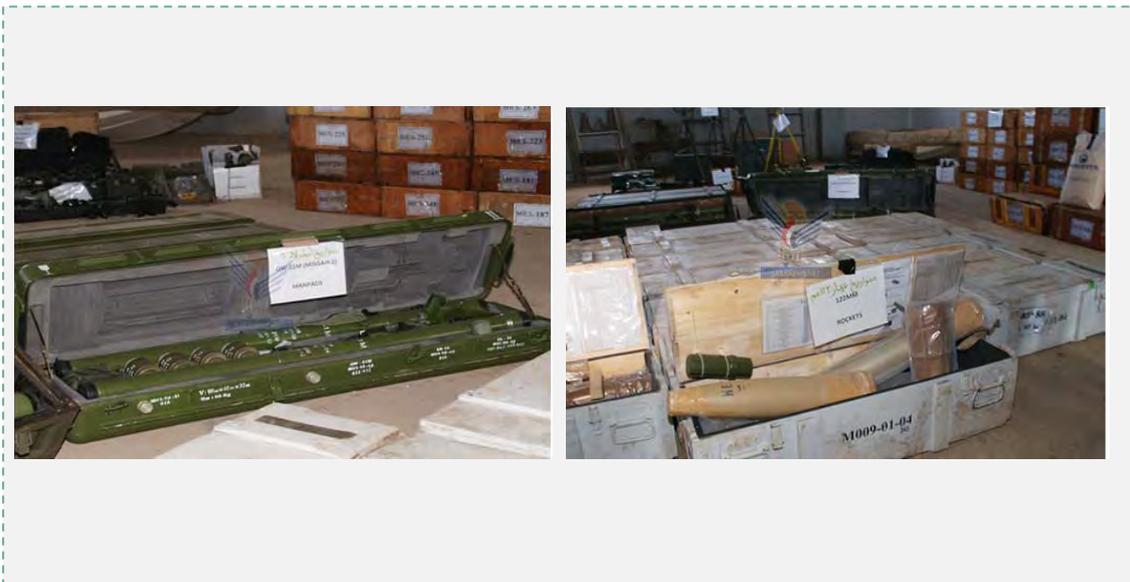




February 11, 2013

**Iranian subversion in Yemen: A ship with a cargo of arms originating in Iran and en route to the Shi'ite Houthi rebels in north Yemen, was recently intercepted. The smuggling attempt was another manifestation of Iran's familiar, repeated efforts to subvert Shi'ite groups in the Arab-Muslim world.**



