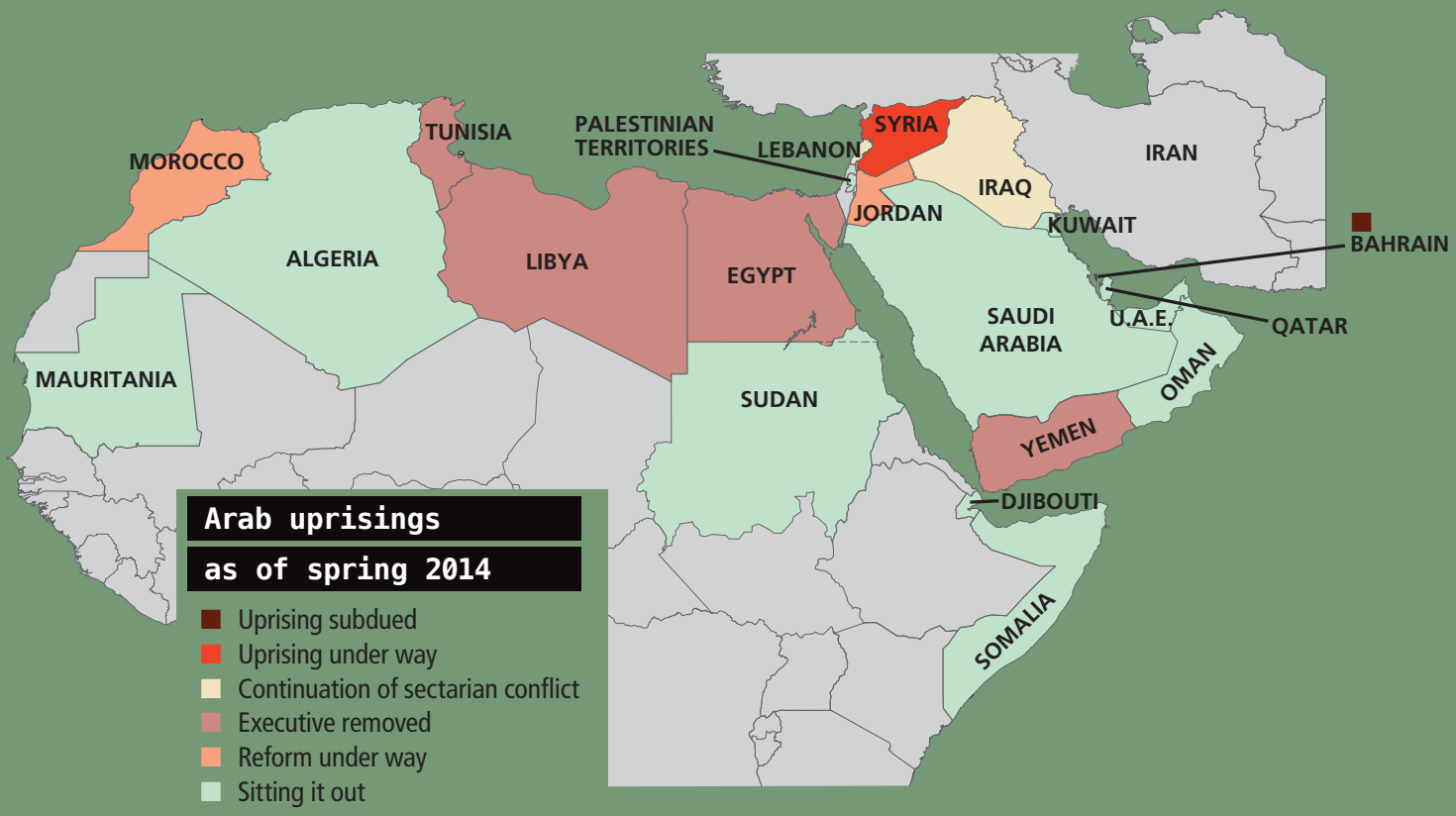
The Middle East and North Africa region is undergoing tectonic change



The Middle East and North Africa region is undergoing tectonic change after a dramatic wave of demonstrations that began in December 2010 created political upheaval and, in some cases, brought down regimes. The region remains highly volatile amid fragile governments, civil war and humanitarian crises, and socioeconomic malaise.

A New Direction Enabling Long-Term Reform

RAND researchers have found that programs strengthening human capital and institutional capacity—rather than operational military capabilities—may be the most effective tools for influencing long-term reforms in the security sector and advancing U.S. and partner interests. Thus, the EPP is based on a new concept of *security and justice sector partnerships* that rely on collaborative planning and mutual obligations to focus on these areas.

The basic tenets of the EPP are designed to achieve long-term reform:

more explicit linkage between military and nonmilitary forms of cooperation that would better reflect the interdependence among military, civilian law and justice, economic, political, and other governance institutions

increased emphasis on building institutional capacity that would foster positive and sustainable change in the norms and operational culture in the security and justice sector

advancement of security sector reforms that would be consistent with U.S. reform goals in other, nonsecurity sectors so as to foster self-sufficiency, good governance, and civilian oversight of national security affairs

partnership programs devised in consultation with partner nations to ensure maximum partner-nation ownership and transparency

practical benchmarks for measuring progress in developing security capacity and in achieving security sector reforms, as a common reference point for gauging performance and altering implementation as needed.

