

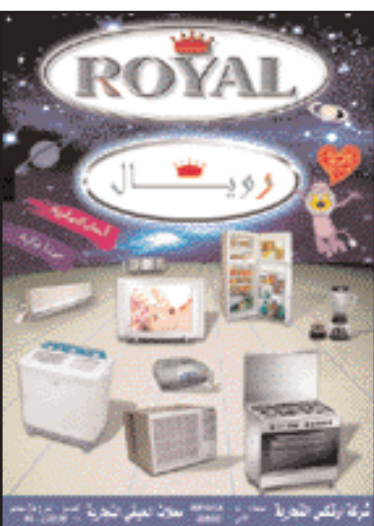
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Some extremists to be freed

BY MOHAMMED AL-QADHI
YEMEN TIMES STAFF

Some extremist detainees are expected to be freed during the month of Ramdhan, official sources said.



Judge Hamoud al-Hitar, head of the clerics committee dialoguing with extremists in Yemeni prisons said that it is expected that some of the detainees will be set free after they pledge to give up their radical and extremist views. Al-Hitar did not give the number of detainees to be set free as they have not been charged with any terrorist acts or crimes. The judge denied information that some militants of Aden-Abyan Islamic Army (AAIA) will be freed as a reward for their participation in the military operations against the anti-US killed cleric Hussein al-Huthi. The militants of AAIA are serving 15-20 year-terms in jail as after being convicted with the kidnapping of Western tourists in Abyan in December 1998, where

some of the tourists were murdered in the confrontations between the extremist militants and the police. Al-Hitar pointed out that the dialogue with these convicted militants aim to "up-root the extremist views that pushed them to perpetrate the Abyan attack on the tourists."

Yemen authorities have already released tens of militants who returned from Afghanistan. Some of the militants were convinced by the dialogue and pledged to relinquish al-Qaeda ideas, as clerics in the committee claimed, but some refused and challenged the clerics and their arguments.

Yemen has also tried extremist militants on charges of terrorist acts like the bombings of the USS Cole and

French Tanker Limburg.

The Sana'a Penal Court sentenced on September 29th two al Qaeda militants to death and sentenced four others to prison terms ranging from five to ten years for the 2000 bombing of the U.S. destroyer Cole which killed 17 sailors.

The same court sentenced on August 28th 15 defendants to terms ranging from three years to death for various terror plots and attacks. Those imprisoned for 10 years included five supporters of Al Qaeda for the 2002 bombing of the French supertanker Limburg in an attack similar to that on the Cole. The militant Hizam Mujali was sentenced to death after being convicted of fatally shooting a police officer at a checkpoint.

Demands of Yemen & USA to extradite the cleric to them rejected:

Abu Hamza to be tried in UK

BY YEMEN TIMES & REUTERS

Yemen's continuous demands to have the Muslim cleric Abu Hamza al-Masri extradited to the country for terrorist charges was rejected, as Britain will charge him with terrorist offences, also putting on hold U.S. attempts to extradite him over a 1998 hostage-taking in Yemen.

Prosecutors and police on Friday said only that a decision had been taken on whether to charge Abu Hamza.

But a source familiar with the case confirmed to Reuters that prosecutors had advised he should be charged in Britain.

The outspoken cleric, who has preached in support of Osama bin



Abu Hamza al-Masri

Laden, is already in British jail after the United States began legal steps to extradite him. The United States has indicted him on 11 counts including having a role in the 1998 hostage-taking in Yemen in which four people died.

The cleric, who has one eye and a steel hook after being wounded in Afghanistan fighting Soviet forces, was arrested under a U.S. warrant in May. But in August Britain launched its own probe to see whether it could mount a case against him.

A full five-day extradition hearing was due to start on October 19th but would have to be postponed until after any case raised in Britain is answered, officials have said.

Continued on page 13

Yemen to deport 3,000 illegal residents

BY MOHAMMAD BINSALLAM
YEMEN TIMES STAFF

The Yemeni Interior Ministry ordered last week its security agents to deport more than 3000 Non-Yemeni residents, the majority of whom are Arab nationals, for their illegal stay in Yemen.

Various media reported an official

source at the Immigration & Passports Authority as saying: "the inspection campaign conducted by the security officers in ten Yemeni cities resulted in the detention of 3,000 illegal residents, most of whom hold Arab nationalities. Necessary arrangements have been made to send these residents back to their countries. There are also several thousand individuals who infiltrate into the country from the Horn of Africa, (especially Ethiopia and Somalia whose citizens escape war and the deterioration of livelihood) to find shelter in Yemen. The same official said that the influx of refugees from the Horn of Africa into Yemen terribly increased in the last period to reach the rate of one thousand every day. Meanwhile, the Yemeni Coast Guard Authority reported that armed confrontations took place on Thursday October 14th between Yemeni military boats and gunmen on two other unidentified boats who were ferrying refugees from Ethiopia and

Somalia to the province of Shabwa on the coastline of the Arab Sea. According to the source, the confrontations resulted in the arrest of a boat and its crew while the other boat fled the scene during the clashes.

Official sources in Sana'a estimated the number of refugees in the Yemeni lands to be half a million, all of whom are from the Horn of Africa.

The problems encountered by the Yemeni Authorities doubled over the existence of refugees who do not abide by the law and regulations. Their presence in Yemen has caused increases of several crimes, including drug smuggling, producing wine, forming gangs for robbing and forging.

Additionally immoral acts spread horribly resulting in the rapid increase of AIDS sufferers all over the country. Official figures mentioned early that in the year 2003, 170 crimes were committed by Somali refugees and 24 others were committed by Ethiopian ones.

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President Saleh attends inauguration of new Somali leader

By Peter Willems
Yemen Times Staff

President Ali Abdullah Saleh attended the ceremony of the new Somali president taking the oath of office last week in Nairobi, Kenya, and called on the international community to help bring stability to the war-torn country.

"We have strong brotherly and historical ties with Somalia and by attending this occasion, we affirm our stance towards the Somali people to keep their security, independence and unity," said Saleh in the Kenyan capital where Abdullahi Yusuf Ahmed was sworn in last Thursday.

"We call on the international community and Arab states to help the Somali government to rebuild Somalia to enable it to take its role in the Horn of Africa for the sake of comprehensive peace in the region," said Saleh.

Yemen's president also asked the United States, the European Union and other donor countries to provide the necessary financial support to rebuild Somalia which has been in a civil war for the last 13 years.

"We call on the United States, the European Union and all other donors to offer prompt help to Somalia so that it can restore stability and security," Saleh said.

On October 10th, a newly formed interim parliament of 275 representa-

tives elected Ahmed as Somalia's president for a five-year term. The election came after a two-year peace process that was carried out in Kenya led by the Inter-Governmental Authority on Development facilitation committee. Ahmed was chosen out of 28 candidates after three voting sessions, and representatives from numerous clans in Somalia are included in the parliament.

Ahmed was once the leader of Puntland, a region that claimed independence and was backed by neighboring Ethiopia. In the sixties, he was a colonel in the Somali army but was jailed by the country's former dictator Mohamed Siad Barre for not being involved in a coup d'etat in 1969. Ahmed led a rebellion against Barre in the eighties.

"It's a wonderful day for Somalia, the region and the international community," Ahmed said during his inauguration. "This is a victory for Africa."

Somalia's new president will face challenges ahead. Fighting between warring factions has continued since Barre's regime was toppled in 1991. Due to fighting, famine and disease, as many as one million Somalis have died during the civil war, and around two million have fled the country. The country's infrastructure, education and healthcare have been left in tatters. Mogadishu, the capital, remains divided between tribal leaders with an esti-

mated 60,000 armed men still roaming the streets.

Other attempts to stabilize the country have failed. When Abdulkassim Sala Hassan was appointed president at a conference held in Djibouti in 2000, he was only able to control a small part of the capital and areas in the south of the country. The central government is in need of a national army and police force.

"It is difficult to say that the new president will pull the country together," said a foreign diplomat. "Even though it has failed in the past, the country may be ready to do its best to establish peace."

To help disarm the militias and stabilize the country, Ahmed has asked the international community to send in troops.

"International forces are required to participate in the pacification of the country and train the security apparatus of the state," said Ahmed. "This is essential."

But it might be difficult to persuade countries or organizations to offer a peacekeeping force. The African Union is trying to find funding to be able to send around 5,000 soldiers to Sudan to help stabilize the Darfur region. The United States and the United Nations may be reluctant to offer troops. While soldiers were stationed in Somalia to support interna-

tional aid during a famine in 1993, 17 US troops and hundreds of Somalis were killed in Mogadishu during a raid that led to the withdrawal of US and UN forces.

The first step by the new president will be to appoint a new prime minister and put together a cabinet before entering Somalia from Kenya. Some believe that Ahmed will choose someone from one of the largest clans in Mogadishu as the prime minister to gain more support.

Somaliland, a northern territory that became independent 13 years ago and refused to participate in the peace process, has not supported the election.

"We remind all concerned that the government and the president elected in Kenya is for Somalia and not Somaliland," said Abdullahi Mohamed Du'ale, the Information Minister of Somaliland. "The people of Somaliland and its government are ready to confront any enemy that tries to violate its borders and territory with force."

Clashes have erupted in the last month between Somaliland and

Puntland over Sool and Sanaag, two areas along the border.

The newly elected president stressed that cooperation is essential to stabilize the country. "I have no grudge against anybody, but I will seek their cooperation," said Ahmed. "They should work with me so that we help the Somali people to get out of the fiasco and quagmire that they are in."

Hussein Aideded, Chairman of the Somali United Congress faction, urged that the key to uniting the country is to make sure each clan is represented equally in the new government.

"[President Ahmed] can easily do this by making each and every Somali clan feel well and democratically represented in the government," said Aideded. "But if major clans feel left out, he will have to work very hard to make the Somali people trust his leadership."

Aideded also said that if intense clashes erupt again under the newly formed government, the international community would not be willing to support another peace process in the future.

Taiz Governor & U.S. Ambassador discuss cooperation

Taiz Governor, Judge Ahmed Abdullah al-Hijri, received the American Ambassador to Yemen, H.E. Thomas C. Krajieski in the Governorate Bureau on Wednesday 13th October. A number of issues were discussed relating to Yemeni-American Cooperation and what support the American Government has presented towards a number of service projects in the Taiz Governorate, and its development horizons.

The American Ambassador expressed his pleasure at visiting Taiz in addition

to expressing his hope of fortifying the economic and commercial cooperation between the two friendly countries. Yemen and America positively reflected on the cooperation lines between the two countries. The members of the Consultative council, Ali Muhammad Saeed Ana'am, and the Head of Planning & Financial development Committee in the Local council, Mr. Shouqi Ahmed Hayel Saeed Ana'am, and the Economical Attache' of the American Embassy in Sana'a, Mr. Jouli Kim, also attended the meeting.

YCIC inaugurates production line No. 7

TAIZ BUREAU

Judge Ahmed Abdullah al-Hagri, Taiz governor, inaugurated production Line 7 of the expansion of the Biscuit factory belonging to Yemen Company for Industry and Commerce (YCIC), a member of Hayel Saeed Group, on Wednesday October 13th. The governor had a walk through the different departments of the factory and was briefed on the stages of production that distinguish the new production line.

Eng. Abdullah Abduljabbar Hayel, General Director of YCIC, explained the stages of developing the factory since 1971, pointing out that the new 84 meter long production line produces 41 tons daily. He denoted that

the production line 7 is considered amongst the most developed biscuit factories in the world. The factory also creates new employment opportunities; its employees reach 2000.

The governor was accompanied by Ali Mohammed Saeed, Member of Al-Shura Council and Chairman of Hayel Group, Muneer Ahmed Hayel, Ammar al-Mu'alem, Zaid al- Nihari, Ammar al-Yadumi and a number of officials and pressmen.

It is worth mentioning that the company attained many international prizes such as, Arch of Europe for Quality and Technology, the Good Manufacturing Practice (GMP) level A, Certificate of Compliance ISO 9000, and the HACCP Certificate from SGS International.

Oil Company finances tourist projects

BY YASSER AL-MAYASI
YEMEN TIMES STAFF

An agreement on financing projects of tourist facilities on the highways was signed on Wednesday October 13th 2004 by the Ministry of Culture and Yemen Oil Company. The agreement states that the company will finance eight tourist facilities between Sana'a, Dhamar, Aden, Taiz, and Ibb. The agreement included constructing 300 bathrooms worth about YR 42 million. Ministry of Culture and Tourism in coordination with Oil Company will decide the authority that will execute the projects while the ministry is going to pay for the advertisements and campaigns that help the facilities.

The facilities will offer tourists the necessary services on the highways.

"The Oil Company finances these projects to participate in supporting the tourist sector and to help in the development," Omar al-Arhabi, General Director of Oil Company, said.

Nabeel al-Faqeeh, Undersecretary of the Ministry of Culture and Tourism for



Representatives of the Ministry of Culture and Oil Company signing the agreement

the tourism sector, confirmed that: "The agreement is considered a qualitative transfer to improve the services offered to local and foreign tourists, especially

Readers' Voice

Yemen Times features "Readers' Voice" a popular way for our readers to interact with us. This is your opportunity to have a say on world and local affairs.

This edition's question:

As a Yemeni living abroad, how optimistic do you feel about Yemen's economic recovery?
- I believe things will be better
- I think things will go worse
- Things will stay as they are

last edition's question:

If John Kerry wins the US elections, do you think that this would be better or worse for Yemen?
It would make no difference

It would be better 37%
It would be worse 32%
31%

Go to our website at: yementimes.com/#poll and have your voice heard!

Coast Guard rescue a ship & its crew

The recently established Yemeni coast guard, on Thursday morning rescued a sinking ship and its crew. The ship crashed into Al-Zubair Island and this pierced the ship letting water inside.

A coast guard source stated that that the Yemeni police requested help for the deliverance of the crew that was formed of 16 members including Pakistani, Indian and Sri Lankan nationals. The police took them to the port of Hodeida and offered them aid.

Symposium on social & medical insurance

TAIZ BUREAU

The activities of the consultant symposium on the project for reforming the medical sector started on Tuesday October 16th at the Medical Institute in Taiz. The project that is financed by the European Missioner aims to improve the medical conditions in the some districts of Taiz and to also discuss the results of preliminary studies of the projects during the past period in al-Shamaiaaten district.

The symposium was attended by Judge Ahmed Abdullah al-Hagri, Governor of Taiz, who delivered a speech saying that all the executive offices and local authorities in Taiz are ready to be involved in the social medical insurance to let the citizens benefit from these successful projects. The governor directed the medical office to activate all medical units in districts, and provide them with the medical cadre and equipment calling on the private sector to continue investing in this field.