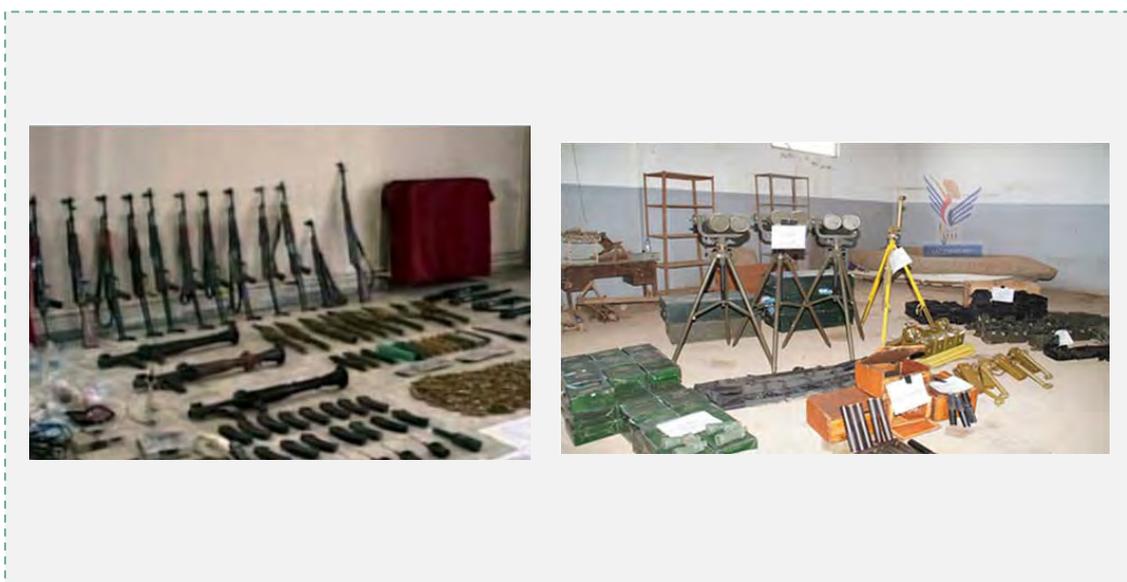
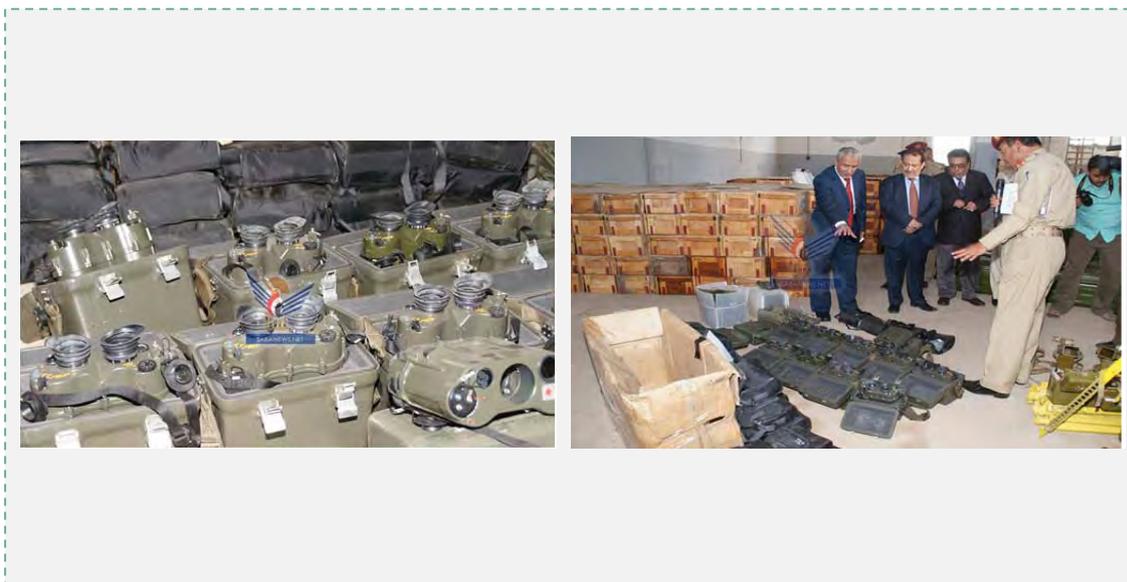
Weapons and military equipment found on board the *Jihan 1*.

## Seizure of Weapons

1. On January 23, 2013, the Yemeni coast guard and security services intercepted the *Jihan 1*, a ship carrying weapons, explosives and military equipment, some of it manufactured in Iran. The ship was en route from Iran and its cargo was intended for delivery to the Houthi Shi'ite rebels in northern Yemen. An announcement issued by the Yemeni News Agency on February 6, 2013, reported that the weapons seized included 122mm Katyusha rockets, anti-aircraft surface-to-air shoulder-launched missiles, RPGs and RPG launchers, Iranian-manufactured night-vision binoculars, ground and naval target-identifying systems with ranges of 40 kilometers (25 miles), sound suppressors for automatic weapons, large quantities of high explosives (RDX and C4), electronic equipment for detonating IEDs,

large quantities of ammunition for rifles and DShK heavy machine guns, and additional military equipment (Sabanews.net website).

**Weapons and other military equipment seized aboard the Jihan 11 (Sabanews.net website.) Lower left picture from the Yemensaeed.com website, February 7, 2013.**



2. The Yemeni ministry of the interior reported that the ship was carrying **40 tons of weapons, shells and explosives**. According to a source in the Yemeni administration, the weapons were destined for Sa'ada, **the Houthi rebel stronghold** (Agence France-Presse, February 9, 2013). The explosives were concealed in 133 plastic containers

<sup>1</sup> The upper right hand picture was distributed by the Yemeni ministry of defense. It shows Interior Minister Abdel-Qader Kahtan (left) and Ali al-Ahmadi, head of Yemen's national security agency (second from left), examining the weapons unloaded from the boat (AP, February 10, 2013).

and **the electronic equipment was hidden in ordinary cartons used for spare auto parts** (Alsahwa-yemen.net website). On February 2, 2013, sources in the Yemeni administration told Saba, Yemen's official news agency, that in Iran the ship had been transferred to a Yemeni crew of eight who were to sail it to Yemen (Bbc.co.uk website). A member of the American administration, who spoke on condition of anonymity, told a Reuter's correspondent that **seizing the weapons had been coordinated with the American Navy** and that an American destroyer had been nearby (International Business Times, January 28, 2013).

