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More displaced persons as Sa'ada's war intensifies

By: Mohammed bin Sallam

SA'ADA, Dec. 12 — In a message forwarded earlier this week to the Join Meeting Parties (JMP) and civil society organizations, Abdul-Malik Al-Houthi called to release an initiative preventing the outbreak of Sa'ada's fifth war, pointing at ongoing preparations to launch the war.

Addressing the JMP and civil society organizations, Al-Houthi said "presenting an initiative at this very point is a religious, national and humanitarian responsibility," adding, "It is incorrect to wait until the war comes to destroy property and claim the lives of thousands of your brothers. The war will bring grave calamity, deepening the wounds of this country."

Al-Houthi mentioned in his forward distributed to media "a lot of [provocation], such as murders, detentions, demolishing houses, evacuating women and children, which is being done nowadays by the government. This is in addition to military mobilization and reinforcements."

The message also indicated a lot of preparations usually done before the state initiates a new war, highlighting that military officers and soldiers are talking about the impending war and the aforementioned preparations are to launch a new attack in the governorate.

Al-Houthi went on to say that indications of this war entails an awakening of all disunited people and a motion to all dignitaries to serve to secure the country. He said that he had forwarded the message to remind people and to prevent bloodshed, as well as to save the country from instability and insecurity. But, he noted, "we are compelled to defend our-

selves to confront any new attack."

The JMP leaders discussed the Al-Houthi's forward during their meeting. They decided to continue negotiating about it until suitable stance and response are reached, according to a source in the JMP. A series of assassination incidents occurred during the last few months between the Al-Houthi group and military forces in Sa'ada. The incidents resulted in killing and injuring from the two sides. Such events threaten and foretell that Sa'ada's war will resume, if the Qatari mediation delegation does not reach a final settlement for suspended problems since the last ceasefire of the fourth war.

In turn, parliamentarian Yahya Badr Adin Al-Houthi accused the Yemeni government of conspiracy aiming at eradicating the Zaidi sect as well as facilitating Al-Wahabiah task to control this situation.

He also revealed that this big campaign extend from Al-Sharafain, district west of Hajja to east of Al-Jawf governorate, where it failed, with government forces sustaining heavy defeats.

Yahya Al-Houthi also accused the government of receiving outside support to continue fighting against the Houthis in Sa'ada, hinting that there is a plan to eradicate Zaidis from Yemen.

Al-Houthi's accusations against the government continue where he explains that the government killed thousands of soldiers throughout Sa'ada war to get rid of them. A number of Al-Houthi loyalists sworn that they witnessed mountain-paths full of killed soldiers.

He ensured that the Zaidi community woke up and became aware of the problem, hinting that there is a possibility to wage a Zaidi revolution, sending the existing regime home, likening the situation with Amawi State subverted by Zaidi revolutions.

Yahya further indicated that the government does not abide by the constitution and law. The government politics

resulted in generating a gang controlling the country using fire and iron, setting fires, inciting feuds and confiscating rights and freedoms, in his opinion.

Local sources informed that an armed group of Al-Houthi's loyalists launched an attack against one of the military sites in Gufah area. The attack resulted in injuring some soldiers. Other group attacked Haidan Hospital, attempting to release one of their loyalists, who was receiving medications there. However, the group could not do so because the government forces exist there intensively.

The same sources said that most of the governorate parts are calm for more than two days after the governorate experienced a series of military operations over the last weeks.

Recently, in some areas located to the north of Sa'ada city a number of people started to leave their areas, heading to the Saudi border. Thousands of displaced escaped during the last war. They did not return due to the gross damage, affecting their homes and farms.

According to high sources, Sana'a News Press said earlier this week that the president, who visited Germany last week for medical tests, met secretly with the political leader of the Al-Houthi group, Yahya Badr Adin Al-Houthi, who has been in Germany since he left his home country. The source also said the arrangements and communications were run last few weeks with the Qatari government and other regional parts aiming at bringing the president Ali Abdullah Saleh and Yahya Al-Houthi together. They also aim at promptly relieve tension and to cease an impending fifth war in Sa'ada.

The success of efforts and negotiations depends on concessions from both-sides. Government concessions consist of leaving an area with tribal influence of Houthis in many districts in Sa'ada. This is in return for giving guarantees ensuring that Houthis do not go with temptations to resume war, handing over heavy weapons while keeping light and medium-sized weapons for self-defense, according to the same sources. Houthis are to decide whether to live in Doha, capital city of Qatar or not. However, this choice may be excluded from the new agreements, especially when the authority is willing to grant them tribal and religious influence over two districts as yet unidentified.

Antique smugglers face charges

By: Hamed Thabet

SANAA, Dec. 11 — The governorate appellate court for the second time imprisoned three suspects, two Yemeni and one Jordanian, on charges of smuggling antiques. The court will give its judgment on January 28th.

About 800 antiques were found in a house, located in the diplomatic area in Sana'a, rented by a Jordanian named Samir Hammad, who is accused of smuggling Yemeni antiquities and defacing them, by adding symbols to the ornaments to match the ancient Yemeni Jewish style, such as the Temple Mount, the Star of David and Hebrew letters.