A.U.C. Awards Sheikh Abdulrehman Hayel Saeed

Among a group of Academics, and economists, such as the General Secretary to the Arab League, Mr. Amro Musa, and the previous Secretary General to the Arab League, Dr. Esmat Abdulmajeed, in a magnificent party, the American University in Cairo presented a "Distinguished Alumni Award" to Shiekh Abdulrehman Hayel Saeed. Shiekh Abdulrehman Hayel Saeed is a member of the Board of Directors of al-Saeed Establishment for Science and Culture, a member of the Secretaries panel of the late Haj Hayel Saeed Ana'am Rewards for Sciences and Arts, a member of the Board of Directors of the companies of Hayel Saeed Ana'am & Company, and an economic and social personality well-known for its grants.



Shiekh Abdulrehman Hayel Saeed

It is worth mentioning that Shiekh Abdulrehman Hayel Saeed Ana'am is a graduate of the Faculty of Economy

& Politics, American University in Cairo, in the Year 1968. It is the University which has participated in graduating a group of most the prominent intellectuals, economists and Scientists, at the regional and international level, since its establishment in 1918.

It is worth mentioning too that the American University in Cairo doesn't award such high level rewards unless it is according to the firm traditions and in conformance with the objective standards it is proud of. Such awards are only offered to distinguished personalities who graduated from the university and who are distinguished by their contributions to economics, developmental or charitable lines of work, or in scientific and cultural activity, or general knowledge.

On the occasion of World Mental Health Day Seminar on psychiatry

By Yemen Times Staff

Under the auspices of Mr. Abdulaziz Abdulghani, Chairman of the Consultative Council, Chairman of the Supreme Council for Psychiatry, and Dr. Mohammed Al-No'ami, Minister of Public Health and Population, the Ministry of Public Health and Population, in cooperation with the International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC), the World Federation of Mental Health and the Universities of Sana'a and Aden, organized the second seminar on "Presence and Future of

Psychiatry in Yemen" during October 12-13. It came on the occasion of the World Mental Health Day, October 10.

The opening session was attended by Dr. Abbas Al-Mutawakil, Secretary of the Ministry of Public Health, Dr. Ahmed Makki, member of the Consultative Council and a group of Yemeni psychiatrists from different provinces.

The seminar included a number of sessions on academic rehabilitation, psychiatric international organizations, and psychiatric services in the governmental and private sectors.

Each session was concluded by a discussion.

"The specialists discuss the health policies in Yemen and are expected to come out with realistic and achievable recommendations," said Martin Amacher, Head of ICRC delegation, at the opening session.

The seminar presented recommendations, which were discussed at the end of the seminar, and certificates were presented to the participants.

The seminar aimed to boost awareness and push forward the issues of psychiatry in Yemen.

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because tourists suffer from a lack of services on the highways that link the provinces with each other; the provision of facilities supports tourism."

Somaliland seeks open trade with Yemen

By YEMEN TIMES STAFF

In a time the Yemeni government asserted on the national unity of Somalia, specifically in the congratulatory message of President Ali Abdullah Saleh sent to recently elected Somali President Abdullahi Yusuf Ahmed, efforts by prominent figures from Somaliland are being made to enhance direct trade relations with their self-declared independent state.

The case becomes more of a concern with the recent reports that the Somaliland government said it would use force if its borders are threatened after the election of Somalia's new president, whose government is fiercely opposed to Mr Abdullahi who claims two regions within Somaliland belong to Somalia.

But in Somaliland, independent for 13 years but without any international recognition, the election of Mr Abdullahi has not been well received. Its government refused to participate in the peace process in neighboring



Ibrahim Othman Yousuf explains benefits of Yemen-Somaliland trade

Kenya is for Somalia and not Somaliland," Information Minister Abdillahi Mohamed Du'ale said after the elections.

A delegate from Somaliland in Yemen

Mr. Ibrahim Othman Yousuf, a prominent figure and investor from Somaliland has been sent by the President of his state Mohammed Ibrahim Egal to Yemen with a letter presented to Yemeni President Saleh urging him to exert more efforts to have direct trade links with

Somaliland.

In an interview to Yemen Times, Mr. Othman openly requested that his mission not be seen as a call for complete political recognition of Somaliland, which is something he greatly desires, but rather to enhance

bilateral trade relations with Somaliland. "There are many possibilities and potentials in cooperation between our two states. I am not demanding that Yemen recognized Somaliland as an independent state but rather to at least help the Somali brothers in this part of the country develop their standard of living by providing them with the means to boost their country's economy."

This comes in a time some direct trade activities have already started – according to Mr. Othman – as the Yemeni Economic Corporation had signed an agreement around a week ago with the Hargeisa Chamber of Trade to explore potential cooperation in importing sheep from Somaliland and exporting some manufactured goods from Yemen.

"We have made some positive steps in establishing key talks with Yemeni investors and businessmen who seem to be keen to invest in Somaliland," Othman said.

"I personally believe that the fact that Somaliland is not recognized politically as an impendent state doesn't mean we are not independent. We are an independent people, we have our borders, our currency, our capital, and most important of all, our history as different people from the rest of Somalia."

"The fact that Yemen doesn't recognize Somaliland as an independent state doesn't mean we cannot work together for the mutual benefit of both parties," he added.

It is worth noting that Ethiopia is currently the most well-connected country with Somaliland even though it also doesn't recognize it as an independent country.

"We have almost daily flights from Addis Ababa to Hargeisa. The Ethiopian counterpart understood the benefit of having such a flight and I am sure if Yemen Airways thinks about it, they would also take such an initiative," Othman suggested.

However, in total contrast to the Yemeni unity, Somaliland decided to breakaway from the country in 1991, and in fact was the first country who recognized the self-proclaimed inde-

pendence of South Yemen during the 1994 civil war, causing the issue of having political relations with Somaliland extremely difficult.

"I understand the sensitivity of the issue of accepting our country as independent, especially by Yemen, but I wanted to raise the issue of possibility to work together in the economic, social, and cultural aspects rather than the political dimension," Othman added.

It is worth noting that despite continuous efforts to encourage trade relations between Somaliland and Yemen, little has been achieved so far in this respect, and the government of Somaliland is insistent on pursuing new ways to drive the attention of independent investors and thinkers in Yemen to establish links with their counterparts in Somaliland hopefully to help boost its economy and generate income from investments. This becomes a potential case due to the fact that the Breakaway state has been known to be more peaceful and secure than the other parts of the country.

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Erratum

We would like to call the attention of our readers that there was an unintentional mistake the sequence of names of persons appearing in the photo published with our news story

of the German Library at Sana'a University in our issue of 14 October 2004.

The persons appearing in that photo shall be as follows:

(from left to right) Prof. Dr. Ali Mansoor, German Cultural Attaché Hendrik Selle, Prof. Dr. Tareq Al-Janabi.

We apologize to our readers and the honourable persons appearing in the photo for that mistake with our best regards.



Republic of Yemen Ministry of Transport



الجمهورية اليمنية
وزارة النقل

CALL FOR EXPRESSION OF INTEREST

to operate the Aden Container Terminal c.a. under a Concession Agreement

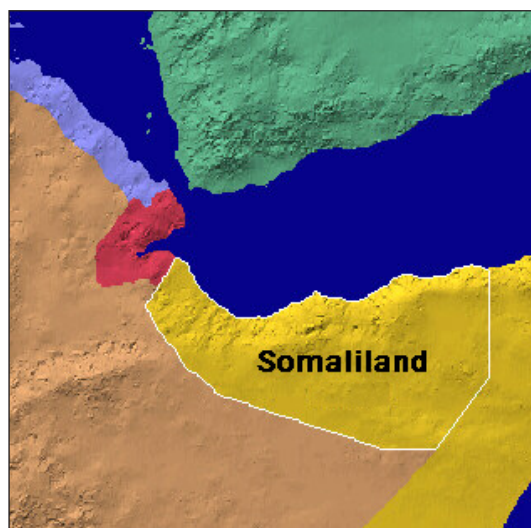
- The Government of Yemen (GoY) is planning to conclude a Concession Agreement with an experienced firm, which is able and willing to operate the Aden Container Terminal (ACT) jointly with the Ma'ala Container Terminal in the port of Aden, Republic of Yemen. The GoY will be the contract partner and the Ministry of Transport the Executing Agency (EA). A Ministerial Committee chaired by the Deputy Prime Minister (Minister of Finance) has been established by the Cabinet of Ministers in order to facilitate the project implementation, representing all public interests. The Rotterdam maritime Group (RMG) will act as legal, financial and technical adviser to the Government and the Ministerial Committee.
- This call for an Expression of Interest (EOI) signifies the start of an open, transparent and objective bidding procedure comprising the following phases:
 - The EOI.
 - The shortlisting prospective bidders.
 - Request for Quotation to selected bidders on the basis of extensive Tender Documentation.
 - Tender Evaluation and Ranking of the bidders by the Ministerial Committee, assisted by RMG.
 - Selection by the GoY.
 - Contract negotiations and conclusion of a Concession Agreement.
 - Handover of the terminal area and start of container operations.
- The port of Aden is strategically located near main trade routes between Europe, Africa and Asia. It has a naturally protected harbor. The Aden Container terminal (ACT) provides 700 meters of quay length with a depth alongside of 16.0 meter with large terminal and back-up areas. The Ma'alla Terminal provides a quay length of 375 meters, with a depth of 11 meters alongside and currently handles only feeders for local containers.
- The Concession area will comprise both terminals, the Aden Container Terminal and the nearby Ma'alla Container Terminal, which will have to be operated as one facility.
- The Concession Agreement will finally have the character of an Equip-Transfer (EOT) contract, which may be converted into a full Build-Operate-Transfer (BOT) contract once new facilities have to be constructed as a result of traffic growth. The Term of the Concession will be 30 to 35 years.
- The Operator will be free to set its tariffs, however the GoY may apply a light form of regulation on tariff setting for domestic containers.
- The GoY with *inter alia* take the following issues into consideration when selecting prospective bidders on the ACT and Ma'alla terminals:
 - Their ability to attract a substantial amount of transshipment cargo;
 - Their willingness to share financial risks with the GoY;
 - Their relations with major container lines;
 - Their willingness to accept a local partner and/or the Government of Yemen as (minority) shareholder;
 - The financial position of the prospective bidder.
- Jointly with the EOI, a prospective bidder shall submit the following documentation:
 - Certificate of incorporation, authenticated by a Public Notary;
 - Last Audited Annual Accounts and company structure;
 - Overview of proven experience in the field of container handling.
 After the submission date, the prospective bidder might be required to provide additional information on the above on short notice, at the request of the Ministerial Committee.
- An EOI, duly signed by an authorized representative, should reach the EA not later than November 5th 2004. It is strongly recommended that the EOI be forwarded by courier and advise to the EA by facsimile of the date of dispatch, airway bill number, and expected date of arrival of the EOI. Information provided by prospective bidders will remain confidential.
- A short information memorandum will be sent to a prospective bidder upon his request, to be made to the RMG through its email address: board@port.rmg.al or can be found on the website of the Port of Aden: <http://www.portofaden.com>

On behalf of the Government of Yemen

Nominated Representative of the Ministerial Committee:

Mr. Omer Mohsin Al-Amoudi
Minister of Transport
Address EA:
Ministry of Transport
Sana'a, Republic of Yemen
Tel: 00 967 1 260903
Fax: 00 967 1 260901 or 00 967 1 260908

Mr. Ahmed Ghaleb
Deputy Minister of Finance
Sanaa, Republic of Yemen
Tel: 00 967 1 500715
Fax: 00 967 1 260396
Email: mofghaleb@y.net.ye



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Palestinians pick up pieces after Israeli offensive

Gaza Strip, Oct 16 (Reuters) - Palestinians picked through the rubble of dozens of homes in a sprawling refugee camp on Saturday after Israel ended its most powerful assault on the Gaza Strip in four years of bloodshed.

A spokesman for Prime Minister Ariel Sharon said the army would return to northern Gaza if there was more Palestinian rocket fire into Israel, which killed two toddlers on Sept. 29 and triggered the 17-day Israeli offensive.

More than 100 Palestinians were killed when Israel sent in tanks, infantry and armoured bulldozers after pledging to hit militants hard before Sharon's planned removal of settlers and soldiers from Gaza in 2005.

"It is part of a continuing planned series of Israeli attacks to attempt to bring our people to their knees, and this, of course, will never be achieved," Palestinian Prime Minister Ahmed Qurie told reporters in the West Bank city of Ramallah.

Residents in Jabalya, a refugee camp of 100,000 and the scene of fierce fighting between troops and gunmen, said Israeli tanks and bulldozers churning through its alleyways

had destroyed dozens of homes and torn up roads and water pipes.

"The whole house is rubble and there is no way we can find anything," said Ezzeya Daher, 50, as hundreds of people picked through mounds of debris to search for belongings. "Now we are refugees for a second time."

Relaxing its military grip as Palestinians began the Islamic fasting month of Ramadan, Israel followed up the pullback by reopening main roads in Gaza that it had blocked at the start of the offensive.

Full circle

For Aisha Abu Al-Jedian, 70, history had come full circle. Sitting on the wreckage of her home, she said she was a refugee from a village near what is now the southern Israeli town of Sderot, where the two children were killed.

"Let them (militants) continue to rocket Sderot until the (Israelis) leave us alone," she said.

Palestinian officials estimated more than 100 houses had been destroyed in northern Gaza. They said it would take two days to arrive at a final fig-

ure.

One four-storey building in Jabalya had about 200 bullet holes. Its owner, 70-year-old Abed Abu Warda, said he and 30 members of his extended family had squeezed into one room to try to avoid the gunfire.

Palestinian medics said Israeli forces killed at least 62 militants and 43 other Palestinians believed to be civilians during the operation. Gunmen killed three Israelis in north Gaza and a Thai farm worker in a Jewish settlement.

"We are determined not to leave Gaza under the hail of Qassam rocket fire," said Sharon's spokesman, Raanan Gissin. "We will take all the necessary steps to prevent and reduce as much as possible the firing of Qassam rockets into Israel."

Qassam attacks have complicated Sharon's efforts to overcome rightist opposition to his plan to remove all 21 Gaza settlements and four of 120 in the West Bank, starting next May.

Polls show most Israelis support a Gaza pullout, which goes to a parliamentary vote on Oct. 25. Opponents see it as "rewarding Palestinian terrorism".