3. **Ali Hassan al-Ahmadi**, head of Yemen's national security council, **accused Iran of being behind the attempt to smuggle the weapons**. He said that smuggling such a large consignment could not have been carried out by ordinary merchants or smugglers, but only by a governmental power. Iran, he said, "**insists on damaging Yemen**" (Agence France-Presse, February 9, 2013). **Yemeni President Abd al-Rabbuh Mansur al-Hadi** warned Iran not to interfere in his country's internal affairs (AP, February 9, 2013). **Interior Minister Abdel-Qader Kahtan** said he hoped Iran would stop "exporting" weapons to Yemen (AP, February 10, 2013).

4. **American officials said the weapons on board were manufactured in Iran, and that "the pattern of the shipment matched past instances of suspected Iranian smuggling into Yemen"** (ITIC emphasis).<sup>2</sup> According to American officials, the **Iranians also have stepped up aid to rebels in the south of Yemen in recent months**. Previous shipments, according to the officials, **involved mainly money, small arms and explosives**.<sup>3</sup> However, a **source in the Iranian foreign ministry denied Iran's involvement in the affair** (Press TV, February 4, 2013).

## The Significance of the Weapons Seized

5. The large quantity of weapons seized, **especially the shoulder-launched missiles, could have significantly improved the Houthi rebels' operational military capabilities**. In an exclusive interview with the Wall Street Journal, American Secretary of Defense Leon Panetta accused Iran's "paramilitary force" of intensifying its campaign to destabilize the Middle East by smuggling anti-aircraft weapons to its

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<sup>2</sup> [http://www.nytimes.com/2013/01/29/world/middleeast/29military.html?\\_r=0](http://www.nytimes.com/2013/01/29/world/middleeast/29military.html?_r=0)

<sup>3</sup> <http://online.wsj.com/article/SB10001424127887323926104578278231369164640.html>

"militant allies." He said that they were a threat to "civilian as well as military aircraft," and were a "dangerous escalation" (ITIC emphasis throughout).<sup>4</sup>

6. Iran regards Yemen as an important factor in its regional policies. It seeks, to establish an Iranian ground and naval presence in the countries and ports of the Red Sea which control the sea lanes from the Persian Gulf to the heart of the Middle East and Europe. In addition, Iran regards Yemen, especially the northern part of the country bordering on Saudi Arabia, as a convenient arena from which to conduct subversive activities against the Saudi Arabians, Iran's main political and religious rivals in the Middle East, while harming the United States' local and regional interests.

7. Iran's support of the Zaydi-Shi'ite Houthi rebels is part of its modus operandi in the Arab-Muslim world, in which it uses local Shi'ite communities for purposes of subversion and terrorism. The Iranian group responsible for those activities, carried out as part of exporting the Islamic Revolution, is the Qods Force, an elite unit within the Iranian Islamic Revolutionary Guards, Iran's long arm of subversion and terrorism.<sup>5</sup>

8. Iran's outstanding success in integrating a local Shi'ite community into its strategy was in Lebanon, where Hezbollah, founded by the Iranian Islamic Revolutionary Guards, became a powerful Lebanese and regional force and Iran's preferred proxy. Syria's Alawite regime is supported by Iran and Hezbollah because of its strategic importance (central to which is Syria's membership in the so-called "resistance camp"). However, in addition, religious and sectarian solidarity is not lacking, because Iran and Hezbollah regard the Alawites as Shi'ites. In Iraq Iran successfully established and armed Shi'ite militias which played an important role in fighting the United States and its allies and helped increase Iranian political influence in Iraq "the morning after." On the other hand, Iran's subversive and terrorist activities among the Shi'ites of Bahrain, Azerbaijan, Afghanistan and Pakistan met with difficulties and so far has not succeed in destabilizing the local regimes or in advancing Iranian interests.

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<sup>4</sup> Ibid.

<sup>5</sup> For further information see the August 7, 2012 bulletin "[The Qods Force, an elite unit of the Iranian Revolutionary Guards, spearheads Iran's global terrorist campaign.](#)"

## Appendix A

### Iranian Support for the Houthi Rebellion in Yemen

#### Background

1. Iran regards Yemen **as an important component in its goal to establish a subversive Iranian presence on land and sea in Red Sea countries which control the sea lanes leading from the Persian Gulf to the heart of the Middle East and Europe**. In addition, Iran regards Yemen, especially the northern part of the country bordering on Saudi Arabia, as a convenient arena for its subversive activities against the Saudi Arabians, Iran's main political and religious rivals in the Middle East, while harming American interests.