Previously the court had released Samir on bail, despite objections by some on grounds that he should serve his sentence. He is being prosecuted by

yet in effect.

The 800 antiques are now in the custody of the General Assembly of Antiques and Museums, and according to Jar Allah, "We definitely have to keep the confiscated antiques because they will be used as proof to convict Samir. However, after the court sentences him we will return all the antiques that we have to the National Museum."

The General Assembly for Antiquities and Museums and the Ministry of the Interior are cooperating in order to find missing links in the case. Jar Allah confirmed, "The two government branches are serious and will work hard to find those who are behind Samir and why and how they supported him. These people could be from tribes who trade with antique dealers in Marib, Al-Jowf and others in Yemen and other countries."



Thousands of stolen archeological pieces were returned to the Yemeni National Museum. Bulls served as powerful symbols to define and protect sacred spaces. One of the explanations is that bulls and eagles are thought to be solar symbols in ancient Yemeni history.

the penal branch of the governorate appellate court, the public prosecution in Marib and lastly by the Attorney General's office for property prosecution.

Abud Al-Rahman Jar Allah, Deputy of the Museums in the Antiquities General Assembly, noted that, "Before these crimes, Samir had committed various other offences; he had been suspected, but knew how to avoid being prosecuted."

Tools used for forging antiques were found in his apartment. Besides possessing original antiques, he melted and designed gold and paint to copy ancient Jewish lettering and pictures. According to old laws related to antiques, anyone who smuggles antiques or trades them will receive a 2-5 year imprisonment sentence. The new antiques law is not

"A smuggler like Samir and anyone who stays in Yemen should at least show some respect to its history. This type of people must be expelled from Yemen. But the problem is, he is still in the country. I hope that Samir will receive a heavy sentence, which will be an example for anyone thinking of smuggling antiques from Yemen," added Jar Allah. Hundreds of antiques have been smuggled to other countries. Officials reported that many were smuggled from Sana'a International Airport.

Sana'a University lecturer Mohamed Al-Aroosi, former president of the Yemeni General Organization of Antiques and Museum, stated that Yemeni law does not have strict sen-

Sana'a Airport, seizing about 500 antiques. In 2004, security authorities in the airport seized another 1000 antiques. In January 2005, Iyad Shaker, an Iraqi smuggler, was caught with 872 miscellaneous antiques, including 97 original antique statues and 256 antique bronze pieces. In addition to gold and coins, 187 popular heritage pieces and 332 counterfeit pieces were found. Moreover, in April 2005 the General Authority for Antiquities and Museums received 19 antiques, four of which were caught near the border. In the same year, security forces seized several kilograms of gold and a number of stone artifacts, in addition to bronze pieces dating back to every historic period of ancient Yemen.

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In brief

Yemen, German radio cooperation
Dec. 11 — Information Minister Hassan Al-Lawzi held talks with experts from the German Radio Academy regarding mutual cooperation next year between the academy and the Mass Media Training and Qualifying Institute here in Yemen. The meeting discussed the academy's plans for digital radio production and its 2008 plan to train a group of Yemeni journalists and technical staff in public and alternate programming, as well as qualifying trainers in this domain, in addition to establishing mini-departments for digitally-produced radio broadcasts.

Yemeni-French youth cooperation discussed

Dec. 11 — Youth and Sports Minister Hamoud Obad met with the head of the French Cultural Center in Sana'a concerning bilateral relations between Yemen and France in youth and sports and how to enhance such relations. Obad asserted his ministry's eagerness to activate all cooperation aspects under the framework of youth cooperation in the Yemeni-French project, welcoming a meeting of the higher youth committee to establish such project's executive program for the upcoming period.

ADEN

Free Zone investments discussed

Dec. 11 — Mohammed Al-Wadhan, deputy chair of the Free Zone General Authority, discussed with Emirati Ambassador to Sana'a Ali Al-Ghoani the possibility of erecting power stations in Aden Free Zone. Al-Wadhan reviewed with the ambassador the zone's investment facilities and features in various fields, including air cargo and industry.

HADRAMOUT

Shibam-Hadramout builders awarded donation

Dec. 11 — German author Günter Grass has donated \$26,000 to Hadramout mud builders for the success of their work to protect argillaceous (clay-like) architecture and restore the governorate's historic city of Shibam. Omar Al-Halaj, who heads the Yemeni-German project's team of experts, says the German Technical Cooperation, known as GTZ, will provide its share of the donation to support development projects in Shibam.

LAHJ

25 died of AIDS this year

Dec. 11 — Some 25 out of 39 people infected with HIV/AIDS died in 2007, Jamal Amar, coordinator of the National Committee to Combat AIDS in Lahj governorate, said Monday. He stressed the importance of setting up health centers for free diagnosis, in addition to rejecting discrimination against AIDS-infected individuals.