Palestinian women hug each other while standing in the rubble of their house which was demolished by Israeli bulldozers, after the Israeli tank withdrawal from the Jabalya refugee camp northern Gaza Strip October 16, 2004. Israeli tanks rumbled out of the Gaza Strip, ending a massive 16-day offensive that killed at least 100 Palestinians in an attempt to stop rocket fire into the Jewish state. REUTERS

Iraq insurgents hit churches, kill four US troops

BAGHDAD, Oct 16 (Reuters) - Explosions damaged churches in Baghdad on Saturday and the U.S. military reported the deaths of four more American troops in bomb attacks elsewhere in Iraq.

A suicide car bomber killed three U.S. troops, along with an Iraqi civilian, in Qaim near the Syrian border on Friday. The fourth died after a car bomb blast in Mosul the same day.

A mortar attack on Qaim also killed four Iraqis and wounded 30 on Saturday, a local hospital doctor said.

The U.S. military denied reports carried by Kuwait's official news agency KUNA that Jordanian militant Abu Musab al-Zarqawi and nine other militants had been captured by U.S. forces during raids on homes in Falluja on Friday.

"We have heard those reports and we do not believe they are true," Lieutenant Colonel Steve Boylan, a U.S. military spokesman in Baghdad, told Reuters. "We have been in contact with the marines based around Falluja and we have heard nothing about those reports through our channels," he said.

In another challenge for the U.S.-backed interim government, a group led by Zarqawi vowed to attack foreign trucks bringing petrol and diesel into Iraq.

Five churches were hit in a string of bomb attacks before dawn that seemed designed to intimidate the country's small but deep-rooted Christian community, already shaken by a deadlier series of bombings of churches that killed 11 people in August.

"If they don't want us in Iraq, let them say it and we will leave," said Samir Hermiz, 40, standing by a Catholic church reduced to ashes. "I'm really thinking of leaving Iraq."

Iraq's 650,000 Christians, about three percent of the population, are mostly Chaldeans, Assyrians and Catholics.

ZARQAWI THREAT

The U.S. military has accused Zarqawi of carrying out bombings aimed at fuelling sectarian strife and civil war.

Some Iraqis say Washington exaggerates the threat from Zarqawi to disguise the strength of Iraq's homegrown insurgency.



An Iraqi Christian youth clears the debris in the Syrian Orthodox church of St Thomasa after it came under attack overnight in Baghdad, October 16. Bombs damaged five churches in Baghdad in coordinated overnight attacks on Saturday, but there were no casualties, an Interior Ministry official said. REUTERS

Zarqawi's Tawhid and Jihad group claimed responsibility for Thursday's suicide bombings that killed up to four Americans in the heart of Baghdad's fortified Green Zone, seat of the government and home to the U.S. and British embassies.

A Tawhid and Jihad pamphlet, shown to Reuters by an Oil Ministry official, said non-Iraqi trucks bringing in imported petrol and diesel would be "subject to destruction".

The pamphlet was distributed to oil officials in Mosul and elsewhere in the north, and to traders importing oil products.

"The attacks by Zarqawi and others are helping disrupt supply. We are taking the threat seriously," the official said.

The government, trying to stamp its authority on all of Iraq before January elections, on Wednesday told the rebel-held city of Falluja to hand over Zarqawi and his men, said by the U.S. military to be holed up there, or face

assault.

U.S. marines, backed by Iraqi forces, said they had set up what they described as a "dynamic cordon" around Falluja since Thursday, setting up checkpoints and carrying out ground assaults on objectives outside the city's confines.

It said the stepped up measures were designed to "disrupt freedom of movement" by insurgents fleeing the city. Many non-combatant residents are also trying to leave fearing attack.

Residents said Falluja, 50 km (32 miles) west of Baghdad, was quieter after heavy U.S. air strikes and ground operations aimed at Zarqawi targets on Thursday and Friday.

But they said U.S. forces bombarded western Falluja, destroying a house and killing a baby girl on Saturday. Reuters television footage showed the dead infant in hospital with its arm blown off. Three other children and a woman were wounded.

The U.S. military said recent air

raids were intended to thwart attacks it said Zarqawi's network was planning during the Muslim fasting month of Ramadan, which has just begun.

Fears of a looming confrontation in Falluja rose on Friday when U.S. forces detained Khaled al-Jumaili, a cleric who had been the city's leading negotiator in talks with the government.

In Baghdad, a rocket or mortar round that hit the compound of the Ibn al-Bitar hospital killed one person and wounded five. A rocket also struck the car park of a hotel used by foreign news organisations and diplomats, but caused no casualties.

Up to 650 British troops may be moved nearer Baghdad to cover for U.S. units battling insurgents in Falluja and elsewhere, British newspapers reported. A Defence Ministry spokesman in London confirmed discussions had taken place with American commanders but said no decision had been taken.

Iran rejects any deal to end uranium enrichment

TEHRAN, Oct 16 (Reuters) - Iran said on Saturday it would reject any proposal to halt uranium enrichment, a step European Union diplomats are proposing to end a row over whether Iran is seeking atomic weapons.

EU diplomats have said they are seeking U.S. and Russian support for a deal that would ask Iran to give up uranium enrichment in return for technical and economic assistance.

"Any proposal which deprives Iran of its legitimate right to a fuel cycle is not acceptable," Hossein Mousavian, Iran's head of foreign policy on the Supreme National Security Council, told state television.

However, he said he was not responding to a specific offer.

"We have not yet received the text of the proposal and have to see what it contains to assess it," he said.

Uranium enriched to a low level can be used to fuel nuclear power stations such as one Iran is building at the southern port of Bushehr.

If enriched further it can be used in nuclear warheads. But oil-rich Iran denies accusations from Washington that it has military nuclear ambitions and argues its atomic programme is dedicated solely to meeting booming demand for electricity.

EU diplomats have said Iran's chief nuclear negotiator Hassan Rohani will visit Europe over the next two weeks as part of Iran's diplomatic efforts to avoid being sent to the U.N. Security Council in November for possible sanctions.

EU WILL CONTINUE TO PUSH

The French Foreign Ministry in Paris, asked about Mousavian's remarks, said France would still push

for Iran to give up its enrichment programme.

"Time is short. France and its partners will continue to work with the Iranian authorities ... with, as their goal, securing the complete suspension by Iran of its enrichment and reprocessing activities," a spokesman said.

Iran mines uranium ore in its central desert near the city of Yazd, and Iranian politicians have been united in saying that the fuel cycle, from cutting uranium ore out of the ground to producing fuel, should be entirely in Iranian hands.

"Iran will supply fuel to its power stations from its own resources," Hassan Firouzabadi, chief of staff of the armed forces, told Sharq newspaper. "Western countries want to get our oil then sell us nuclear fuel at tens or hundreds of times more than its price," he added.

U.S. presidential hopeful John Kerry and his allies have proposed "calling Iran's bluff" by offering to supply atomic fuel so that Iran could give up its enrichment programme.

Foreign ministers from Britain, France and Germany won Iran's guarantee to suspend uranium enrichment when they visited Tehran last year.

But the promise lapsed and Iran has since restarted making parts for centrifuges that enrich uranium by spinning it at supersonic speed, and has started producing uranium hexafluoride, the centrifuges' feed gas.

Israel has increased pressure on Iran's enrichment activities by buying in weaponry that could target centrifuge bunkers, deep underground near the central town of Natanz.

Pakistan says to give extra security to Chinese

ISLAMABAD, Oct 16 (Reuters) - Pakistan will provide extra security to Chinese nationals working in the country and hunt down a former Guantanamo Bay inmate who masterminded the abduction of two Chinese engineers, a minister said on Saturday.

Interior Minister Aftab Ahmed Khan Sherpao said after meeting visiting Chinese officials that Pakistan will take all necessary steps to bring the al Qaeda-linked tribesman who directed the six-day hostage drama to justice.

"As the president said, the mastermind of this operation, Abdullah Mehsud, he would be dealt with by the law enforcing agencies," Sherpao said two days after the death of one of the Chinese engineers.

Wang Peng died after a rescue operation by army commandos on Thursday.

"We are not going to let (him) go," Sherpao said of Abdullah. "Whatever operations are necessary, they will be taken," he said.

Officials at the Pakistan's interior ministry briefed the visiting Chinese about the kidnapping and the additional security arrangements for Chinese nationals in Pakistan, Sherpao said.

"There will be a multi-layered security system so that such incidents do not occur again," he said.

Some 3,000 Chinese are working on a number of development projects in the country.

"The Chinese are fully satisfied with the operation and the security arrangements and have assured continuity of cooperation," said Sherpao.



Pakistan's Prime Minister Shaukat Aziz (R) talks with Chinese assistant to the Minister of Commerce, Chen Jian (L) in Islamabad October 16. Pakistan said on Saturday it would provide extra security to the Chinese working in the country and vowed to pursue a former Guantanamo Bay inmate who masterminded the abduction of two Chinese engineers.

Earlier, a Pakistani air force plane flew Wang's remains to his hometown in the eastern Chinese province of Shandong. The other Chinese engineer, Wang Ende, is already in Beijing.

The two men, both employees of state-owned Chinese firm Sino Hydro Corp, were heading to work on a dam project in the remote South Waziristan tribal region, about 330 km (200 miles) southwest of Islamabad, when they were abducted last Saturday.

China is a traditional ally of Pakistan, supplying it with arms and hundreds of millions of dollars in development finance. Beijing had urged Islamabad to do its utmost to rescue the engineers and to increase security for their co-workers.

It was the second time this year Chinese workers came to harm at the hands of militants opposed to Pakistan's role in the U.S.-led war on terror. In May, three technicians work-

ing on a port project were killed and nine wounded in a bomb attack in the southern Pakistani city of Gawadar.

Hundreds of foreign militants, including Uzbeks, Chechens and Arabs, are thought to be holed up in the tribal region, protected by Pakistani tribesmen. U.S. officials believe Osama bin Laden and other al Qaeda leaders may also be hiding somewhere along the rugged border between Pakistan and Afghanistan.

African leaders to meet in Libya on Darfur conflict

TRIPOLI, Oct 16 (Reuters) - Five African leaders meet in the Libyan capital on Sunday aiming to spur talks to end a conflict that has displaced about 1.5 million people in Sudan's western Darfur region and created a humanitarian crisis.

African Union-sponsored talks in Nigeria between the warring parties are expected to resume on Oct. 21 after collapsing last month with Darfur rebels saying the Khartoum government had refused key security demands such as disarming marauding Arab militias.

Sudan has accused the United States of encouraging rebels to take a hard line in the negotiations, seen by many as a test of the AU's ability to respond to crises in its own backyard.

Libyan leader Muammar Gaddafi, who has championed the cause of African unity, invited the leaders of Sudan, Nigeria, Egypt and Chad to the summit. Nigeria is the current AU president, while Chad and Egypt, like Libya, share a border with Sudan.

The meeting is expected to take place late on Sunday, after breaking the day's fast during the Muslim month of Ramadan.

Sudanese officials said the summit would support the Nigeria talks and, by including African Arab states, would help ensure the conflict was not misrepresented as an ethnic fight between Arabs and Africans, as some rebels have described it.

Analysts said the gathering's main significance would be to show that

regional powers were willing to engage in a crisis that many fear could tear apart a country already coping with a separate war in the south and facing unrest in the east.

"It is important that (regional) powers act on their own national initiative ... and step up to the plate," said Jonathan Stevenson, an analyst at the Washington office of Britain's International Institute for Strategic Studies.

Darfur rebels, who took up arms in 2003, have also been invited to Tripoli to meet Gaddafi, the maverick leader once ostracised by the West but who has been rebuilding ties with Western capitals.

"We think Libya can play a very vital role ... The leader (Gaddafi) wants to listen directly to us so he can take some kind of an initiative," Tag el-Din Bashir Nyam, a member of the rebel Justice and Equality Movement, said in Tripoli.

The rebels, who will not attend the summit, have accused Khartoum of neglecting the region and of arming the Arab Janjaweed militia to attack non-Arab villages and kill their inhabitants. Khartoum denies supporting the Janjaweed, calling them outlaws.

The U.N. Security Council has threatened Sudan with possible sanctions if it does not stop the violence, which the United States has described as genocide. The U.N. says the conflict has killed up to 50,000 people and has created the world's worst humanitarian disaster.

India's Congress wins polls in key industrial state

BOMBAY, Oct 16 (Reuters) - India's ruling Congress party won power in a giant state on Saturday, a victory that will boost the fortunes of Italian-born Sonia Gandhi's party and strengthen Prime Minister Manmohan Singh's minority national coalition.

The vote in the western state of Maharashtra, India's second most populous, was the first major political test since Congress scored a shock victory in national elections in May, sweeping the Hindu nationalists out of power.

"We have won the election and we will form the government," Margaret Alva, a senior Congress leader, told reporters. "This is a vote for all the good work done by our state government and in favour of Sonia Gandhi's leadership."

Congress and its allies won 140 seats in the 288-member Maharashtra state assembly at the

end of counting, according to preliminary results from the Election Commission.

Though that is still short of the half-way mark of 145 seats, the alliance is expected to easily form a government with the support of smaller, pro-Congress groups.

Maharashtra, also India's second most industrialised state and home to Bombay, the country's financial and film capital, is a prized province to rule.

The state of 100 million people — the size of Germany and the Netherlands put together — accounts for 12 percent of national GDP, pays two thirds of India's corporate taxes and 37 percent of personal income taxes.

Jubilant workers of the Congress and its ally, the



India's Congress party workers raise their hands as they celebrate their party victory in Bombay October 16.

Nationalist Congress Party, set off fire-crackers outside the party office in the heart of Bombay's business hub and danced on the streets, beating drums and shouting victory slogans.

A new state chief minister would be chosen early next week after talks between the two parties, a Congress official said.

Consolidates Manmohan singh govt

Elsewhere in Indian Kashmir, Chief Minister Mufti Mohammad Syed won a by-election to enter the lower house of the state legislature, a victory expected to boost his standing in disputed, revolt-torn state.

Though analysts considered Congress had a slight edge in Maharashtra before the polls, they felt it was vulnerable to any

tendency to vote against the party in power.

A spate of suicides by debt-ridden farmers, deaths of tribal children due to malnutrition and water and power shortages could also have hurt the ruling party.

"Despite bad governance, the Congress won mainly because the opposition election strategy was not well-planned," said Bharat Kumar Raut, editor of the Maharashtra Times newspaper.

"The BJP and (its ally) Shiv Sena are largely urban parties and they had no answers to the Congress strategy in the villages," he told Reuters.

Raut and Congress workers also said that Gandhi's refusing the post of prime minister in May and handing it over to economist-turned-politician Singh, created an emotional appeal among voters, particularly Maharashtra's women.

The BJP was hoping to extract a

measure of revenge for its loss in May and gain momentum in Maharashtra ahead of three more state elections early next year. But the party managed to win only 118 seats compared to 128 seats in 1999.