2. **Yemen's basic geopolitical situation makes it easy prey for Iranian subversion. The central government is weak**, and since the recent regional upheavals it has had to cope with **a strong, difficult opposition** (which caused the ousting of President Ali Abdallah Saleh<sup>6</sup>). In addition, there has been **the existence**, since 2004, **of an ongoing Houthi Shi'ite rebellion in the north**, and there are groups of **Sunni separatists in the south, some of whom are Al-Qaeda sympathizers**. Moreover, about 30% of the Yemeni population belongs to the Zaydi-Shi'ite sect, which has **ideological-religious ties with Iran** and is regarded by Iran as a convenient tool for its subversive activities.

#### The Recent Houthi Rebellion

3. **Since 2004 a rebellion of varying levels of intensity has been waged against the government in northern Yemen near the Saudi Arabian border**. The region is mountainous and its terrain is difficult for a regular army to operate in or to put down the rebellion. The rebels, who number several thousand, belong to the al-Houthi clan and are **Zaydi-Shi'ite Muslims**. They are led by **Abd al-Malik al-Houthi**, brother of Hussein Badr al-Din al-Houthi, who instigated the rebellion.

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<sup>6</sup> On November 23, 2011, Yemen's President Ali Abdallah Saleh signed an agreement with Saudi Arabia transferring his authority to his vice president in return for immunity from prosecution. The agreement was signed, after more than 30 years of Saleh's rule and about ten months of popular uprising, under the aegis of the Saudi Arabian king, the countries belonging to the Cooperation Council of the Arab States of the Gulf, Western countries and the UN.



**Abd al-Malik al-Houthi, rebel leader, gives a speech on November 3, 2012 (YouTube.com website).**

4. In November 2009 the Saudi Arabians initiated a broad-scale attack on the Houthi rebels which included the use of fighter planes and killed hundreds of rebels. The attack came in response to Houthi attacks on Saudi border police. Afterwards, during the years of the regional uprisings, the Houthi rebels exploited the general chaos and lack of a governing hand to expand their sphere of control (while still maintaining a low profile).

5. Today the rebels **control the entire Sa'ada district and considerable areas along Yemen's border with Saudi Arabia**. Their Yemeni opponents claim **their strategic goal is to establish a Shi'ite country in northern Yemen**. One of their goals is apparently to gain access to the Red Sea, **which will enable them to receive continuous supplies of arms from Iran by sea.**<sup>7</sup>

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<sup>7</sup> From "Yemen after Saleh," the Institute of National Strategic Studies, Overview, No. 298, November 29, 2011.



Saudi Arabian forces secure the border with Yemen to prevent Houthi rebels from attacking, November 2009 (Hdrrmut.net website)

### Iranian Support for the Houthi Rebellion

6. **A large amount of circumstantial evidence indicates that the Houthi rebels receive military support from Iran.** Spokesmen for the Yemeni administration (with support from American sources) **have repeatedly accused Iran of supporting the Houthi rebellion.** Their statements indicate that the support **comes from the Iranian Islamic Revolutionary Guards** and includes **training** (including the involvement of Lebanese Hezbollah operatives), **funds and weapons** for the rebels. Their accusations are supported by the seizure of two Iranian boats carrying weapons for the rebels (See below) and by anti-American, anti-Israeli and anti-Semitic slogans using Iranian ideological terminology.

## Indications of Iranian Ideology

الله أكبر  
 الموت لأمريكا  
 الموت لإسرائيل  
 الخلفاء على الطور  
 النصر للإسلام



A north Yemen Houthi rebel video: the sign on the tank reads "Allahu akbar, death to America, death to Israel, the Jews are cursed, Islam will be victorious" (Marebvideo.com website, Yemen). The terminology is clearly Iranian.

A rebel APC with a sign bearing the same inscription as the tank (Bintjbeil.org, the Hezbollah Bintjbeil website in Lebanon, 2009).