SANA'A

Islamic Relief organizes conflict transformation training

Dec. 11 — Islamic Relief in Yemen hosted the first in a series of conflict transformation and peace-building training workshops for participants from Sa'ada governorate. The workshops was held Dec. 8-17 in Sa'ada.

The program was part of a two-year plan under which Islamic Relief-Yemen would conduct interactive participatory workshops in four Yemeni governorates: Sa'ada, Sana'a, Lahj and Aden. Islamic Relief-Yemen staff and outside trainers from Egypt trained 665 individuals from the four governorates. Participants include tribal leaders, imams, other community leaders, teachers, students, members of key civil society organizations, local NGOs, security, army officers and police officers, government officials, members of local courts and refugees.

SANA'A

4,000 manuscripts found in Grand Mosque

Dec. 11 — Culture Minister Mohammed Al-Maflahi held talks with an Italian delegation that restores manuscripts regarding cooperating in the excavation of antiquities and restoring 4,000 manuscripts — some from 1,000 years ago — discovered in the Grand Mosque in Sana'a. Talks also touched on possibly restoring a number of manuscripts and repairing several historic palaces in Hadramout governorate's city of Tarim. The two sides further discussed opening a Yemeni-Italian cultural center to extend cultural and academic cooperation between the countries.

By: Fuad Musa'd
For Yemen Times

Radfan, Dec. 11 — Thousands of citizens spanning the southern governorates buried on Monday the four "Stand martyrs" who were killed at the hands of security forces during preparation for a protest held on October 14th.

The funeral procession for Abdul-Nasir Hamada, Shafiq M. Mohsen, Fahmi M. Hussien and Mohammed N. Haitham, consisted of four ambulances and hundreds of cars, beginning from Ibn Khaldoon Hospital.

Waiting at Al-Gada'a cemetery, thousands of citizens from Al-Dhale' and Yafe' participated in the burial. Afterwards, tens of thousands marched in Al-Habilain city, passing the rally square where participants carried pictures of the victims, repeating, "Promise martyrs to crush cowards." On the occasion of the burial, a large celebration was staged, at which partisan and association leaders delivered speeches in which they demanded rights repeated in identical rallies. The participants unanimously agreed to criticize the authority and its performance regarding retirees' issues in southern Yemen.

Moreover, journalist Ahmed Bin

Fareed delivered a speech in which he confirmed that bloodshed between southerners, considered by some as instigating hatred, is forbidden.

Ali Saleh Obad, a Yemeni Socialist Party leader, said that the protesters possess the strength and resistance to attain their demands. "It is not for those who laugh much but rather for those who laugh last. Such protests will not calm down as we have tens of thousands just like the four martyrs," he claimed.

Addressing the protesters, Tawakul Kurman, chairwomen of Women Journalists without Chains, said, "You are entitled to demand that the free world protect you. It is a choice imposed upon you." She urged free nations, the Security Council, the UN and the European Union to form an international committee to investigate what she called the crime of murdering the "Stand martyrs," considering it an anti-human crime.

Kurman went on to say that "the police stubbornly follows a policy of avoidance. Through sit-ins, strong resistance and struggle, they will be exposed."

She demanded that Yemen's capital be transferred to Aden, which she called "the city of flowers and the window to other worlds." According to Kurman,

this act would enhance national unity and provide the country with endless opportunities for a better and more secure future.

A statement issued by the political activity and civil society organizations mentioned that the massive funeral procession to bid farewell to the victims is an escalation of peaceful struggle, making the issue just.

"The political activities, civil society organizations and blood relatives as well as social figures maintaining solidarity with open-ended sit-ins legitimize this peaceful struggle, which has the right to escalate if the authority does not comply with demands to prosecute the true perpetrators who committed such an outrageous crime," the statement further added.

In related news, sources in the Sana'a-based Al-Jazeera office confirmed that its representative, Fadhle Mubarak, was detained by the security personnel in Dar Sa'd in Aden governorate, preventing him from covering the funeral procession.

This is the fourth action undertaken by security authorities against Al-Jazeera since mid-October, preventing it from covering the JMP's activities.

On October 14, security authorities in



Thousands of citizens participate in the burial

Sana'a, under high-level directives, prevented the Al-Jazeera team from airing the October 14th anniversary rally staged by military retirees in Radfan in Al-Dhale'. They also threatened to block the Sana'a-based Al-Jazeera office in case the rally was aired.

Likewise, on October 28, security

authorities in Hadhramout governorate besieged Al-Jazeera's team, where transmitting devices and cell phones were confiscated.

They also detained Ahmed Al-Shalafi, Al-Jazeera's correspondent, for more than four hours, preventing him from covering news.

After 3 months of disconnect journalist return to the streets

By: Saddam Al-Ashmouri
For Yemen Times

SANA'A, Dec. 11 — A number of journalists and human rights activists acting with civil organizations held a sit-in on Tuesday, during which they continued to demand their rights to free speech and guaranteed the right to possess media outlets. The peaceful protest took place at Freedom Square in front of the Cabinet, amid heightened security measures.

