

OBAMA'S YEMEN EO STILL LETS OUR SPOOKS PAY THE TARGETS OF THE EO

As I noted earlier, Obama just signed an Executive Order ostensibly targeting the US assets of those who undermine Yemen's stability, potentially including US citizens who do so. I've been comparing this EO to one of the analogous ones pointed out in Karen DeYoung's article on the EO: one issued against Somalia in 2010 (h/t to Daveed Gartenstein-Ross for the link).

The EOs are very similar, including the language potentially targeting US citizens. But there are some interesting differences.

As DeYoung pointed out, the Yemeni EO, unlike the Somalia one, does not include an annex with named targets, even though the EO itself speaks of "certain members of the Government of Yemen." As such, this EO seems to be a threat with consequences, not an immediate sanction.

The Yemen EO also uses slightly different language in the clause targeting those who materially support those destabilizing the country. Whereas the Somalia EO includes those who provide "logistical" or "technical" support, the Yemen EO includes those who provide "technological" support. So make sure you don't serve as webmaster for someone Hillary Clinton thinks is destabilizing Yemen.

The most interesting difference, IMO, is this clause, which appears in the Yemen EO but does not in the Somalia one.

Sec. 5. Nothing in section 1 of this order shall prohibit transactions for the conduct of the official business of the United States Government by employees, grantees, or contractors

thereof.

In other words, while Obama doesn't want you, or Ali Abdullah Saleh's leave-behinds, or the AP to destabilize Yemen, he reserves the right for US government employees, grantees, or contractors to do so. Which presumably means, as happened in Afghanistan, we are and plan to continue paying some of the people who are in violation of this EO.

I wonder. Among all the adjectives we might use to describe the Saudis, do we use "grantee" among them?