"The Maharashtra verdict consolidates the government at the centre. It's a green signal to the Manmohan Singh government to move steadfastly and decisively without looking at the left or the right," political analyst N. Bhaskar Rao of New Delhi's Centre for Media Studies told Reuters.

Singh's government depends on the support of communist parties and has been under considerable leftist pressure over crucial economic and political decisions.

"It is also a message for the Congress to consolidate its position in states like Bihar which are expected to go to the polls soon," Rao said.

S.Korea says sends 5 N.Korean seamen back home

SEOUL, Oct 16 (Reuters) - South Korea has repatriated five North Korean seamen it rescued after they drifted into the South's territorial waters, an official at Seoul's Unification Ministry said on Saturday.

South Korea handed over three seamen and their 5-tonne wooden boat at the maritime border between the rival states in the East Sea, also known as the Sea of Japan, the official said.

Two others whose vessel was damaged in the Yellow Sea were repatriated separately through the Panmunjom truce village, set in the Demilitarised Zone which divides the peninsula, he added.

"Three seamen found in the East Sea took their boat back after having their engine fixed, but the two rescued from the Yellow Sea couldn't because their vessel boat was severely damaged," the official said by telephone.

The two Koreas remain technically at war since the 1950-53 Korean War ended with an armed truce rather than a peace treaty.



Two North Koreans, who were rescued by the South Korean Navy after their troubled boat took them to South Korea's western sea border on Thursday, walk towards the border line at the truce village of Panmunjom in the demilitarised zone, about 55 km (31 miles) north of Seoul, October 16.

Indonesian cleric charged over Bali bombings

JAKARTA, Oct 16 (Reuters) - Indonesian cleric Abu Bakar Bashir has been charged with involvement in the nightclub bombings in the holiday island of Bali that killed 202 people, an official said on Saturday.

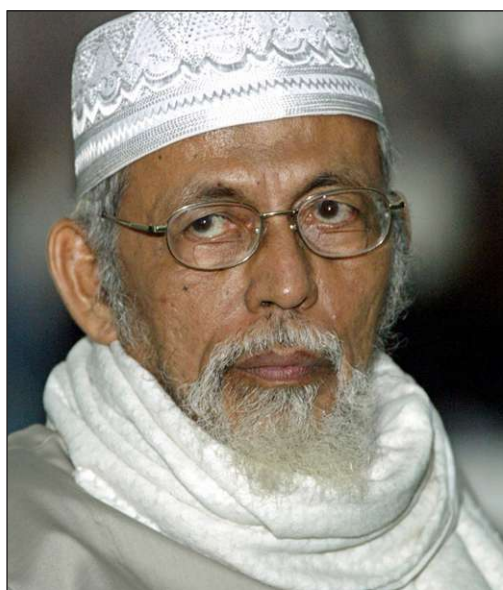
"He is charged for having a part in the Bali incident," state prosecutor Andi Herman told Reuters.

Bashir was charged under the criminal law Number 187 for his involvement in the Bali bombing, Herman said, the maximum penalty under which law is life sentence.

The accused leader of the al Qaeda-linked Jemaah Islamiah (JI) militant network was charged on Friday with involvement in a suicide bombing attack at the U.S.-run J.W. Marriott hotel in Jakarta in 2003.

Herman said the charges against Bashir over the Marriott bombing were brought under the tough anti-terror law Number 15, which carries death penalty.

A new trial against Bashir could start within two weeks



Indonesian Muslim cleric Abu Bakar Bashir listens to his legal team during his trial in a Jakarta court in this April 30 file photo. Indonesian prosecutors filed terrorism charges on Oct. 15, against cleric Abu Bakar Bashir, a major step toward a new trial of the accused leader of Southeast Asia's Islamic militant Jemaah Islamiah network. "It has been submitted to the South Jakarta court today," Didik Istiyanto, S. Jakarta state prosecutor, told Reuters.

after prosecutors filed terrorism charges against him on Friday.

Bashir, who denies any links with JI or terrorism, was first arrested days after the Bali blasts amid suspicions he led JI and had ties to violent acts.

However, following a trial using the ordinary criminal code, the court said there was not enough evidence to prove Bashir led the group, and ultimately only convictions related to immigration violations were upheld in appeals courts.

After Bashir had served time on those convictions, Indonesian police detained Bashir under the anti-terror laws.

JI has been blamed not just for attacks in Indonesia, the world's fourth-most populous country, but for planned and actual violence throughout the region.

A car bomb outside Australia's embassy in Jakarta last month, which killed nine, is the latest attack intelligence experts blame on the group.

Bush: Kerry unfit to lead amid “great threats”

SUNRISE, Fla., Oct 16 (Reuters) - President George W. Bush labeled Sen. John Kerry on Saturday a political opportunist who is unfit to lead amid “great threats” to America.

“At a time of great threats to our country, at a time of great challenges in the world, the commander in chief must stand on principle — not the shifting sands of political convenience,” Bush said at a campaign rally in the crucial battleground state of Florida.

The scathing tone of Bush's remarks highlighted the intensity of the presidential race as it moves into its final stretch with the candidates locked in a virtual dead heat.

Kicking off a bus tour in southeastern Florida, Bush cited Kerry's vote a year ago to oppose a request for \$87 billion to fund the Iraq war and said that was at odds with his earlier vote to authorize the use of force.

“His contradictions call into question his credibility and his ability to lead our nation,” Bush said as he seized on the impending one-year anniversary of the vote on funding to revive a favorite attack line against the Massachusetts senator.

Bush portrayed Kerry's opposition to the bill as a politically motivated attempt to curry favor with anti-war Democrats as he sought his party's nomination.

Kerry has said his vote was based on concern over how the administration was conducting the Iraq war and how it was spending the money allocated for it. The senator also said he had wanted the bill to be linked to a rollback on Bush's tax cuts for households making more than \$200,000 a year.

Kerry campaign spokesman Phil Singer called Bush's remarks a “more-of-the-same” rationale for his re-election that won't resonate with Floridians.



U.S. President George W. Bush gestures while addressing supporters at a campaign rally in West Palm Beach, Florida, October 16. President Bush is making three campaign stops in Florida today before returning to Washington. REUTERS

Playing on the anniversary theme, Singer said it has been a full year since a memo by Defense Secretary Donald Rumsfeld warning that the United States faced a “long, hard slog” in Iraq.

WOOING JEWISH VOTERS

At the rally in Sunrise, which is near heavily Democratic Fort Lauderdale, Bush also tried to reach out to Jewish voters, touting a law he signed to track anti-Semitism around the world.

“This nation will keep watch. We will make sure that the ancient

impulse of anti-Semitism never finds a home in the modern world,” the president said.

Jewish Americans backed Democrat Al Gore over Bush by nearly 4-to-1 in the 2000 presidential election.

But the Bush campaign, emphasizing the administration's strong pro-Israel stance, is hoping to expand its share in swing states like Florida, where even a small number of votes can make the difference.

Both campaigns are campaigning hard in Florida — the biggest of the

battleground states with 27 electoral votes — after four hurricanes put overtly political appearances on hold in the state during September while residents cleaned up.

Florida was the site of the bitter 2000 vote recount that was ultimately decided in favor of Bush after the intervention of the U.S. Supreme Court.

Before leaving for Florida, Bush used his weekly radio address to lambaste Kerry as a liberal on taxes and social issues like gay marriage and abortion.

Cuba sends “meddling” European legislators packing

HAVANA, Oct 16 (Reuters) - Cuba's communist government barred three European lawmakers from entering the country on a visit to support Cuban dissidents, a Foreign Ministry statement said on Saturday.

Spanish deputy Jorge Moragas and Dutch legislators Boris Dittrich and Kathleen Ferrier were told to reboard their Air France flight and go back to Paris when they arrived in Havana on Friday night.

Moragas, an opposition party member who led the trip, had planned to meet with opponents of President Fidel Castro in a show of support after the new Spanish government announced it would try to mend relations between the European Union and Cuba.

“The publicly declared objectives of his visit are a flagrant violation of our sovereignty,” the ministry said. “This is a gross political provocation for Cuba.”

The Cuban statement said Moragas was illegally entering Cuba on a tourist visa. Two representatives of non-governmental organizations accompanying the legislators also were sent back to Europe.

Spain's Foreign Ministry said the treatment of Moragas was unacceptable and called in the Cuban ambassador in Madrid for an explanation.

Relations between the EU and Cuba deteriorated last year over European criticism of human rights abuses in

Cuba.

Foreign Ministry doors have been closed to EU diplomats and their calls seldom returned since they began to invite dissidents to EU national day receptions in June 2003 in response to the jailing of 75 Castro opponents.

Spain's new Socialist government seeks to restore dialogue with Havana, arguing that the EU policy based on human rights priorities has led to a dead end.

Recently arrived Spanish Ambassador Carlos Alonso Zaldivar regretted the absence of Cuban authorities at the Spanish national day party on Tuesday, which was attended by dozens of pro-democracy dissidents and wives of political prisoners.

Leading dissident Oswaldo Paya left early in disgust.

In Madrid, Moragas demanded Zaldivar's resignation and announced he was flying to Cuba to meet Paya and Blanca Reyes, wife of journalist and poet Raul Rivero, who is serving a 20-year prison term for his writings.

Moragas visited Cuba in July, also on a tourist visa, to meet with dissidents and “offer financial support to the mercenaries,” the foreign ministry said.

“Our patience has limits and we will respond to the meddling and provocation of enemies who, at the service of the United States, seek to subvert our internal order,” it said.

VACANCY

US NGO working in the field of educational development has the following position openings for Yemenis only on the staff of the Yemen Accelerated Learning Activity (YALA):

BASIC EDUCATION ADVISOR

The Basic Education Advisor is a senior Sana'a-based position on the USAID-funded Yemen EQUIP 1 project reporting to the Chief of Party. Major goals of this project include improving and enhancing access to, quality of and community participation in basic education in Yemen. The project will work schools in five governorates (Sa'ada, Al Jawf, Amran, Marib and Shabwa) in Yemen, with an emphasis on rural districts in those governorates. The Basic Education Advisor will direct technical assistance activities related to the design and delivery of educational services to selected formal schools in the five governorates. Specifically, the Basic Education Advisor will:

- ∞ Liaise with the COP on all matters related to technical assistance to formal schools in the five governorates;
- ∞ Oversee the roll out of EQUIP 1 Yemen in-service teacher training initiatives;
- ∞ Conduct activity planning, implementation, monitoring, follow-up, and reporting for technical work related to formal schools, in collaboration with Chief of Party and MOE partners;
- ∞ Exercise quality control and provide leadership to staff working on the project in the provision of educational assistance to formal schools;
- ∞ Troubleshoot across governorates, identifying problems, interpreting project events (problems/successes) from a variety of angles, proposing “solutions” or responses to keep activities on track and remedy problem areas;
- ∞ Develop and maintain excellent and collaborative working relationships with local MOE officials in governorates and develop strong collegial relationships with relevant MOE officials in Sana'a.
- ∞ Develop the Formal Schools section of annual work plans;
- ∞ Assess staff performance on a regular, informal basis, identify areas of need or weakness, analyze staff training needs and develop and deliver program “solutions” or responses to build capacities of junior staff.

Qualifications for the position include:

- ∞ Master's degree (doctorate preferred) in education, in a sub-field field related to teacher training, and professional development;
- ∞ Substantial experience (10 years plus) working in the field of education, preferably in teacher training and professional development;
- ∞ Outstanding managerial skills, supervisory and communication skills;
- ∞ Fluency in English;
- ∞ Knowledge of/experience with USAID-funded projects preferred but not required.

MONITORING AND EVALUATION (M&E) SPECIALIST

The qualified Monitoring and Evaluation (M&E) Specialist information specialist will lead data gathering, input, analysis, and reporting in connection with a three-year program financed by the U.S. Agency for International Development (USAID). The Yemen Accelerated Learning Activity (YALA) will undertake activities aimed at improving the quality and accessibility of basic education services in Yemen, both formal and informal, as well as mobilizing communities to get involved in local educational issues. Project activities will be focused in Sa'ada, Al-Jawf, Amran, Marib, and Shabwa governorates.

The M&E Specialist will be responsible for participating either on or obtaining information after the fact from multi-disciplinary teams going out to the field to gather baseline information in the education sector, work with local communities to identify local needs and priorities, and implement specific education-related interventions at the local level, including the physical rehabilitation of educational facilities. He or she will also be responsible for sharing information with and harmonizing procedures with other automated data systems operating in Yemen, particularly those already established by the Government of Yemen and USAID.

Qualifications for the position include:

- ∞ University degree in a relevant social sciences field;
- ∞ At least 3 years' experience managing information systems, ideally including experience with Geographic Information Systems (GIS);
- ∞ Relevant training and experience working in the education sector in Yemen;
- ∞ Fluency in English;
- ∞ Experience working with existing information systems of other external donors or the Government of Yemen is desirable.

Interested candidates are requested to send CVs to
John Raleigh, Chief of Party,
AED/EQUIP, P.O. Box 22377, Sana'a, Yemen Fax: 302-728

Words of Wisdom



The fall-out from technology advances, notably globalization, is clearly ahead of us. We need to grapple with this and the sooner we assess the issues and decide on what we need to do, the better prepared we will be. A main component of globalization is liberalization.

Prof. Abdulaziz Al-Saqqaf, (1951 - 1999)
Founder of Yemen Times

OUR
OPINION“Keeping
the promise”

While I was having my evening tea, I decided to look back into the old archive of the Yemen Times. I had the folders of 1995-2004 in front of me. I skimmed through the pages, and tried to find something interesting to write about for this issue's editorial. I read through a number of reports that talked about the public's concerns and expectations. What I found was a common distrust between the Yemeni public and their government. And I'm not talking about a specific government, but rather the public in general do not trust officials, and that was obvious from the different responses of regular people about issues that relate to health, education, security, politics, etc.

I thought to myself that this is in itself a subject for an editorial, and I decided to dedicate this column to it.

So, how did we arrive at this level of mistrust, and what is needed to get our country out of this dilemma?

Ever since my childhood, I didn't want to become a politician. That also includes work in the diplomatic corp. I had the illusion that being a politician makes you unfaithful in communicating with others and extreme diplomacy turns you into a liar rather than a polite communicator.

But nevertheless, that theory of mine evolved to become more solid as days passed by. I realized that indeed, politicians do give promises, but rarely fulfill them. They speak in some ways at some times, and do the total contrary at others.

“But politicians must secure their interests and the interest of their country.” Is what one friend told me. He even suggested that when they present invalid facts as facts or make promises that are impossible to deliver, they are actually doing what they are supposed to do.