Women Journalists without Chains, the group which organized previous sit-ins held since last July but ceased in September, announced in a press release its decision to resume sit-ins, calling all press members, civil society organizations and advocates of freedom and expression to participate in the 19th sit-in held in front of the Cabinet.

Tawakul Kurman, Chairwoman of Women Journalist without Chains, declared that she will not stop protesting until freedom of expression and the right to possess audio-visual and printing presses is granted to parties, organizations and individuals.

Yahya As-Shami, member of the Yemeni Socialist Party (YSP) Central Committee, delivered a speech addressing the protesters, in which he claimed, "Any form of democracy is meaningless if freedom of opinion and expression is not guaranteed."

As-Shami also affirmed that freedom of speech is the starting point toward democracy, considering any manipula-

tion of this freedom to be against the principles of the revolution. He added that it is not enough that this freedom is claimed on the front page of official newspapers; rather, it must be realized by the people.

Aidarous Al-Naqeeb, member of the Culture and Media Committee in Parliament, stated, "Freedom of expression is the true standard of democracy," confirming parliamentarians' solidarity with journalists to possess all types of media outlets. They are willing to attend the 20th sit-in until complete freedom of the press is ensured.

Aidarous also stressed that the Ministry of Information is an executive body to facilitating journalists' work rather than restrict it, calling for all journalists to continue holding sit-ins to take their rights back.

He further criticized past oppressive regimes which monopolized the media, as well as those trying journalists, holding them accountable for regression in Yemen and causing the country to have a bad reputation.

Journalist Saleh As-Suraimi delivered a speech on behalf of the Yemen Organization for Supporting Democracy and Fighting the Legacy of Power. He wondered about the authority and its ruling party's allegiance of granting women an electoral quota while they fear issuing press licences for Rashidah Al-Qaili and Tawakul Kurman.

In a statement released by the sit-in in which the Joint Meeting Parties (JMP) denounced the insistence of the

Ministries of Information and Telecommunications on preventing Women Journalists without Chains from possessing a newspaper and blocking its mobile services. It also condemned the two ministries' violations of the parliamentary decrees which stipulate the release of those services.

Protestors renewed their demands for halting the monopoly of audiovisual media, making it free for individuals, organizations, and parties as well as issuing licenses for newspaper without any discrimination and removing illegal conditions imposed upon them. They also demand to cease pre-planned violations which journalists and freedom of expression advocates are exposed to.

They further announced their solidarity with the journalist, Abdul-Kareem Al-Khaiwani and Al-Shara' newspaper and are against trying them in a state security court. They denounced the authority's actions taken to prevent news channels such as Al-Jazeera and Al-Arabia from covering protest activities in the southern governorates.

The protesters condemned the prevention of two parliamentarians, Inssaf Mayo, and Ahmed Saif Hashid, from entering Aden the day before because they were carrying personal cameras; the demonstrators considering this action barbaric, violating basic civil rights as well as breaching the constitution, which guarantees citizens' right to voice and express their opinions



The siting takes place at freedom square amid heightened security

throughout writing, and photography.

They also praised the initiative presented by parliamentarian Ali Ashal, which indicated the right of obtaining information, insisting on pressuring the government until a law guaranteeing the right of possessing media outlets.

In the rally attended by a number of Saba News Agency journalists, September 26, the agency's members demanded in a statement to refer perpetrators who attacked Yahya Jar-Allah, editor in the agency, and referring them to legal and fair interrogation as well as compensating Jar-Allah and giving back to him all his confiscated belongings taken in Sana'a International Airport by Central security personnel.

The agency's members also stated that

the security personnel were not satisfied with their actions against Jar-Allah; rather they dragged him into a special room, where they bashed him severely, using their gun butts and kicking as well as uttering foul language. The journalists stated that the press community does not consider such actions a mistake or individual transgression but rather an outrageous attack.

The organization renewed its call for the president to fulfill his electoral promises such as protecting press freedom, ensuring the right of possessing audiovisual and print media for everyone. The ruling party is monopolizing this freedom while it is a constitutional right before being part of the president's electoral program.

Yemeni women break into male market

By : Nawal Ali

SANA'A, Dec.12 — Yemeni businesswomen launched in their first meeting last week in Sana'a the Yemeni Businesswomen Unit related to the Yemeni Businessmen's Club.

The meeting was led by Arwa Al-Adimi and dedicated by the head of Yemeni Businessmen's Club Chair Ahmed Ba Zara'a.

He said that this unit will promote and improve women's institutional practical performance, confirming that the unit's activities will develop more and more in the coming year.

"Women were absent in the business world for ages and we are hopeful that this new unit will be the first step towards new private sectors. I ask every businesswoman to join men in investment projects in order to develop society and also I asked all the national and local NGOs to support businesswomen and facilitate difficulties they may encounter," Ba-Zara'a stated.

He stated that they are going to adopt different programs to support this unit in order to improve businesswomen's skills which comply with their ambitions.