The EPP departs from the ad hoc transactional nature of the current model and instead offers a longer-term focus that is founded on more rigorous and integrated planning, assessments, and resource management. Within these categories, both the United States and partner nations have common objectives and shared responsibilities—emblematic of the *partnership* between them.

1. Planning. The foundation of the EPP is integrated planning across the U.S. government, both horizontally (within the embassy) and vertically (between the embassy and Washington, D.C.), that enables the United States to speak with one voice in dealing with partner nations. Past planning has been disjointed and lacked a structured means by which stakeholders can link objectives to activities and resources. A similar dialog should also occur between the U.S. government and partner-nation officials.

2. Assessing. Assessment is a core component of the EPP Model. It emphasizes greater accountability in U.S. foreign assistance, serving as the basis for a dialog with partner nations about the relationship between security cooperation, security sector reform goals, and broader reforms in other sectors. A collaborative approach to assessment informs decisionmaking, serves as a vehicle to expand partner-nation relationships, and enhances ownership and accountability for both partners. Assessment approaches need to be tailored to the needs and capabilities of partner nations.

3. Resourcing. Assessment results should be directly linked to and inform resourcing decisions, reaching resource managers in time to inform decisions on specific assistance activities. Program deliberations and deadlines should be transparent to everyone so as to manage expectations on both sides. Partner nations should identify ways to share the resource burden, particularly in sustaining programs after they are established.

The EPP offers many benefits, including collaboration and transparency, partner-nation ownership,

mutual accountability, an emphasis on the importance of institutional capacity development, monitoring and evaluation results that can be incorporated into future planning, flexibility to tailor to partner-nation needs, and coordinated efforts that promote U.S. policies.

While current U.S. priorities focus on the MENA region, the concept of security and justice sector partnerships has broad applicability at the global level.

Stability Through Partnership

The ultimate objective of the EPP Model is to change the paradigm from pressuring a partner into reform to supporting the partner's own efforts to achieve planning benchmarks related to both reform and capability goals. Recipient countries value security assistance as a component of a *relationship*, not simply as part of a transaction.

U.S. influence in the MENA region and elsewhere around the globe will come not from financial leverage but from building and sustaining effective partnerships. The concepts and recommendations put forward in this study offer a framework by which to achieve these aims.

Recipient countries value security assistance as a component of a relationship, not simply as part of a transaction.

From Principles to Action

PLANNING

Establish a formalized structure for security and justice sector discussions in specific sectors. Regular planning meetings under this structure would help integrate stakeholders across the U.S. government and improve the focus of assistance efforts.

Build on the State Department's new Integrated Country Strategies as the cornerstone for facilitating interagency planning and capturing joint objectives for security and justice sector partnership activities. These strategies should become the road map for both internal U.S. government and bilateral planning.

Identify likely resource constraints as early as possible and mitigate negative effects by leveraging efforts across stakeholders (U.S. government agencies, nongovernmental organizations, other donor nations, or the partner nation), as integrated planning improves the linkages among objectives, activities, and resources.

ASSESSING

Integrate elements of analysis into a partnership program design based on a common understanding of security sector priorities. Identify key sectors and program areas that merit assessment, along with possible metrics for assessing programs. Workshops can be an effective mechanism for sharing ideas with partner nations.

Select a pilot project of mutual interest in the security and justice sector. Document specific benchmarks and timeline milestones that both the United States and the partner nation can use to assess performance and progress.

Incorporate assessment steps and actions into the Integrated Country Strategies to ensure that they align with broader U.S. strategic goals in the partner nation.

RESOURCING

Involve resource managers in planning and evaluation meetings with partners from the outset.

Effectively communicate resource decisions, perhaps using a memorandum of understanding or other formal communiqué. Such a mechanism can help ensure that U.S. and partner-nation officials are clear on goals, objectives, milestones, evaluation processes, and resources.

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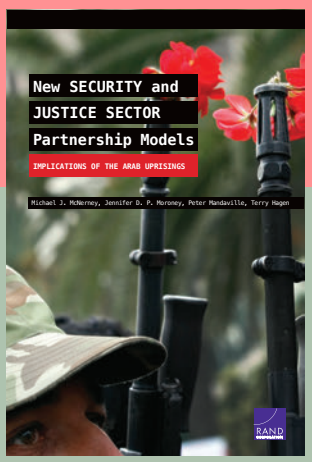

This brief describes work done in the RAND National Security Research Division, documented in *New Security and Justice Sector Partnership Models: Implications of the Arab Uprisings,* by Michael J. McNerney, Jennifer D. P. Moroney, Peter Mandaville, and Terry Hagen, RR-605-DOS (available at www.rand.org/t/RR605), 2014. The RAND Corporation is a nonprofit research institution that helps improve policy and decisionmaking through research and analysis. RAND's publications do not necessarily reflect the opinions of its research clients and sponsors.

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