Having said that, there is also another dimension to this, and that is reaching power. For a politician, ensuring that he is appointed comes before anything else at all. It is rather more important for a politician to lie, deceive, and make impossible promises than saying the truth that would make the voter, higher chief, or president less inclined to have him appointed.

I remember the days when the government used to say that the economic reforms of the 1990's would yield fascinating results in 10 years or so. But today, the public sees that things have got worse, adding more to their distrust in the government.

Just last week, a statement by Prime Minister Abdulqader ba Jammal said that the electricity outages that have been occurring regularly before Ramadan will stop during the month of Ramadan. I may have been naïve when I told my friends that perhaps this could be the case and we will enjoy a holy month without blackouts. I was made fun of at the time - a week ago - when I said so.

But guess what? The electricity went off again in the first days of Ramadan, making me think that perhaps my friends were right when they made a mockery of my trust in the government.

You can multiply this example by hundreds and thousands happenings from the level of small officials in remote areas who promise to pave streets and expand schools, to the level of top authorities in the hierarchy who claim that the future of Yemen is bright and prosperous with a decent life for all.

In brief, I believe that indeed people have not been asking for too much. All they requested during the last decade was to be delivered what they were promised.

One exact quote from an issue published in 1999 about the Presidential elections is enough to understand what Yemenis want. During the campaign, a street seller had one simple demand for the two candidates: “I just want to say that the most important thing for us is that he keeps his promise!”

The Editor



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First English Newspaper in Yemen, Founded in 1991
by Dr. Abdulaziz Al-Saqqaf

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We need reforms

By ABDULWAHAB AL SOFI
abdulwahab_alsofi@yahoo.com
HODEIDAH

FOR THE YEMEN TIMES

Every year on September 26th, the Yemeni people celebrate the anniversary of the revolution. It was an historical partition between a tyrannical era and an era of development, civilization, democracy and freedom. Nowadays, Yemeni people are celebrating the occasion of the 42nd anniversary. I cannot number the achievements of the revolution during the last 42 years. Through this period, most of Yemen's dreams have come true. Yemeni's have been given their rights in many fields. It is only history which can narrate to the new generation, the achievements of the revolution. I think there is nothing more important than the unity achieved after the revolution. This is aside from, the visible progress in many fields. To prove this, let us bring you back to the dark ages, in order to show the difference.

It is not possible for people of Yemen to compare between the age of the Imam and new modern Yemen. In the Imam's age, Yemen was completely isolated from the outside world. He closed the door to all entries. He refused all other cultures, whether were good or bad. Even Yemeni students, who could infiltrate to their homeland after completing study abroad, were detained by the Imam as they had new thoughts and wanted to improve life. Moreover, he killed many of the educated people.

Although Yemen, in that period, was rich with many Islamic scholars who were fought by the Imam, it was an undeveloped country in which ignorance spread. Consequently, the Yemeni people lived for a long period with undeveloped lives.

Day by day, their suffering gradually increased. Many of those sufferers struggled against the Imam until they became revolutionaries. They sacrificed their lives to make modern Yemen. Some were killed by the Imam but others are still alive to bear witness to the tyranny of the Imam. Those revolutionists fought the Imam to build a better life for all Yemenis. We should remember them as long as we are still alive. They sold their souls to salvage Yemenis from ignorance and despotism.

Thus, the revolution came to produce the Republic by which the Yemeni people's livelihood clearly improves. They have their rights. Many hospitals have been built in every governorate of Yemen. Schools for both girls and boys also were built in every village. Universities were built in most Yemeni cities. Telecommunications and electricity services were made available in all Yemeni cities. On the other hand, what has been mentioned above, does not satisfy many Yemeni observers. The picture is still incomplete and dark. Administrative deterioration continues and bribery has spread to every corner of the government.

The unemployment rate increases year by year. Poverty and disease still dominate all over the Republic of Yemen. The Ministry of public health is

struggling to insure sick people get better care inside Yemen. The big calamity, however, is that Education does not augur welfare at all. Each school year is worse than the one before. The matter has reached a peak. We do not only suffer from illiteracy, but also we unfortunately suffer from 'educated illiterates'. Some people, having finished secondary school, cannot read and write properly. Students who have studied for 12 years in school, but they are really unable to read and write. It seems unbelievable, but it is the truth. If we remain silent about this, what can we expect from our university graduates?

All those responsible for education should be ashamed. In addition to that, electricity is the worst service in Yemen without any competitor. People in some areas taste the bitterness of blackouts for 2 hours a night, daily. Should we remember the era of the Imam during that two hours and celebrate what is going on? The September 26th anniversary should illuminate people as to their better lives, not remind them of the Imam's era. Otherwise there is no need to celebrate. I would like to attract your attention the fact that we need another, new revolution. We are in need of a better revolution, which differs from the September 26th revolution. It is a revolution of the resurrection of our responsible consciences.

We need exclusive reform that starts from the peak of the Pyramid to its basement. Then it will be a real revolution, which, at that time, deserves a big celebration monthly not annually. Will it come? Only our honourable people can determine.

The best terrorist

By: MUA'AD ALI DABWAN.
muad55_a@hotmail.com
FOR THE YEMEN TIMES

No doubt, all of us hear about "terrorism" almost every second. The word has been applied to any man with a beard, if women's faces were a fertile soil for beards they also could have been called terrorists. Through the word has scared a lot of people from the right path, good believers never quit the prophet Mohammed's Sunnah (Peace be upon him) whatever happened. This is the path of such believers, never to leave any the teaching of Islam whatever cost they may pay.

In fact, the terrorists fall into three categories. Firstly the poor terrorist, the man who prays and fasts but does not know any thing about what goes on in the world around him. Some of this type of terrorist, are the followers of Shiekh Mogbel Al-Wadaee (God's mercy be upon him). They condemn any political step attempting to bring about positive change in the ruling power, they have condemned the suicide bombs operated by Palestinians in order to protect their lands. Forgetting the prophet words "the one who dies defending his land is a martyr". These are regarded by counter terrorism experts as: "the best terrorist".

According to the U.S.A, that wants people to follow its rules blindly or leave it alone. They do not threaten America nor any other power that wants to take over the whole world.

The second type of these terrorists is very much like the first. They also practice their religions sermons, and are little acquainted with the world affairs. If you want to recognize them you can visit them in the mosque. Most of them are old. They do not accept the opinions of their cultured sons. Even when they come to listen to a preaching they want to hear only what pleases them - no more no less. They cynically utter statements when hearing a political religions preaching like "Is this the one that will liberate Palestine?" ignoring how frustrating such statements are!

The third kind of these called terrorist is cultured and well-acquainted with the people's affairs. They are always busy putting the seeds of wisdom and bravery into their followers. They are very dangerous because they do something that may overturn the pages of false history that we learn. They are people of principle. So they can change, convince and win a lot of people to their side by persuading speeches. Even if they do not pray, they are still terrorist. Even if they do not preach in the mosque and are without beards, they are looked upon as terror-

ists! Yes they are, do you know why? Because they threaten the U.S.A., this is only principle behind the issue. One of them, if any would like to know, is the Iraqi president Saddam Hussein. He is, as I think, the hero of all the Arab leaders. So America found a very feeble pretext in order to remove him from power. Saddam had no weapons of mass destruction nor any relationship with Al-Qaeda militants. However, until this time the Americans could not find a pretext for war. It seems that as the writer Gihad Al-Khazen (Hayat Newspaper) has mentioned, "The reason behind the war on Iraq is Israel. The Israelis wanted to be protected from the danger of Saddam and used America as a means to achieve such an aim", "the authentic people of America would never let Bush attack Iraq. If the Jews weren't there", he added

What I would like to demonstrate to the reader, at the end, is that they should not be afraid of the "terrorist" label if it is applied by America. Rather they should take it as an honor, crowing their achievements in life. I need not mention more examples. All people who believe strongly in something sublime, come across painful thorns in their way, what they should do is to sweep them aside, or walk through them in order to die in the cause of God.

Letters to the Editor

**You're right about
our individualism**

You have touched an important issue and are absolutely right regarding the Arab, or rather in our case Yemeni, mentality concerning individualism. The fact is that individualism dominates in the companies and institutions in Arab countries, in terms of them not being institutionalized. This is true even in Multi-national companies that are working in Yemen. Once a position is 'Yemenized', that is the end of rules laid down by expatriates. Favoritism, bribery, nepotism and tribalism all dominate the daily running of the company. Unqualified personnel are recruited in the organization or upgraded, while others who believe in institutionalization are left behind.

Mohammed Abdullah
basmeirmohd@hotmail.com

About 911

Thank you from an American for the sentiments expressed in your editorial about "911: A day to

remember". Indeed, the answer to why this happened may be impossible to fully understand or answer.

Thelma Davidson
ttidavids@yahoo.com

Killing of innocents

I hope and pray that the hostages now under threat of death will be released by their captors unharmed. The killing of innocents is a crime against humanity, even during times of war, and even when the other side does not respect civilian life. Unfortunately, there are people living under great oppression.

Their future looks hopeless as their families and homes are being crushed by humiliating injustice and violence. When such conditions are ignored or viewed with callous indifference by the rest of the world, it can and does produce a desperate rage that transcends religion and culture. These are the conditions in which many Muslims find themselves today. Lacking hope and having lost patience with the dysfunctional options placed before them,

they seek justice, and we are seeing more and more of them willing to take extreme measures, to react in violent ways, even to kill themselves in order to deliver a militant or political act of defiance.

Those living in the Muslim world who are in this "pressure cooker" of oppression may seek any religious or non-religious justification for their extreme and violent actions. If they look long enough, they sometimes find what they are looking for, as there are extreme minded people in every religion who do not represent the commonly practiced tenets of the faith. Unfortunately, polarizing propaganda has been relentlessly spun into today's sensationalism, unjustly fueled by the fear of this "unknown and strange" faith. I urge all those countries who's troops are in Iraq to withdraw their troops and nationals from Iraq while they are still alive. If other foreign leaders showed their resolute opposition to the war, the Iraqis will not resort to desperate and extreme measures. There is a chance for

peace, but only if the so called "war on terror" is stopped. Otherwise — God help us all!
Mohamed Saeed
South Africa
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An invitation to Iraq

The 9-11 attack on the U.S. killing 3000 citizens was indeed a terrible event, but I wonder if the author has plans to go to Iraq and stand contemplating the 30,000 men, women and children whom Mr. Bush has recently killed there. And I wonder if the author knows that the most popular interactive video game currently in the U.S. allows the players to become virtual U.S. soldiers shooting Iraqis with a variety of weapons. Mr. Bush, who will soon announce his plans to kill thousands of Iraqis and Syrians. There will, in the near future, be plenty of places throughout the entire Middle East to stand and contemplate violent death.

Robert Lindh
lindh@swnebr.net

COMMON
SENSE

By Hassan Al-Haifi

Insurgency
at its worst

Undoubtedly, any sane Moslem would condemn any acts of violence against any non-Moslems living in their midst, not so much because it is irrational, inhumane or a sign of intolerance, but because they are simply not Islamic.

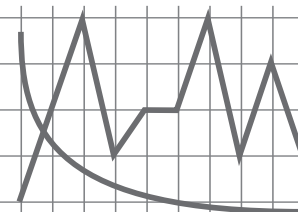
Therefore, any efforts to portray the recent series of bombings against Christian churches in Iraq as serving the cause of Islam or the Iraqi rebellion will find only condemnation from all true faithful Moslems, who truly understand their faith. Moreover, history shows no precedence for such heinous acts by Moslems in the past, as can be proven by the sizable Christian minorities that still exist amidst predominantly Moslem communities, with relatively little record of persecution or interference from any Moslem government or community in the right to practice their faiths of worship, as long as they remained law-abiding and showed no animosity to Moslems. Thus, most Moslems are bound to question the genuine motives behind those "insurgents" in Iraq, who claim to be protectors of the faith, but in fact have violated religious dictates by their wanton disregard of Islamic teachings that place great value in the sanctity of the lives of innocent unarmed civilians and in the tolerance that Islam teaches of other faiths existing in the midst of Moslem domains. Furthermore, they raise questions as to the legitimacy of their actions, since they do not possess any real mandate from the Iraqi people, most of whom disapprove the actions of these so called militant insurgents. In fact, one would suppose that most Iraqis would view such shameful acts as serving the interests of the enemies of Islam, since they project an untrue, but nevertheless undesirable picture of Islam and Moslems as intolerant of other faiths. Nothing is further than the truth.

These insurgents are neither guided by Islamic jurisdiction or ordinances and are more likely serving the interests of non-Moslem forces that have found so called Moslems to carry out their designs for distorting the image of Islam. In this holy month of deep religious meditation and reflection of the state of the Moslem world, Moslems are urged to make it clear that the cards of these hoodlums are exposed and that the kind of violence they are perpetrating is anathema to all Islamic dictates. Even Iraqis in Falluja have expressed a disassociation with such "Moslem fanatics", as the Western press would like to project them, and they are right in condemning the kind of tactics that these "foreigners" follow, which they say is damaging to their cause. Who are they? What are they really doing there in the first place? The Iraqis are not in need of them, since most Arabs and Moslems would agree that the Iraqis themselves are capable of organizing and running their own genuine resistance against the invaders, and most likely in a more civilized manner. In fact, many Iraqis and most observers would agree that the occupiers could not be pleased more by anything than to have an ugly (non-Islamic) portrayal of the insurgency in Iraq, so as to give the occupation some degree of legitimacy, as part of the "war on terror".

Most observers cannot help but assume that these insurgents are encouraged by the real forces that have been behind the push for the American invasion of Iraq. The facts are proving more and more that the Zionist lobby in the United States was very active in encouraging the Bush Administration to occupy Iraq. There is also strong evidence that the Israeli intelligence organ, the Mosad is working discreetly in Iraq to create the venue that will encourage any acts that will lend credence to the soundness of the American invasion of Iraq. The idea behind this is that all these acts of barbarity would cover up for the real motive behind the uncalled for invasion of Iraq, in terms of serving the Zionist agenda and providing a buffer that secures Israel from what Israelis fear is a potential "menace" in Iran. Many observers (even Western observers) would not hesitate to suggest that there is logical reasoning to believe that there is a strong link between these mysterious fly-by-night operations, carried out by bogus gangs, that operate under Islamic names, and the energetic activities of the Mosad in Iraq. There are well over 100 Israeli companies operating in Iraq and most are owned or headed by "former" Israeli military or security officers. Moreover, for the simple reason that such militancy and disregard for the Islamic ban on the killing of innocent civilians or the violation of the houses of worship of other faiths is out of tune with the real ordinances of Islam, would clearly indicate that true Moslems could never behind such acts.