"Though Yemeni traditional customs are really strict with regard to women, the acknowledgement of Yemeni businessmen that there is a businesswoman's unit is really a positive step,

and it means that they accept women as market competitors," Ba-Zara'a added.

Furthermore, businesswomen's unit head Arwa Al-Adimi ensured that the unit's message is to activate Yemeni women in economic development and promote the relationship between all businesswomen through adopting special programs and activities to polish their practical skills according to Islamic principles.

"The unit has only ten businesswomen registered formally," Al-Adimi stated, adding that Yemeni businesswomen still need support in training and promoting their experiences in the market.

In this regard, an academic study carried out last year mentioned that a lack of government jobs, the low economic circumstances at home and the desires to own independent projects are the main reasons which lead Yemeni women to break into the market and run their own business.

The study, which carried out by Dr.Hassina Al-khadery, the head of the women's center in Sana'a University, revealed that most Yemeni businesswomen's ages are between 20 to 40 years old, "because these ages allow her to play her role actively as a businesswoman and as a wife and mother at the same time."

However, the study pointed out that not all Yemeni businesswomen have

registered in the Chamber of Commerce, so the number of registered businesswomen does not reflect the real number of all businesswomen in the Yemeni market. According to the study, most Yemeni businesswomen do not register to avoid taxes, as well as for social reasons.

The reason behind the success of these women, according to the study, is the support of the husband and the family who can also be their financial sponsors. "Yemeni businesswomen invest in many sectors, including services, education, entrepreneurship, banks, and agriculture," claimed the study.

The World Bank (WB) has already declared that it will support businesswomen in nineteen countries, including Yemen. According to the WB, higher rankings on the ease of doing business are associated with higher percentages of women among entrepreneurs and employees. "Regulatory reform leads to especially large benefits for women," said Dahlia Khalifa, Doing Business spokesperson. "Women often face regulations that may be aimed at protecting them, but instead force them into back-office jobs, where they have little job security and few social benefits."

The first Yemeni businesswomen office was opened in 2005 in the industrial trade chamber in Sana'a.



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Activists cast doubt on ability to fight corruption

By: Mohammed Bin Sallam

SANA'A Dec, 9 — Different Yemeni government agencies and non-governmental organizations (NGOs) observed International Anti-Corruption Day, occurring on December 9. The occasion, during which many prominent personalities discussed corruption, was highlighted by different government agencies, which aim to fight corruption through the recently established National Anti-Corruption Authority (NACA).

Some of the participants showed optimism that the newly established authority will succeed in diagnosing corruption in Yemen and suggest possible solutions, while others doubt that the authority will have successful results. Bilqis Abu Isbu'e, NACA Deputy Chairman, considered the media to be the authority's main partner in combating the phenomenon. She pointed out the important role of media in fighting rampant corruption by exposing its various aspects and increasing people's awareness about its harmful effects at the national level.

According to Abu Isbu'e, any report published by the press about corruption will function as a message for the authority to play a greater role in this respect,

reaffirming the media's role in increasing people's awareness and enhancing integrity.

She reviewed all the efforts so far expended by NACA since its establishment, including plans for future developments, saying that the authority began to receive notifications and complaints from citizens about various corruption cases and financial liability concerns as part of the authority's duties under an agreement signed by Yemen and the International Anti-Corruption Committee. The NACA Deputy Chairman clarified that the authority works on two levels, the first of which is bringing about an institutional framework, administrative structure and qualified staff, while the second is engaged in establishing the Anti-Corruption Law.

Abu Isbu'e denounced rumors that the authority was established to improve the government's image. "Please give us at least one year as an opportunity to demonstrate our capacity in fighting corruption and suggesting possible and transparent solutions to eliminate it from various government offices," she responded.

Concerning the use of military, security and other government vehicles after

official working hours for personal purposes, Abu Isbu'e said that such a phenomenon costs the state billions of riyals, coupled with car accidents caused by sons and relatives of officials while driving government vehicles.

She confirmed that the NACA is waiting for any reports and notifications from the press and journalists about this phenomenon in order to begin discussing it. "You should learn that no issues is prohibited for discussion," she continued.

With regard to financial liabilities, which the authority required from senior government officials, Abu Isbu'e stated, "There is a positive response from the government regarding financial liabilities, and 16 ministers have submitted financial reports to the authority. The information and data contained in the financial liability forms are kept confidential, in accordance with law. In case any official is suspected of misusing funds, he/she will be investigated."

Abu Isbu'e pointed out that current laws prevent authorities from talking or giving press statements about any corruption cases still under review. She revealed that the authority is preparing to establish the National Coalition for Integrity, to consist of government institutions concerned with fighting corruption such as Parliament, the Central Organization for Control and Audit (COCA), judicial bod-

ies, civil community organizations, the media and even ordinary citizens.

Prominent Member of Parliament (MP) Ali Ashal declared that he doubts that the newly established authority will succeed in fighting corruption for numerous reasons, one of which is that some of the selected members are not eligible.