7. **Iranian training for Houthi rebels** was exposed in an article recently published in the London-based Arabic newspaper Al-Sharq Al-Awsat, which is affiliated with Saudi Arabia. According to the article, "Yemeni diplomatic sources" revealed that **Iran was providing military training** for many Houthi fighters **in Eritrean territory on one of the Red Sea islands near Yemen**. That was because, according to the sources, the civil war in Syria made it difficult for Iran to bring Houthi rebel fighters there or to Lebanon for training. The sources said **they had information that the Iranian Islamic Revolutionary Guards were sending Houthi rebel fighters to Eritrea and training them there**, and that the Eritrean government was aware of it (YouTube.com based on Al-Arabiya TV, January 21, 2013; Awsat from Al-Sharq Al-Awsat, January 21, 2013).

8. According to the same "Yemeni diplomatic sources," **Iran was also smuggling weapons into Yemen**, especially to the region of Sa'ada in northern Yemen, the rebels' stronghold. **The weapons were being smuggled from the Eritrean islands in boats**, from which they were transferred to trucks which brought them to the Houthi-controlled territory. The sources also called on the government of Eritrea to stop the activities, which did not "contribute to the natural relations between the two countries."



Houthi fighters (YouTube from Al-Arabiya TV, January 21, 2013)

9. The following are additional examples of **information published in recent years about Iranian and Hezbollah support for the Houthi rebels:**

1) **Former Yemeni President Ali Abdallah Saleh**, interviewed by Al-Jazeera TV on September 11, 2009, accused Iran of supporting the rebels. He said that Iran and extremist elements in Iraq close to leader **Moqtada Sadr** (an Iraqi Shi'ite leader who has close relations with Iran), **were aiding the Houthi rebels in northern Yemen**. He also said that the Yemeni security forces had **detained two squads whose members admitted to having received \$100,000 from sources in Iran**. On another occasion he claimed that **Hezbollah in Lebanon was training Houthi rebels in the use of land mines, hand grenades and other weapons** (Weekllystandard.com website, February 22, 2010). Another possible indication of Iran's funneling funds to the Houthi rebels was the **Yemeni authorities' closing of the Iranian hospital in Sana'a, the capital of Yemen, in November 2009**. The Yemeni administration claimed that Iranian intelligence was using the hospital as **a pipeline for delivering funds to Shi'ite rebels**.

2) **Al-Arabiya TV reported that the Yemeni army had found Iranian-made weapons in the hands of the Shi'ite rebels fighting the government**. According to Al-Arabiya, "in the battle area near the city of Sa'ada, [Yemeni] soldiers found six storehouses belonging to Houthis containing Iranian-made machine guns, short-range rockets and large quantities of **ammunition**" (Arabiya.net, August 22, 2009). The army later claimed that they

had attacked **a number of trucks carrying weapons and ammunition for the rebels which had come from Iran.**

3) **In October 2009 Yemeni sources reported that three Lebanese demolitions experts had been killed in the area under Houthi control and that in their assessment the three were Hezbollah operatives** (Nusra.tv and dd-sunnah.net websites). In December 2009 the Saudi Arabian-owned newspaper Al-Sharq Al-Awsat reported that **senior Iranian Islamic Revolutionary Guards and Hezbollah operatives had met with Houthi rebels** (WeeklyStandard.com website, February 22, 2010, from "Who's Behind the Houthis? – A proxy war in Yemen," by David Schenker). Other sources reported that the meeting had been held in November 2009 to counsel the Houthis as how to escalate their campaign along the Saudi Arabian-Yemeni border (Thememriblog.org website).

4) In March 2011 **American Secretary of State Hillary Clinton** told the Senate that Iran was very involved in the opposition movement in Yemen (Irantracker.org website).