This observer undoubtedly sees the legitimate right of the Iraqis to regain their independence and sees this as well within the Islamic right of self-determination. This is something that all Moslems should support and strive for, as it is a religious duty of Moslems to back any of their brethren, who are subjected to an unjust occupation. But it is also important for Moslems throughout the world to assert that any acts perpetrated towards this objective should never violate Islamic dictates on the sanctity of civilian life (especially of innocent Iraqis, who are supposed to be the beneficiaries of any efforts at liberating Iraq). Moreover, Moslems throughout the world should maintain that such acts as violating the houses of worship of other faiths existing in Moslem countries is a serious violation of Islamic principles and does not reflect the true Islamic character of tolerance and "dialogue" that the Quran compels Moslems to engage in with those of other faiths: "there is no compulsion in religion" No religion has allowed men to freely chose their own worship better than Islam. It was the tolerance taught by Islam and practiced by all Islamic scultures over the ages under various regimes throughout the Moslem world that has made Islam probably the only religion that gained its converts peacefully rather than through compulsion or violence. So, how could the bombings of Christian churches be logically associated with Islamic teachings or viewed as sound acts of truly believing Moslems? May God cleanse the Moslem world from these dangerous elements of a fifth column that has been implanted among Moslems. Isn't it enough that these hoodlums have clearly shown that they are a menace to Islam and are actually serving the interests of the enemies of Islam?

YT Business



Lack of commitment & bureaucracy hindering Aden's progress

Tony P Restall
International Free Zone Specialist
tonyrestall@yahoo.co.uk

I regularly read your editorials every week and noted your attention to the comparison between Dubai and Aden in a recent editorial.

Having recently completed an assignment for the EU - European Union to support the Aden Free Zone, I am now

able to comment freely (under my EU Contract I was not permitted to communicate my opinions to the national media).

I commenced my EU Contract in Feb of 2002 having been working in the Middle East Free Zone & Port Industry since 1976. In fact, I was on the original team that put the Jebel Ali Free Zone together and launched it to the international market.

Whilst working for the Dubai

Government it was always our main concern if Aden/Yemen ever activated a Free Zone and Commercial Hub Operation in Aden it would pose a significant threat to Jebel Ali Free Zone.

The very size of container ships has changed over the last 20 years (increasing in size by 450%). Limited port calls now dictate that places such as Salalah (who took the initiative) will benefit immensely.

What stops Aden from becoming

another Great Free Port - is perhaps politics and a lack of commitment. Look at the sad tale of the Aden Free Zone - a bureaucratic nightmare that everyone acknowledged was a disaster but did nothing about.

It was truly shameful! I have worked amongst you, and know what life is throwing at Yemenis everyday.

Believe in yourself and cut through all the red tape and your dreams can become a reality.

After all - When we sold Jebel Ali Free Zone - We were selling a Dream! - The Disney Land of Middle East Investment.

Aden has some of the best undeveloped Port Real Estate I have ever seen (better than Hong Kong, Singapore and definitely better than Dubai).

Recently, in Dubai they sold 7,000 Properties in a single day, that was truly amazing!

What is Yemen waiting for?

Exchange Rate for the Yemeni Rial

Currency	Buying	Selling
US Dollar	184.9200	185.1300
Sterling Pound	330.2200	330.6000
Euro	227.6500	227.9000
Saudi Rial	49.3100	49.3700
Kuwaiti Dinar	627.4900	628.2000
UAE Dirhem	50.3500	50.4000
Egyptian Pound	29.5700	29.6100
Bahraini Dinar	490.5000	491.0600
Qatari Rial	50.8000	50.8600
Jordanian Dinar	260.8400	261.1300
Omani Rial	480.3500	480.8900
Swiss Franc	147.0000	147.1600
Swedish Crown	25.1500	25.1800
Japanese Yen	1.6821	1.6840

Source: Central Bank of Yemen

I will continue to read your articles in the hope that one day, God will give his attention to the plight, to prevent the demise of poor Aden City.

Symposium on national industries

AHMED AL-BUKHARI
TAIZ BUREAU

A National Symposium on the situation of Yemen's national industries and the role of quality and standards, was held on October 10th - 11th 2004 at al-Saeed Cultural Forum in Taiz. This symposium was organized by the Ministry of Economy and Trade, under auspices of the Minister, Dr. Khaled Rajeh Sheik, Chairman of the Yemeni Authority for Qualities and Standards and the Yemeni Industrialists Society. The symposium was attended by industrialists and representatives of Associations, Trade Chambers, Government Authorities and many companies and factories.

The first session of the symposium was presided by Dr. Abdulwahed al-Afori while Eng. Ahmed Abu Taleb was the secretary. The second session was headed by Dr. Abdurahman al-Zabedi and the secretary was Dr. Ali Abdullah Qaid. The first session on the second day was headed by Shawqi Ahmed Hayel and Jamal Moh'd was its secretary, while Abdullah Abdulwali and Ahmed Ahmed

were respectively the head and secretary of the second session.

"The symposium coincided with the world standardization day on October 14th, under the slogan "Standards Connect the World with Each Other". Eng. Jamal Moh'd Abdulrahman, Manager of Taiz Office of the Authority of Quality and Standards, said, "This symposium comes simultaneously with the celebrations of the anniversaries of the Yemeni revolutions". It is also for the sake of reinforcing cooperative relations and promoting effective partnership between the Authority of Quality, Standards and Control, and Yemeni Industrialists Society. We stressed cooperation for it was based on unifying all efforts of the authority and the association wishing to reach a modern system of standards and quality control. The long-term goal is to determine the relationship between all of the people who are concerned with standards, industrialists, consumers, authority...etc," he declared.

"What's been achieved in Yemen in this respect can't be compared to the efforts of other countries that have reached a high level of standardization, though it is of the most important con-

cepts leading to development in all fields. That's reflected in all activities, and industry in particular, for industrial production is significant for development. The actual challenge in the present condition is to respect the consumer and provide their requirements at lower cost. Not only that but to elevate the level of local industries in order to achieve this goal, because our success will enable us to compete internally and externally," he added.

He explained in his statement that: Of the overall objectives of the symposium is identifying standardization and its significance in scientific and technological development (and in reinforcing the consumer's trust in) national products. What's more, showing the role of the authority and the association in the national field and their contribution to raising awareness in the community. The symposium was intended to highlight the significance of the integration of all sectors aiming to achieve sustainable development and motivating them to implement the standard qualities.

The symposium discussed two basic themes: the first one was the role of quality in reinforcing the capabilities of



national industries. Standardization mentioning its history and stages of its development is considered one of the main factors of transferring technology.

It is of the elements of health and peace in the world. The second theme focused on the situation of national industries in the shadow of the international changes and the situation of industrial development, sustainable development, and situation of agriculture in Yemen.

Additionally the symposium discussed strategic views on industrial

development with its obstacles, in the framework of international agreements and treaties.

At the end of the symposium recommendations were discussed. The concluding celebration featured many speeches by Eng. Abdusalam Ghaleb al-Qamish, Dr. Ahmed Hayel Saeed, Judge Ahmed Abdullah al-Hajri, Dr. Khled Sheik, and Ali Moh'd Saeed. All the speeches emphasized the cooperative relationships that make such activities successful and encouraged Yemeni industries and the strengthening of the

economy.

Dr. Ahmed Hayel Saeed declared that the Hayel Saeed Group believes in endless expectations and ambitions, so they have concentrated their efforts for years on exporting products and finding new markets for them.

Those efforts have been successful enough to get Yemeni products to more than 35 countries, in Asia, Africa, and Europe. He expects that these products to amount to US\$ 50 million by the end of 2004. Not only that, but there will be a 10% rise in exports.

VACANCY

US NGO working in the field of educational development has the following position openings for Yemenis only on the staff of the Yemen Accelerated Learning Activity (YALA):

COMMUNITY PARTICIPATION FACILITATOR

The Community Participation Advisor will report to the Chief of Party, be based in Sana'a, and work on a USAID-funded project to improve the quality and access to basic education for Yemeni's in rural areas. The project will work to improve rural schools in five governorates (Sa'ada, Al Jawf, Amran, Mareb and Shabwah). The Community Participation Advisor will provide technical assistance to create more opportunities for involving local leaders, teachers, parents, and other community leaders in deciding how their local schools, and the educational services they provide, can and should be improved. Specifically, the Community Participation Facilitator will:

- ∞ Liaise with the COP on all matters related to enhancing community participation in a concerted effort to improve school facilities, and all educational services, formal and informal, in the five governorates;
- ∞ Collaborate in the community consultations aimed at improving in-service teacher training;
- ∞ Collaborate with the Educational Advisor and Architect/Engineer in activity planning, implementation, monitoring, follow-up, and reporting for technical work related to formal schools, subject to the supervision and guidance of the Chief of Party and the project's GOY/MOE counterparts;
- ∞ Provide guidance and suggestions to technical staff regarding the social and cultural issues which may contribute to, or hinder, the quality, cost, or timeliness of proposed interventions;
- ∞ Participant on a multi-disciplinary team of professional "problem solvers" across governorates, identifying problems, interpreting project events (problems/successes) from a variety of angles, proposing solutions or responses to keep activities on track and remedy problem areas;
- ∞ Develop and maintain excellent and collaborative working relationships with local Governing councils, Parents' Committees, Tribal councils, and other formal and informal representatives of key stakeholders (e.g. Sheikhs, or political parties) and develop strong collegial relationships with relevant GOY officials in Sana'a, in the governorates, and at the district level.
- ∞ Develop proposed community participation interventions to be integrated into the project's annual work plans;
- ∞ Provide guidance to the COP on staff performance on a regular, informal basis, with the aim of improving the understanding and effectiveness of the multidisciplinary team in effecting quality improvements in the targeted schools, and communities.

Qualifications for the position include:

- ∞ Master's degree (doctorate preferred) in Sociology, cultural Anthropology, clinical Psychology, or Social Work, in a sub-field field related to Community Based Development, and/or Community Organization Management;
- ∞ Substantial experience (10 years plus) working in the field of Community Development;
- ∞ Outstanding Communication, Negotiation and team skills;
- ∞ Knowledge of/experience with external donor funded projects, USAID experience preferred but not required.

ARCHITECT / CIVIL ENGINEER

A qualified Architect / Civil Engineer will act as part of a multidisciplinary team to assess a variety to barriers to improving the quality of basic education facilities and services in five governorates (Sa'ada, Al Jawf, Amran, Mareb and Shabwah). The Yemen Accelerated Learning Activity (YALA) will undertake activities aimed at improving the quality and accessibility of basic education services in Yemen, both formal and informal, as well as mobilizing communities to get involved in local educational issues.

The Architect / Civil engineer will take the lead role in determining the structural integrity, and health and hygiene factors present as a given site, which may effect the health and safety of teachers, pupils, and all may intend to use the facilities. The Architect / engineer will further participate in a multi-partner dialogue regarding the advisability, and affordability, of other potential improvements to schools, community multi-purpose rooms, to make them more attractive, accessible, and more open to serving more creative, interactive, and innovative teaching styles.

The Architect / Civil Engineer should be well versed in the GOY / Department of Public Works building codes and standards, have built routine professional relationships with the Ministry of Public Works to remain abreast of changes in the codes that may evolve over time. He/she should also establish and maintain close collegial relationships with the MOE divisions involved in school rehabilitation, and with the wide range external donors working in the same sphere: World Bank, GTZ, KFW, UNICEF, the Dutch Embassy, and DFID.

Responsible for providing information to the Monitoring & Evaluation Advisor prior to and after returning from field site visits, as part of team collaboration on building and maintaining a comprehensive data base showing baseline data, all work planned, undergoing implementation, completed, and assessed impact. He/she will also be automated data systems operating in Yemen, particularly those already established by the Government of Yemen and USAID.

Qualifications for the position include:

- ∞ University degree in a Architecture or Civil Engineering;
- ∞ At least 5 years' experience managing medium scale building renovation projects, working with private construction firms preferable;
- ∞ Relevant training and experience working experience with the Ministry of Public Works desirable;
- ∞ Fluency in English;
- ∞ Experience working with existing information systems of other external donors or the government of Yemen is desirable; and
- ∞ Experience with Geographic Information Systems (GIS), desired, but not required.

Interested candidates are requested to send CVs to
John Raleigh, Chief of Party,
AED/EQUIP, P.O. Box 22377, Sana'a, Yemen Fax: 302-728

Island of Happiness



BY ISMAIL AL-GHABRI
YEMEN TIMES STAFF

Yemen is distinguished by the possession of numerous islands which are scattering off the extensive Yemeni coastal line. The most significant of which is Socotra Island which is the largest of all Yemeni islands and is located in the Arabian sea. Its area is about 1200 square miles. It is approximately 193 miles from Ras Ferteek, which is in al-Maharah governorate and is the closest point on the Yemeni coast. Archipelago is a small island located in the southern part, and belonging to Socotra Island. Two brother-islands, Sumhah Dersah and Abdo-el-Kouri island, are considered the most populated islands and the richest for pearl hunting since past eras. They are also the largest of the archipelago islands after Socotra.

Socotra is a historical island and one of deep-rooted fame. Its historical significance has been spoken of since the beginning of the flourishing trade of sacred commodities, and the commercially important route known in history as the "Olibanum Route". Socotra, since those ancient times, was as a center for producing such sacred commodities which ancient people considered as sacred due to their association with worshipping rituals in the temples. These commodities were also used to back commercial stock that supported the economy of the ancient Hadhramout kingdom, whose King was known as the King of the Olibanum Country. The most important commodities which Socotra island became famous for producing

in those ancient eras, were aloeswood (incense), a kind of frankincense, and Socotran aloe which is regarded as the best kind of aloe. Also, it has been known for producing al-mor (a kind of spice) and the olibanum and other perfumeries. Due to this highly commercial dimension, Socotra acquired a wide fame in history, and was spoken of abroad by people who looked upon it's commodities as sacred. The country producing such commodities was called "sacred land". The ancient Greeks and Romans used to call Socotra Island the Island of Happiness. Socotra enjoys a distinguished strategic location at a junction of sea routes in the Indian ocean. Therefore, since ancient times, it has attracted the attention of invaders and pirates who were greedy for its wealth. Its people used to defend Socotra Island against the invading armies and those greedy souls by constructing forts and fortifying walls.

Socotra Island, today, is a fascinating and beautiful Yemeni corundum. It belongs to the Governorate of Hadhramout. It – along with some other islands - forms Socotra District. Socotra is divided naturally into two divisions i.e. Beduin area which is located in the middle of the island and is clutched between high hills. Its altitudes are covered by forestry and coastline. The most important of the many small scattered towns is Hedibo, the administrative capital of Socotra, followed by Qelensya, Qadheeb, and Foujed. There are several unique components in Socotra that make it one of the most prominent spots in Yemen for attracting tourists. It is considered as one of the most important natural plant gardens in the world, and deserves to be designated and conserved as an area of natural beauty, due to its rare plants and animals.