"Observers of the Anti-Corruption Law understand that it is the product of a government initiative made in response to the International Agreement for Fighting Corruption that urged the Yemeni government to combat this widespread problem in its offices and agencies," Ashal commented. "This response doesn't reflect the government's will and it established the NACA to show people that it is serious about eliminating corruption."

"I don't think that this authority will be able to effectively perform its duty, as there are areas it cannot investigate. As an MP, I can confirm that Parliament constitutes a barrier against fighting corruption," he said.

At the ceremony, Chairman of the Supreme Judicial Council Judge Essam Al-Samawi praised the idea of establishing a national coalition for integrity and fighting corruption, coinciding with the government's efforts to eradicate the phenomenon. He advised various NGOs and independent media to assist the NACA in fighting corruption, search for facts and

avoid publishing fraudulent information.

Al-Samawi indicated that the NACA will be one of the arms of the judiciary, in addition to public prosecution, criminal investigation bureaus and other security organs.

Ahmad Mohamed Al-Anisi, Chairman of the NACA, gave a speech on the occasion, saying, "Fighting corruption is a community responsibility. The NACA is not the only responsible agency for fighting such a phenomenon. Solidarity and cooperation between various parties to eradicate the phenomenon is impossible, but the government is recommended to strengthen the power and independence of the judiciary, support Parliament, develop oversight agencies and enhance their independence, and involve different media outlets, COCA, NGOs and the international community in fighting such a destructive phenomenon."

The NACA Chairman reviewed the several steps that have been taken so far as part of the efforts exerted for fighting corruption. These steps include Parliament's approval of the International Agreement for Fighting Corruption, issuing the Financial Liability Law, establishing the NACA and enacting the Tenders Law.

Giving a speech on the occasion, Dina Assaf, the UN Development Program Resident Representative, Flavia Panseiri

indicated that Yemen has endorsed the UN Agreement for Fighting Corruption. "Corruption is known to be the biggest obstacle to development. Therefore, Yemen needs to expend serious efforts in fighting the phenomenon, particularly as the country is ranked 131st out of 179 countries ordered in terms of least corrupt to most corrupt," she said. Assaf attributed rampant corruption in Yemen to numerous reasons, such as the lack of questioning and transparency, weak involvement of people in running public affairs, poor performance of the media, NGOs and COCA, and insufficient legislation to fight corruption.

Panseiri vowed that her organization will cooperate with the Yemeni government in supporting Yemen's judicial system and backing the Finance Ministry in managing budgets more transparently.

NACA members Saadaddin Taleb and Ezzaddin Al-Asbahi reviewed the requirements for establishing a national coalition for integrity and fighting corruption, plus the practical steps for the coalition's business. They specified the first quarter of 2008 as a deadline to complete the formation of this coalition, crystallize its principles, invite partners and various agencies to the inaugural ceremony of the coalition in April 2008 and then develop a strategy in cooperation with NGOs, the media and the private sector.

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التنموية الإجتماعية الخيرية بأحر التعازي وأصدق المواساة
للدكتور/ أنيس هزاع الأصبحي المسؤول الصحي
بالجمعية ولكافة أسرة الفقيد، سائلين المولى عز وجل أن
يتغمد الفقيد بواسع رحمته ورضوانه ويدخله فسيح جناته و
يلهم أهله وذويه الصبر والسلوان. (إنا لله وإنا إليه راجعون)

NBY registers 30% growth

The National Bank of Yemen had another successful year, with a series of distinguished achievements in all items on the balance sheet.

-Total assets grew by 26.8 % , net profit Registered 30.2 % growth, while roe increased from 27.6 % in 2005 to 28.3% in 2006.

-Tier I capital was also up, at 35.2 % . These financial accomplishments in 2006 contributed towards The strengthening and consolidation of the banks financial position, improving its profit margin and confirming its position in the Yemen banking market as an effective financial institution with great potential for growth and value-added for shareholders and the government of Yemen.

These achievements were affirmed by



a Capital Intelligence report in November 2007, which gave the bank a BB rating for its financial strength, the highest in Yemen .

Chairman Abdul Rahman M Al Kohali says:

"The Banker award is a reflection of the right bath that the bank has outlined in its strategies, and its modernization and development project, which is now in its final stage of implementation. The National Bank of Yemen is committed to top-quality services and products in accordance with international standards, and to realizing the goals and expectations of all parties concerned in the welfare of the bank within the domain of the comprehensive benefit of society and Yemen's economy.

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Successful dinner party held at Shammr Hotel

On December 6, Shammr Hotel and Suites hosted a dinner party entitled, "Something to Remember," which included representatives from many companies in Yemen, who immensely enjoyed the party, which went smoothly until 11 pm.

The evening was highlighted by the welcome address of Mr. Abdulhadi, general manager, followed by a presentation by Ms. Ahnne Vianzon, sales executive manager.

In her presentation, Ms. Vianzon displayed for guests renovated rooms, suites, and other aspects of the hotel which were updated and improved. The expectations of potential guests were also discussed.