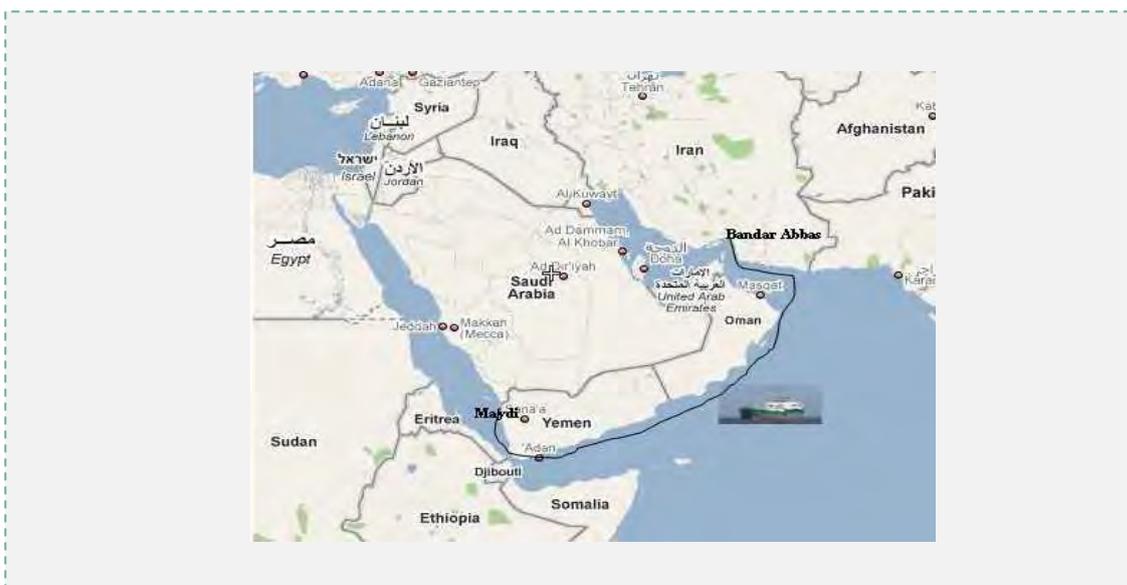
5) **John Brennan, Presidential Advisor for Homeland Security and Counterterrorism**, gave a speech in Dublin in which he accused Hezbollah of training militants in Yemen and Syria (Washingtonpost website, October 27, 2012).

## Appendix B

### Previous Yemeni Seizure of an Iranian Ship Carrying Weapons for the Houthi Rebels

#### Background

1. On **October 26, 2009**, the Yemeni navy seized a ship called ***Mahan-1***, sailing under the Iranian flag, which had left the Iranian port of **Bandar Abbas** and illegally entered Yemen's territorial waters. The Yemeni navy claimed to have confiscated anti-tank weapons found on board the ship, **which were meant for the Houthi Shi'ite rebels fighting the Yemeni army in the northern part of the country** near the border with Saudi Arabia. The ship's crew, **which included five Iranians and an Indian**, was taken to Sana'a for interrogation. According to Yemeni sources, the ship's crew claimed that they had come to Yemen to meet with and evacuate wounded Iranians who had fought alongside the Shi'ite rebels.



The Mahan-1's route

2. The ship was intercepted near **the port of Maydi** in the Hajjah Governorate, northwestern Yemen. **Yemeni security sources said that the ship was on its way to unload its cargo of arms near the city of Harad in the Sa'ada Governorate** (the area in northern Yemen where the clashes between the Yemeni army and the Houthi Shi'ite rebels take place). **The weapons were supposed to be hidden on a farm and then retrieved by the rebels.**



The Mahan-1 (Al-Arabiya TV, October 26, 2009, picture from YouTube)



RPG launcher seized on board the ship (Al-Arabiya TV, October 26, 2009)

### Yemeni Reactions

3. On October 29, 2009, **Yemen's Information Ministry spokesman, Hassan Ahmed al-Lawzi**, stressed, not for the first time, that Iran continued intervening in Yemen's internal affairs, and said that Yemen had showed Tehran documents as proof. He added that Iran's continuing interference was motivated by its religious establishment, which was turning the Iranian media against Yemen, led by Iran's Arabic-language Al-Alam TV (Yobserver.com website).

4. The Yemen Observer quoted the Iraqi newspaper **Al-Ahali**, which claimed that the **Iranian Islamic Revolutionary Guards trained the Houthi rebels in Eritrea** and even transferred arms from the Eritrean port of Assab<sup>8</sup> to the port of Maydi, Yemen (where the intercepted Iranian ship was supposed to unload its cargo). The Yemen Observer added that **Abdallah Madhoun**, a Houthi leader who had surrendered, said during interrogation that the **Shi'ite rebels received unlimited support from the Revolutionary Guards as well as from Hezbollah experts coming from Lebanon**.

### Iranian Responses

5. **Iran, as usual, categorically denied that the ship was carrying weapons**, claiming that it had set sail with no cargo on board from the UAE port of Sharja and was en route to the Caspian Sea via the Red Sea, the Mediterranean, and the Black

<sup>8</sup> For further information see the July 31, 2009 bulletin "[Iran's activity in East Africa, the gateway to the Middle East and the African continent.](#)"

Sea for commercial purposes. The ship's owner, Abd al-Latif Meymani also denied there was any cargo on board the ship (Mardom Salari, November 1, 2009). Iran's foreign ministry again accused the Yemeni press of politically motivated "media fabrications." Defense Minister **Ahmad Vahidi** again offered to mediate between the Yemeni government and the Houthi rebels, rejecting allegations that weapons had been found aboard the ship (Fars News Agency, October 28, 2009). **Mohammad-Hassan Alizadeh**, Iran's ambassador to Yemen, denied the affair as well (ISNA, Iran, October 31, 2009).