Socotra possess a rich and diverse flora and fauna, with natural plant life scattered all over the island and the archipelago of the islands belonging to it. It is blessed by the beauty of several rare plants which blossom in beautiful colors. There are also many wadis (valleys) and small current rivers which are covered by thick palm forests along with soft sandy beaches. So, the Island "Socotra" looks like a scenic natural painting with splendid beauty piled in its frame along with hills, palm trees, and beaches.

Socotra, being one of the largest of archipelago islands, is considered as the most important of the islands, from the perspective of its uniquely diverse plant life. Additionally, it is one of the ten most significant islands in the world for the same reason. Research indicates that there are 900 types of rare plant living in Socotra Island and the archipelago of the islands belonging to it. Amongst which are about 300 types of plant uniquely existing in Socotra, and no where else in the world. As an example of these rare plants are the two-brother blood tree, and the olibanum tree, of which there are nine kinds existing on the island. There are also weeds with medicinal properties that ancient human beings relied upon as medicines for various diseases.

The "two-brother blood tree" is the most significant of the rare plants whose fame has transcended normal horizons. Its name was conjured by the island, due to its fame and its importance, many eras ago. This tree grows at the peaks of hills, and its height is within the range of 6-9 meters. Its has the appearance of an over turned umbrella. The people of the islands make holes in the stems, through which leaks a sticky red sub-



Draegon Blood

stance. The substance is left aside until it dries, then accumulated and prepared for export. It is then used throughout the world, as an agent in many of industries and as a medicine for curing diseases.

Several fabulous tales and stories were composed about the origin of this tree, one of which is that this tree has grown up from the blood of two brothers – Habel and Qabel when the first murder in history took place. The blood flow is said to have caused the tree to grow. Another legend is that the tree grew up from the clotted blood of a dragon and an elephant, spilt during their fight to the death.

Besides these plants there are several kinds of rare bird in Socotra Island,

which along with the plants, form an alluring environment for tourists. There are approximately 141 kinds of rare bird which are living in the islands. Nine kinds of which uniquely inhabit the island and cannot be found anywhere else in the world.

The visitor to Socotra usually pays special attention to a unique strange small animal in the island, as it forms one of tourist landmarks of the island. The animal is known by its name "Wild al-zabad Cat" (Wild Civet Cat). It is similar to the normal cat in shape, but, bigger in size. It lives within the forests of palm trees. The people of the island used to hunt it by using special nets. After catching it, they press strongly on its rear gland or use a

knife making a hole in that gland so as to produce the civet out of it.

Al-zabad (civet) is a smelling black colored substance that is mixed to make a kind of Arab perfume that smells like rose musk called (al-zabad perfume). After extracting the civet from the cat's rear gland, the cat is released and returned to the palm tree farms.

Socotra Island is one of the most important natural plant protectorates and one of the most prominent tourist landmarks in our country. Our Government has provided architectural, health, and educational services to these islands, and is leading it towards advancement and connection to the world.

Inaugurating issuance of Poetical divans for illiterate poets

BY HASSAN AL-ZAIDI
YEMEN TIMES STAFF

The Civil Democratic Tropism Foundation (CDTF) held last Saturday a meeting in which it inaugurated a divan of poems for illiterate poets in the presence of 30 of them from provinces all over Yemen except for Sana'a and Aden.

A book composed of 1200 pages was shown in the meeting, which was held at Taj Saba Hotel in Sana'a and sponsored by the German Embassy, in the framework of Sana'a being the Arab Cultural Capital. The book contains samples of the works of 450 illiterate poets from throughout the republic.

The inauguration started with the reading out of poetic works for poets from Sa'ada and Amran. Then, Mr. Abdulmajeed Al-Fahd delivered a speech in which he clarified that the project lasted for 19 months over

two phases: the first phase was the collection and issuance of the divan, and the second was videotaping the documentary film of the two Salt and Power Journeys.

The German Ambassador to Sana'a also delivered a speech in the ceremony in which he expressed the enthusiasm of Germany to support Yemeni culture especially the manually translated culture as it is not worth-listening to anonymous sounds since the book contains dialects of primitive areas in Socotra and Al-Mahrah. He also stressed that the Government should play a role in the maintenance of the cultural heritage in such areas, the documentation of dialects and spreading programs of these dialects. Many poems on traditions, customs and woman and revenge issues, were recited by the participating poets. This was pondered upon as the first effective contribution to civil society foundations that number up to 40,000.

A dreamy lover

Darling, I'll tell you what I want,
But, will you believe me or not?
Just you and me in our island,
Where the nature is adorned before hand.
At the shore we curved "No Admittance"
Our trees and pelicans made a fence.
Florid nature is our love bed,
Our roof is the sky overhead,
No people, no pry no spy,
No noise, no din, no cry,
Bliss 'n' felicity be with us!
Kings envy us even Venus!

No storms, no floods, no quake,
By hand our cover we make,
So proud of our cosy hut we're,
In which we put out our flamed fire,
My head in your bosom I lay,
While you sleek my hair, I stray.
Our hero love wrecks any hurdle,
No one hinders him, even death rattle.
True love is all what I want,
And I found it here in your heart.

By: Waleed Aziz Abu-Shukair
E-mail: waleed4228@yahoo.com

Modern technology and mankind

BY MOHAMMED AL-HOMAIDI
TAIZ UNIVERSITY

All people know technology. This is not confined to technology knowledge. We all know it when using computers, especially, modern technology, such as the Internet.

In the world of today, we have things for which past generations longed for in vain. We have things that protect us from the ignorance and lack of knowledge that made primitive men afraid. We know how scientists now bring forth harvest that were never seen before, and because of new technologies, the products of the whole earth can be enjoyed everywhere.

In a world faced by proliferation of anti-life technologies and conscious of

the impending dangers of modern technology, it has become imperative for a global awakening and calls for concern from eminent world leaders, activists, voluntary agencies and organizations such as the UN.

Without doubt, science and technology have contributed greatly to the advancement of the human race and helped to change the way we live from obscurity to the computer era. In other ways, emerging technology has posed a considerable threat to the existence and survival of mankind.

In recent times, technology has encouraged the production of weapons of holocaustic nature and scientists in their quest to conquer nature have evolved various concepts including the concept of human cloning. These pose a big challenge to the previous meaning and principle of humanity. In this

regard, students have an active and urgent role to play in determining the relationship between man and technology- if technology is for progress or for destruction. Since students and scientists are at the focal point of it all.

Nevertheless, man is already engulfed in some kind of identity crisis, which will be exacerbated by human cloning further. With this idea of cloning, family values and tradition are going to be eroded thereby breaking the strong bond that links man in our communities. In this way peace will be elusive since the first constitution in every society is the family. This is a great threat to the Islamic values and sacred nature of human life.

Students and scientists are at the

delivery of new technologies and therefore determine the trend for emerging technologies. It is important that they use the role positively as pro-life advocates and demonstrate the value of human life in their work. No tool or piece of knowledge has an innate moral context. With the increasing adversities of technology economic, industrial development will be impeded and sustainable world peace will continue to elude humanity.

In a word, the civilization of the modern technology and mankind helped in the advance of the modern world in all the fields of life. And as for technology, the nature of the future battle will be complicated by the rate at which technology changes our lives.

مبروك المولود البكر
أجمل التهاني وأطيب التبريكات مقرونة بأريج الفل والياسمين نزهة للأستاذ
عبد الواحد عبد الله الخديري
بمناسبة إرتقاؤه مولوده البكر الذي أسماه
تائر
جعله الله قرة عين والديه وأنبتة نباتاً حسناً وبارك فيه
المهنتون: مازن عبد الغني السقاف، أيمن عبد الغني السقاف،
نصري ابوبكر السقاف، عبده عابد

وسط حشد كبير ضم الأهل والأصدقاء والجيران
في جو مفعم بالفرح والغبطة والسرور احتفل الشبان الخلقون
المهندس وأئل نعمان الدكتور الصفي نعمان
أولاد الدكتور نعمان عبد الرحمن نعمان
الخميس الماضي بدخولهما القفص الذهبي
الهنوتون: دكتور أحمد عبد العزيز نعمان، محمد بن سلام
وجميع الأهل والأصدقاء

تابعوا التفاضيل
في العدد القادم

الجائزة الكبرى في مسابقة الموسم "أجمل صورة" جائزة تليق بالحدث وتستحق المشاركة

لعرفة ماركة السيارة تعرفوا العدد القادم

- سيارة دفع رباعي
- قمة في الرفاهية
- موديل 2005
- شكل انسيابي مبهر للأنظار
- أرقى المواصفات
- قوة متانة و أناقة
- المزيد من المعلومات يرجى
- زيارة موقع المسابقة

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Why Al-Khaiwani matters to the US

Jane Novak
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Yemen, a country far from the US, penetrated the American consciousness in 2000 with the bombing of the USS Cole. After 9/11, Yemen, a beautiful country, rich in culture, became better known to Americans as the birthplace of Usama bin Laden.

Americans slowly became aware of Yemen's march toward democracy and that President Ali Abdullah Saleh, having guided Yemen through tumultuous years, was reelected in 1999. They learned that under his stewardship, a legislature was created in 2001.

Yemen is a nation with a strong indigenous pro-democracy movement. At the Arab Democracy Conference held in Sa'ana, its host President Saleh called democracy "the rescue ship" for political regimes and the "choice of the modern age for all people." Yemen is reforming in the face of high unemployment, and less than full literacy. There are more than 12 political parties established in Yemen.

One of the most uniquely Yemeni institutions is the Children's Parliament, instituted to teach students the concepts and principles of democracy, elections and consensus. In this advancing

democracy, civil society organizations receive government support with an aim of enhancing their role.

The developing democracy in Yemen was not imposed by the US but was shaped and nurtured by its people. The Yemeni media has undertaken much of the hard work enfranchising and educating the electorate. "The media represents a major component of the democratic transformation undergone so far in Yemen" remarked James Rawley, Yemen's UN resident coordinator.

"Since the reunification of Yemen, the country has witnessed the transition to a more pluralistic and free media...a key hallmark of the movement towards a democratic system of governance. The political space - not found in many other countries of the region - was further enhanced recently by the decision of H.E president Ali Abdullah Saleh in May, to abolish the provision for detaining journalists for what they say or write" Rawley said.

Yemen is a Middle Eastern country staking its own path to democracy. Yemen is also a study in the difficulties facing reforming states. This month, contravening the law prohibiting retribution against journalists, the West Sana'a Court sentenced Abdulkarim Al-Khaiwani, the editor-in-chief of Al-Shura Weekly, to prison as punishment for a series of articles on governmental

performance. In a quick, secretive trail, without full legal council, during the judicial vacation, Al-Khaiwani was convicted and sentenced to a year of hard labor.

Despite vocal protests from international journalist foundations, Yemeni unions and human rights workers, Al-Khaiwani remains jailed for performing the media function so essential in a democracy. As a further assault on journalistic immunity, the Yemeni Press and Publications Attorney interrogated the Editor-in-Chief of Al-Wasat Newspaper, Jamal Amir, for allegedly causing harm to Yemen-Saudi relations by the publication of news articles. That case is pending.

The media is known in the US as the fourth estate because of its vital role as a check on government. In a reforming state, the dynamic between authoritarianism and popular empowerment is often played out as a conflict between the press and the state. In these cases, many Americans are hoping this one step backward from press freedom will be followed by two steps forward toward liberty, especially for Mr. al-Khaiwani.

The noble Yemeni people are at a crossroads between hope and despair. Will Yemen devolve into an autocratic regime with a frozen media like so many others in the region or will it continue



By Samer A.

down the difficult path toward true democracy?

President Bush of the United States has stated: "A vibrant, successful democracy at the heart of the Middle East will discredit (terrorists) radical ideology of hate." If this is true, then a free and unmolested Yemeni media enhances American security. Having great respect for liberty, and those who struggle for it, many Americans hope the "rescue ship" for Yemen, democracy, is not sinking, especially in light of continued media harassment.

**Jane Novak is an American journalist, who has written recently for the Washington Times.*

Putin's Last Stand

BY ANDERS ÅSLUND

Russian President Vladimir Putin was highly successful in achieving his goals during his first term. He strengthened the power of the federal government, while weakening big business, free media, the communist party, the liberal parties, and civil society. Within government, he squeezed regional governors, both chambers of parliament, and even the state apparatus, concentrating all legislative, executive, and judicial power in his own hands. Meanwhile, since Putin came to power in 2000, Russia has attained solid macroeconomic stability and steady annual growth averaging 6.5%.

Alas, Putin's success may lead to his downfall. He was fortunate during his first term because he recognized limits to his power. An avid reader of opinion polls, he tried, enigmatically, to be everything to all voters. Now, heady from his string of political triumphs, he seems to think himself free of all constraints. But no politician is that lucky. Putin is violating too many rules of politics, and that cannot continue for long.

For example, because Putin is too jealous of power to delegate and wants to make all decisions by himself, he replaced a strong prime minister and chief of staff with two ineffectual men. So, rather than creating a strong vertical command, he paralyzed his govern-

ment.

One reason for this extreme over-centralization is that Putin does not trust anyone. Another reason is his pre-occupation with secrecy. A true secret policeman, he relies on his circle of KGB men from St. Petersburg. His power base shrinks by the day, and his strangling of independent media leaves him increasingly ill informed.

The consequences were apparent in the school hostage drama in Beslan in North Ossetia.

Law enforcement failed the population. It possessed no relevant intelligence. Policemen accepted bribes to let the terrorists through. Russia's best special forces were sent to Beslan, but they were not given ammunition, body armor, battle plans, or operative command. The school was never cordoned off. In the end, local Ossetians stormed the school with their own guns and killed several special troops in contempt.

Incredibly, the Chairman of the Federal Security Service (FSB) and the Minister of Interior arrived in Beslan soon after the siege started, but did nothing. The two regional governors concerned refused to go to Beslan altogether.

In fact, nobody from the government did anything. Putin and his government simply ignored the Beslan crisis, minimizing news coverage of it. Official statements came from a junior local official, who made a fool of himself by

lying grotesquely.

It is difficult to imagine a worse government performance. In his time, Soviet President Leonid Brezhnev was ridiculed for being interested only in concealing bad news rather than wanting to remedy problems. Putin is now behaving the same way. Obviously, such secrecy hurts Russia.