Shammr Hotel and Suites would like



Mr. Abdulhadi, GM, describes to the guests the facilities and services provided by Shammr Hotel.

to extend their eternal gratitude to all companies who participated in the event and hope for their continued support.

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Republic of Yemen Ministry of Agriculture and Irrigation Groundwater and Soil Conservation Project

Announcement of Vacancy

SOCIOLOGIST (International Expatriate Consultant) (Period: sm in two spells)

The Republic of Yemen has received a credit from the International Development Association (IDA) to cover part of the cost of the of the Groundwater and Soil Conservation Project (GSCP) and intends to apply portion of the proceeds for recruitment of International Expatriate Sociologist Consultant for period of 2sm in two spells.

Objective:

The Social and Institutional Assessment (SIA) prepared during project preparation and the Quality Entry Assessment (QEA) carried out in 2005, highlighted various social issues important for the project. Now it is required to have a Social Impact Assessment Study to follow up various social issues identified by the SIA and assess related project impacts.

The Sociologist shall have a MSc degree in Sociology or economics with specialization in Sociology with extensive experience of not less than 15 years in Socio-economic surveys, social and institutional assessment related to agriculture and irrigation projects. The Sociologist shall have experience in poverty assessment of land tenure and land use, water rights, participatory groundwater management, stockholders assessment, formation of Water Users Groups and Associations etc.

Proficiency in English ,working knowledge of Arabic and computer skills are required. The Sociologist shall work under the supervision of the PCU.

Terms of Reference:

The Expatriate Sociologist shall take the lead role of drafting the outline framework of the study and advise the National Sociologist to continue the work in his absence and carry out the analysis as per advise of the Expatriate Sociologist which shall be finalized during the second visit of the Expatriate Sociologist and a Report on SIA submitted on the following TOR:

- Review the SIA prepared during project preparation and QEA prepared in 2005.
- Review the Mid-Term Implementation Assessment Report (MTIAR) of April 2007 including the Report on Beneficiary Impact Assessment Report(MTIAR) of April 2007 including the Report on Beneficiary Impact Assessment (BIA);
 - Review the MOU of April 21-May 2,2007 (a relevant extract from this MOU is attached);
 - Determine how the poor have benefited or been affected by the project;
 - Examine in-depth how the tenants and sharecroppers have been involved in the project and what the outcome for them have been;
- Follow-up Social Assessments (SAs) to monitor gender issues;
- The BIA included an analysis of Water User Groups (WUGs) capacity building and functioning. The proposed study shall assess these WUGs in more depth in terms of participation of various types of members-small farmers, landlords, sharecroppers and tenants;
- The area served by the SIA and CWMP found poverty levels of 40-60% Further, the project provides higher subsidy to smaller farmers with a view to reach many small size farms and to have a direct poverty impact. The proposed study proposes to have a size farms and to have a direct poverty impact.

The proposed study proposes to have a more –in –depth assessment of how the poor have been involved in the project and what the impact on them has been;

- The SIA recommended a detailed study of land ownership and the conditions of sharecroppers.

The proposed study envisages: (i) assessment of situation of tenants and landless and how these various groups have been involved in the project and what the impact on them has been;

(ii) how have project benefits been divided between landowners and tenants/sharecroppers;

(iii) how have landless farm laborers been affected; (iv) how have tenants and sharecroppers participated in WUGs; assessing project's impact on tenants, sharecroppers and landless who are under poverty line along with impact on poor (small farmers will combine to present a picture of the project's poverty impact;

- The GSCP provides for the bucket type drip irrigation kits targeting the women with home gardens and the women extension agents were to help in this regard. The proposed study en-visages an in-depth analysis of the results to date keeping in view the action taken by Community Water Management Project (CWMP) which included gender issues in its design, and women's WUGs have started to be formed and trained.

There are some women who are in-charge of the farms (widows or whose husbands are away) and some of these women would be interested in obtaining improved irrigation systems;

- The proposed Social Impact Assessment shall ascertain how these various categories of farmers have been involved in training activities and WUGs and suggest ways to maximize their effective participation. Both SIA and CWMP have reported high level of illiteracy and the proposed study shall examine whether this is affecting farmers ability to participate in the project and whether current training and awareness materials and approaches are designed appropriately

The Expatriate Sociologist shall frame questionnaire in Arabic with the help/assistance of the National Sociologist on the basis of which the National Sociologist shall conduct the above assessment study.

Interested applicants who strictly meet above requirements, may submit their application with their CVs and supporting documents to the PCU address given under on or before 30th December, 2007. Only the short listed candidates will be called for interview.

Selection will be processed in accordance with IDAS (World Bank) guidelines for selection and employment of consultants.

Groundwater and Soil Conservation Project
Near Abu Obeida Mosque
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Pansieri: U.N. volunteers program is important for developing countries

In an exclusive interview with the Yemen Times, Flavia Pansieri, resident representative for the United Nations Development Program in Yemen, talked about the United Nations Volunteers (UNV) program in Yemen. *An interview by Nawal Ali.*

When did this program begin in Yemen?