6. The website **Iranian Diplomacy**, affiliated with reform elements in Iran, was harshly critical of what it called the "doubletalk" of Iranian foreign policy regarding Yemen. It claimed that Iranian offers of mediation were "empty" as long as Iran was active in the conflict and supported the rebels. The site also claimed that Iran had shamed itself by even bringing up offers of mediation, while the Yemeni government revealed more and more evidence of the assistance provided by Iran to the Shi'ite rebels (Irdiplomacy.ir website, October 2009).

### **Reaction of Al-Sharq Al-Awsat (affiliated with Saudi Arabia)**

7. After the media reports about the interception of the ship (and the arrest of 11 members of the Iranian Islamic Revolutionary Guard Corps by Pakistan, who had infiltrated into its territory), **Tariq Alhomayed**, one of the strongest critics of the Iranian regime, used his column in Al-Sharq al-Awsat to attack it, not for the first time. In an article entitled "Iran does what it wants," Alhomayed claimed that the discovery of the weapons by the Yemeni government once again showed that Iran was a reckless, irresponsible country. He added that besides publicly exposed instances of Iran's subversion and interference in other countries' affairs, **the Revolutionary Guards continued operating in Iraq and in Lebanon and arming local Shi'ite groups**. He concluded that "the Iranian regime's problem is that it has yet to be punished, which is why it has not learned its lesson and continues to meddle, directly or not, in the affairs of other countries, while claiming that other countries meddle in Iran's internal affairs" (Aawsat.com website).

## Appendix C

### Iranian Subversion and Terrorism among Shi'ite Communities in the Arab-Muslim World – Updated Overview

1. Iran's support of the Houthi rebels in Yemen, some of it subcontracted to Hezbollah, **is part of Iran's subversion of the Shi'ite populations in the Arab-Muslim world.**

The Iranian modus operandi is manifest not only in Yemen but also in other Arab-Muslim countries, including **Lebanon, Syria, Iraq, Bahrain, Pakistan and Azerbaijan, with varying degrees of success.**

2. The Iranian body to which such activities are entrusted is the **Qods Force**. Iran uses the Qods Force, an elite unit within the Iranian Islamic Revolutionary Guards, as its long arm of subversion and terrorism to "**export of the revolution.**" To that end the Revolutionary Guards invest considerable resources of money, highly trained manpower and military equipment transported by the Qods Force to a wide variety of terrorist and guerilla organizations, militias and political parties throughout the Arab-Muslim world.<sup>9</sup>

3. The Iranian Islamic revolution is exported to various communities in the Arab-Muslim world through **social, economic, ideological, cultural and religious activities.** Those activities prepare the ground for **establishing terrorist and guerilla organizations and/or militias within Shi'ite population centers.** The organizations and militias are directed and handled by Iran to carry out its program of promoting its regional interests.

4. Iran's most conspicuous success in exporting the Islamic revolution is **Lebanon**, where it succeeded in firmly establishing Hezbollah within the Shi'ite population, the largest sectarian group in the country. Over the years Hezbollah has been transformed from a local militia organization with terrorist and guerilla capabilities into **a semi-state military power** with enormous political influence in both internal Lebanese and regional affairs. In other countries, such as **Yemen**, Iran is trying to replicate the Hezbollah model in various ways and with varying degrees of success:

1) **Syria** – Iran and Hezbollah provide the Syrian Alawite regime with military, security, and political propaganda support in its war against the Sunni-led uprising. The support is primarily given to promote Iranian strategic interests (the

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<sup>9</sup> For further information see the August 7, 2012 bulletin "[The Quds Force, an elite unit of the Iranian Revolutionary Guards, spearheads Iran's global terrorist campaign.](#)"

most central of which is Syria's membership in the so-called "resistance camp") but there is also an element of religious-sectarian solidarity with the Alawites (the minority sect ruling Syria, considered Shi'ites by Iran and Hezbollah, while orthodox Sunni Islam regards them as heretics). Iran and Hezbollah also aid the Shi'ites (a minority of about 400-450 thousand Syrians) because they are concerned that after the Assad regime collapses, the Shi'ites are liable to be objects of revenge. **Note:** On October 14, 2012, American Secretary of Defense Leon Panetta said that Iran was organizing and training a militia to support the Syrian regime. In our assessment Iran and Hezbollah are founding an Alawite/Shi'ite militia in preparation for "the morning after."<sup>10</sup>