The conclusions to be drawn from the Beslan drama are obvious. Chechen policy must be revisited. The security forces should be cleansed and disciplined. Ineffective ministers and governors should be sacked, while their offices should be given more authority. More open information flows and fewer KGB appointees are needed.

Putin, however, wants nothing of the kind. He does not obey the elementary rule that when in a hole, you stop digging. No official has been sacked, but the editor of *Izvestiya* was dismissed for accurate reporting.

Similarly, nothing has been done to address the rampant corruption of the FSB. Rather than giving governors more authority, Putin demanded the power to appoint them himself. Instead of strengthening the government, he deprived it of one of his best men, Dmitri Kozak, and appointed another unknown KGB man from St. Petersburg in his place.

Putin's rule is not only authoritarian; it is dysfunctional. It is too rigid and centralized to handle crises. Rather than addressing actual problems, Putin pur-

sues his personal authoritarian agenda. This centralized police state is interested in little but its own economic and political power. It is difficult to escape the impression that Putin is more interested in pampering his KGB men than fighting terrorism. Because liberal economic reforms harm their interests, such reforms have been abandoned.

Ordinary Russians are not blind. They ask, "How can the appointment of regional governors be a means of fighting terrorism?" Putin is swiftly eroding the great authority he built up during his first term. This process can destabilize Russia faster than anybody now realizes.

The question is no longer whether Putin will really leave office when his term ends in 2008, but whether he will be able to save himself that long. He probably can, but he will need to undertake a complete U-turn, returning Russia to the path of democracy, regional self-government, and free expression. At the very least, Putin must sack his top KGB friends and his hapless prime minister, Mikhail Fradkov. He must also settle the Yukos affair and change his Chechen policy. Putin has the power to do so, but hardly the mindset.

Anders Aslund is director of the Russian and Eurasian Program at the Carnegie Endowment for International Peace.

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Is the European Union imploding?

BY ALBERTO ALESINA AND FRANCESCO GIAVAZZI

The prospect of being accepted into the EU provided the nations of Eastern and Central Europe with a strong incentive to achieve fiscal balance - a process somewhat similar to what happened in Western Europe at the time the euro was launched. In both cases, however, after initial progress, countries have shown clear signs of political "fatigue": in the euro area, the Stability Pact has imploded; throughout Eastern Europe, budget deficits have started to rise.

In the Czech Republic last year, the budget deficit jumped to 13% of GDP, a threefold increase since 1999. Although this included a one-time charge for bank restructuring costs, this year the deficit will close above 6% of GDP. In Poland, the deficit is also moving close to 6% of GDP, up from 2.9% in 2001. In Hungary the budget deficit is widening again, after narrowing to 4% of GDP in 2001. Malta, too, has a deficit close to 10% of GDP, up four percentage points since 2001. Only the Baltic countries seem able to maintain sound fiscal poli-

cies.

In many ways, this is not surprising: once politicians no longer face annual EU progress reports - and the threat of exclusion - fiscal relaxation becomes much less costly. At the same time, the big euro area members (France and Germany) do not have a leg to stand on to criticize other countries' fiscal policies, so there are virtually no international constraints on EU countries' budget deficits. Indeed, these constraints have proven to be utterly useless after a country's EU entry, and it will be hard to impose them as an admission criterion for other potential entrants.

Perhaps more surprising is the apparent political backlash against the governments that have led countries into the EU. Once again the similarity with what happened in Western Europe at the time of the euro's implementation is striking. The government of Romano Prodi, having managed against all the odds to get Italy into Europe's monetary union, fell three months later. The Czech Republic, Poland, and Hungary have each endured a government crisis since EU accession.

Throughout Central and Eastern Europe, the EU is not as popular as it

used to be. Voter turnout in the European Parliament elections in June was embarrassingly low in the new accession countries, ranging from just 17% in Slovakia to 38.5% in Hungary. Participating in their first-ever EU election, citizens in these countries turned out at a rate not only well below the European average (about 45%), but even below the UK average.

The reasons are twofold. Accession countries felt that they were asked to make major fiscal adjustments in order to be accepted into the EU. Regardless of whether such policies were in the long-term interest of these countries, in the short run they were politically costly.

This "adjustment fatigue," a term coined to describe the experience of Latin American countries to economic liberalization in the 1990's, is now coupled with the feeling that the EU is not such a great bargain after all. Perhaps most visible has been Western European countries' eagerness to protect their labor markets against migration from Central and Eastern Europe - a sticking point that always comes up in every meeting between politicians from the West and the East.

Little wonder, then, that voters in Central and Eastern Europe now feel that they got a poor bargain from the governments that brought them in: belt tightening, labor market restrictions, and the notorious barrage of EU regulation. The result has been a reaction against these governments and a lack of public interest in EU affairs.

So, after all the celebrations of European enlargement, we are left with a predictable set of problems: a "union" of countries with very different views on everything (from foreign policy to labor market policies) and different economic interests; widespread disillusionment among voters in the new member states; a constitutional process whose future is uncertain; and all the usual political wrangling in Brussels between countries seeking to get as much power as possible.

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By Yahya Al-Olfi
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Reflections

"...Simply Yemeni Authorities Do not Think Simply..."

The Desperate Need for an Overhaul of the country's Administrative system

I have always been surprised whenever a new authority, department or establishment is devised and mostly think that such an idea came out after a sound Catha Edulis Chewing session. Unnecessarily Authorities were turned into ministries, ministries into authorities and other denominations a good case in point is tourism first it was an authority working well and smoothly with its different departments. Then suddenly turned into a ministry and after some time broke into many authorities a part annexed to the ministry of culture and coined the name "tourism sector" another formed a Tourism Development Authority and an unnecessary offshoot was devised and called the Tourism Promotion Council which since its foundation has proven to be a failure.

This council should return to its original home and that is being a department within the authority which is to house all the other tourist denominations and offshoots. In my opinion to have the right institution with well defined goals is far more better than all the necessary offshoots. Tourism must be an authority and remains so like in Jordan, U.K. etc. Unnecessary offshoots such as the Tourism Promotion Council and the Tourism Sector at the Ministry should cease to exist. Tourism Authority should have a direct contact with the Prime Minister so as to avoid the mostly confusing and unnecessary disturbances caused by the interrelation with the Ministry of Culture.

Hopefully in an upcoming reshuffle this illness can be attended. During the past few days I came across an interesting article by a writer named A/ Alim Bajash in a weekly named "the weekly" edition no. 284. This article actually tunes up with what I always thought all along about some extravagant unnecessary innovations in the administrative system. The problem here is that what is convenient in a foreign country is not necessarily applicable in the same form in our own. The said writer begins like this "...Simply Yemeni Authorities Do not Think Simply!", this is why you are sure that this country shall fail within the upcoming twenty years.

Robert Hindle Yemen's World Bank Manager for three years which ended last September says "...simply the government needs to lower its weight, because there are always alternatives with less cost, making for ten unnecessary ministries" unquote. Hence the Ministry of Planning and International cooperation can be transformed from a flabby voracious intermediary into a slim and agile Organ. The National Committee for Celebrations is an appendix without of which Mr. Abdo Rabbo Mansoor Hadi still can remain vice-president. The Supreme Council for Civil Service, The Supreme Council for Universities, Women's Supreme Council etc. tens of such councils are not needed in reality.

Take for example the fact that only getting rid from three thousand cases

of double employment has saved us 12 billion Yemeni Riyals per annum. This is a mere minor intervention with regard to small positions so what about it if the Civil Service ministry starts to terminate double employment in the higher levels.

Tens of employees in the level of Minister, deputy and heads of boards and general managers occupying other positions in more than an organization, corporation and party. They are everywhere occupying highest positions in the banking sector, the sports unions, governmental and non-governmental authorities, National Supreme committees, Supreme Party Committees, the different organizations, Standardization and Measurement Authority, Universities etc. and the last of which is at the Permanent Committee of the people's Conference.

What is even more appalling is that you would find but a few amongst them who are fit to assume those high incumbencies while the other do not know what they should nor how the should react.

This is why you would find the records of the government free from actual successes, while at the same time you could find lots of conferences, seminars and meetings and all of which approx. are merely acoustical.

The dilemma of all the administrators in Yemen is "bombastic thinking" and most ministers and state directors do not think beyond the daily employees' attendance sheet chores.

Directors are only interested in finding excuses so as to reason the finishing off of their financial trusts by any means...just enough causes upon typing the financial report at the end of each fiscal year.

We have an inefficient Auditing and Inspection Authority which even if it discovers contraventions has not questioned any. Mostly you would find our ministers directly concerned with the economic situation at their complete ease, do not bother themselves to find out simple practical solutions and mostly "commission transactions" devour half of their thinking time.

This is why it is difficult to notice an indication of betterment in the condition of Yemen excepting gigantic walls encircling ministries, corporations and authorities or fabulous forts and castles and those are the houses of the ministers, their deputies and office managers.

Most of them lacking innovative thinking but surely have elegant signatures or office managers well-versed in administrative routine.

Yemen needs a rescue operation. It needs less ministers thinking better with a new practical agenda and practical solutions for the Rheumatism overwhelming the performance of all state institutions e.g. Yemen wastes millions of US\$ dollars by spending lavishly on international futile conferences and at the same time says that it is one of the poorest.

Continued from page 1

Abu Hamza to be tried in UK

Abu Hamza is wanted in Yemen on charges of being involved in terrorist activities while being based in Britain. He is believed to have participated in the kidnapping of 17 foreign tourists in Yemen six years ago. Four of the hostages were killed during a rescue attempt carried out by the Yemeni army.

British Home Secretary David Blunkett has said that Britain would not send Abu Hamza to Yemen because he could possibly face the death penalty. Britain has a ban on the death penalty and sending suspects to countries that apply capital punishment.

If Abu Hamza is extradited to the United States, he will face an 11-count indictment. Along with being connected to the kidnapping in Yemen, Abu Hamza is accused of trying to put together a terrorist training camp in Oregon in 1999. He is also accused of recruiting at least one man to an Al-Qaeda training camp in Afghanistan and providing material support to Al-Qaeda in 1999 and 2000. It is believed that Abu Hamza, who was born in Egypt as Mustafa Kamel Mustafa and holds a British passport, was the spiritual leader of Richard Reid who tried to detonate a shoe bomb on a flight from Paris to Miami in 2001. It is also believed that Abu Hamza had an association with Zacarias Moussaoui who is being tried in a US federal court on terrorist charges.

The Yemeni government had asked the British government to extradite Abu Issa Al-Hindi, also known as Bilal, for being involved in the kidnapping of foreigners in 1998. Al-Hindi was arrested by British officials as a suspected Al-Qaeda member. Yemen authorities have been searching for Al-Hindi for the last five years.

When Abu Hamza was sent to a high-security prison in London last May, the Yemeni government demanded his extradition. Director General of the Ministry of Interior Mohieddine Al-Dabi said that the government was pushing for Abu Hamza to be sent to Yemen and stand trial for his connection to the kidnappings in 1998.



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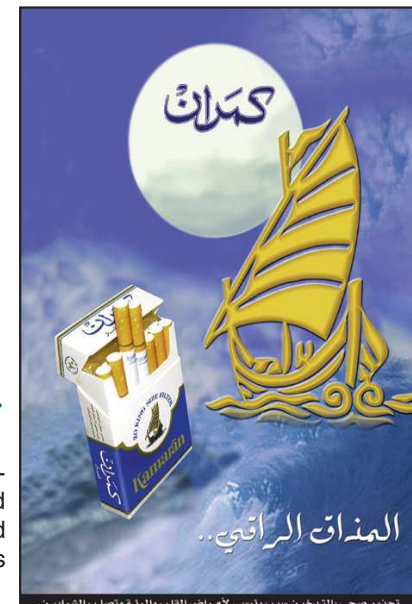
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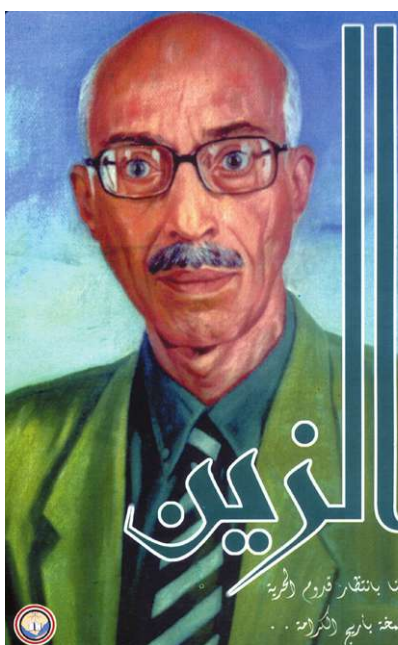
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By Ramzi al-Absi
Yemen Times Staff

Many of al-Saqqaf's lovers and fans contributed to the activities of the commemoration expressing their shock and sadness for the sudden departure of Zain. They



remembered him, his life, careers, and noble characteristics and adopted his quote, "I am waiting here for freedom's arrival having been perfumed with pride," to be flagged.

Dr. Sultan al-Suraimi, Yaha al-Shami, Mohammed al-Shaibani, Othman Turath, Dr. Mohammed Ali al-Saqqaf, and Jamal al-Ju'bi delivered their speeches giving the audience a clear overview of the late prominent writer. They mentioned Zain's reflections on their personal lives on one hand and on their organizations' foundation as a writer, politician, and real friend. Each of the speakers delved deeper and deeper in Zain's life: his study in Egypt, his role in founding the Union, his contributions to the Sudanese writers' issues, his "*Al-Am Musfer*" (his famous book), even his sense of humour. All of them showed their heartfelt consolidations. Lamia Zain al-Saqqaf, the daughter of the deceased intellect, delivered her speech, as outspoke.

kenly as her father, presenting Zain the noble father thanking the Yemen Writers' Union and the guests present for the kind emotions they kept in their hearts for her father.

On this woeful occasion, the Yemen Writers' Union published a commemorative book titled "Al-Zain", which includes six sections: the first is about the consolation notices that were issued by Yemen Writers' Union, Yemen Unionist Assembly, Yemeni Journalists Syndicate and the Yemeni Socialist Party. All of them expressed genuine grief over Zain's death. The second part of the book presented a variety of elegies written by a host of talented poets. The elegies collectively

vowed not to forget Zain for his pure soul inhibited their writers' bodies. The third part of the very book comprises many writings on Zain communicating his overwhelming love that was clearly evident in his writings. Models of Zain's writings are presented in the following section; the kind of writings that reveal the great talented intellect who deserved great love for all. The extracts were a few and don't represent all his works, but his wise philosophies were clearly evident.

The book includes a record of condolences. Many of Zain's friends and lovers wrote their soft words in this section telling how

dear he was to them. A pictorial part of the book contained some photos of the deceased marking various stations of his life.





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