2) **Iraq** – Iran is waging an on-going campaign in Iraq against the influence of the United States and the West though the exploitation of Iraq's Shi'ite majority (an estimated 60% of the population). During the years of the American military presence in Iraq, **the Qods Force, with aid from Hezbollah, established a series of Shi'ite militias** ("Hezbollah Brigades," "League of the Righteous," "Promise Day Brigade"<sup>11</sup>). **The Iranians provided them with IEDs, including EFPs, rockets and anti-tank and other weapons.** They were used by the Shi'ite militias against the American and allied armies, wounding and killing many soldiers. The fighting of the militias contributed to the American decision to withdraw from Iraq. It also helped the Iranians into a position of power, which they used in their dealings with the present Iraqi administration (headed by Nouri al-Maliki, a Shi'ite) to leverage Iranian interests into a better position in Iraq's internal politics after the American withdrawal.

3) **Bahrain** – Bahrain, located in the Persian Gulf, an area with global strategic importance, has more than a million Shi'ites (60%-70% of the population) but is ruled by a Sunni monarchy. Iran claims sovereignty over Bahrain, and has a long history of handling subversive and terrorist Shi'ite activity in Bahrain. **Its goal is to change the Bahraini regime and challenge both Saudi Arabia and the United States, which support it.** In November 2011 a terrorist network handled by the Iranian Islamic Revolutionary Guards and planning showcase attacks in Bahrain was exposed, and in November 2012 Hezbollah and Iran were accused by the Bahraini administration of involvement in a series of explosions in the capital city of Manama.

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<sup>10</sup> For further information see the November 11, 2012 bulletin "[Hezbollah: Portrait of a Terrorist Organization.](#)"

<sup>11</sup> <http://www.google.com/hostednews/afp/article/ALeqM5jCA6iGhsEI3i-z4hAG8Z2Cu4kV3Q>

4) **Azerbaijan** – Since the establishment of Azerbaijan, a Shi'ite Muslim country, in 1991, **it has been an arena for Iranian subversion and terrorism**. Iran's activity, led by the Qods Force, has been aimed at changing its pro-Western political and its secular religious character. Its intention is to damage Azerbaijan's relations with the United States and the West, and with Israel as well, with all of which Azerbaijan maintains friendly relations. **The terrorist attacks carried out in recent years were meant to settle accounts with Iran's enemies on Azeri soil**. The latest manifestation has been the repeated efforts to launch terrorist attacks on Israeli, Jewish and American targets.<sup>12</sup>

5) **Pakistan** – **Pakistan is a traditional arena for Iranian subversion and terrorism. The Iranian activity, led by the Qods Force**, has been aimed at weakening Pakistan's ties with the United States and the West, and at harming Saudi Arabian influence within the Sunni population. The Iranians have constructed cultural and religious centers for the large Shi'ite minority living in Pakistan (estimated at about 10% of the population) and also uses Shi'ite subversive and terrorist networks. One example is the two terrorist attacks against Saudi Arabian targets in Karachi in May 2011. Arab and Western media reported that the terrorist operatives who carried out the attacks (which were part of a terrorist campaign against Saudi Arabia) belonged to a Shi'ite organization called The Army of Muhammad and to one (which originated within The Army of Muhammad) called The Mahdi Force (a name taken from Shi'ite terminology).

6) **Afghanistan** – Afghanistan has a large Shi'ite minority (almost 20% of the population). Iran provides Afghani Shi'ites with social and economic support, including medical aid, assistance to schools, non-interest bearing loans, etc. It also activates them for propaganda events it initiates such as Jerusalem Day. Iran's activities have met with resistance from Al-Qaeda and the Taliban, which regard the Shi'ites as infidels and favor the establishment of a Salafist-jihadi Sunni Islamic Caliphate. Yet despite the deep ideological and religious gaps, Iran has ambivalent relations with Al-Qaeda and the Taliban, and they occasionally maintain close operational collaboration against the common enemy, the United States and the West, such as Iran's granting asylum to Al-Qaeda operatives and allowing passage from Afghanistan to other operational arenas.

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<sup>12</sup> For further information see the November 4, 2012 bulletin "[Azerbaijan as an arena for Iranian terrorism and subversion.](#)"