The U.N. Volunteers program started in Yemen in the late '70s and has been very active since then by providing volunteers who are willing to come to Yemen and contribute to its development.

In fact, at one point, Yemen had the largest number of volunteers, but right now, the numbers are a little lower. We're certainly working to bring them up again and ensure a larger participation by international volunteers in Yemen, as well as the growing participation of Yemenis in their own nation's development.

Who are the U.N. partners involved in this program in Yemen?

The program fields volunteers in a vast spectrum of specialties to support the activities of other U.N. agencies. Right now, we have volunteers working with UNDP, the United Nations High Commission for Refugees, the World Food Program and the United Nations Population Fund. Volunteers are based either in these organizations' offices or on their projects.

One of the program's most important features is the readiness and ability of volunteers to actually go to the field and live and work in the communities they're supporting. That's why they're such an important development contribution and that's why UNV assignments often allow a type of outreach that more normal project activities don't always provide.

Can you give us a hint about the program's activities for this year's International Volunteer Day celebration in Yemen?

We're going to do two things, the first of which is an in-house activity while the second is more public. The in-house activity will be a get-together for all of the volunteers in Yemen to get to know each other better because they're scat-

tered all over the country. We'll discuss common issues and share common resolutions discovered through their activities.

The second activity, and probably more important for the general public, will be publishing an account of what it means to volunteer in Yemen. We'll interview numerous national and international volunteers based in different locations with different agencies, asking them why they're volunteering, why it's important for them to be volunteers, what they've been able to contribute and what they've gained from such experiences.

We'll do this both to increase public understanding of the important roles volunteers play, as well as encourage greater involvement by Yemenis in volunteer activities for their own development.

This doesn't have to be done exclusively through the U.N., as other types of organizations, non-governmental organizations and donors all make use of volunteer contributions. So many NGOs in this country use volunteers to pursue and accomplish their activities.

We want to acknowledge these contributions to Yemen's development, which regrettably, aren't fully accounted for because they don't get into the national account. Because they're voluntary and without financial contribution, they aren't counted. However, the fact that they're not counted doesn't mean they can't be counted because they count a lot.

A country like Yemen must become increasingly aware of what important contributions its own citizens are making to its development, even if this doesn't show up in the national accounts because it has taken the form of volunteerism.

What would you like to say to all of the volunteers in Yemen?

What I want to say is how important a program like the UNV is for any developing country because it allows leverag-



Flavia Pansieri

ing the spirit of ethical imperatives and individuals' commitments to a country's development in a way that's important to be recognized.

Volunteerism also is important because it has a multi-player effect. For example, by witnessing someone else volunteering, others may be inspired to do the same.

This is something the UNV program is pursuing very consciously by ensuring that every single volunteer not only carries out his or her specific duties, but also becomes an ambassador for volunteerism in order to prompt a greater commitment in others to the same cause, while at the same time, working toward ensuring that national plans recognize and account for these contributions in the overall development planning every country undertakes.

Have you encountered any difficulties in promoting the concept of volunteerism in Yemen?

No, on the contrary, I think there's already very fertile ground for volunteerism in Yemen, as well as in other Muslim countries, because it's part of people's personal commitment.

Recognizing that all of us have a responsibility toward those who are underprivileged or discriminated against is very much embedded in the Muslim religion and very much a part of every good Muslim's life.

So, this isn't a Western concept; rather, it's a concept fully internalized within

Yemeni culture. That's why we see so many activities taking the form of volunteering.

However, I think it's important to move beyond charity toward volunteer action to promote development and sustainability. I hope that all of the many young – and not so young – people who feel an ethical imperative to help those less privileged than they are will see the importance of going beyond just charity toward sustainable intervention to promote development.

Volunteers face many problems, so what do you do to ensure volunteers' rights in Yemen?

Regarding the rights of volunteers, you're absolutely right. The fact that such individuals are motivated to contribute doesn't mean they should be exploited or treated disrespectfully. Quite the contrary, I would say they deserve more respect because they do it for voluntary reasons.

For this reason, legislation is very important. One area we're working on, particularly with the Ministry of Planning, is ensuring that U.N. volunteers are recognized for the highly competent and committed expertise they bring – at the same level as any other professional – because this is important.

It's equally important to ensure that basic requirements are met regarding insurance, security and medical care because these are important supporting features clearing the way for more volunteers.

So, I do agree that volunteer rights should be respected. In fact, some time ago, the U.N. Volunteers program issued some guidelines that we're happy to share with anyone who's interested regarding the basic legal requirements that are important to regulate fairly in any country's volunteer activities.

At your International Volunteer Day celebration, what's the audience to whom you're seeking to send your message?

You'll be assisting us, as your newspaper's broad readership will allow us to reach the public with our message, which



UN volunteers give away foodstuff to Yemeni children.

essentially is this: "You can do something too; you too have the ability and – I would say – also the responsibility to volunteer. Join us!"

The means are many fold – you can volunteer via the U.N. or with national and/or international NGOs; there are many ways to volunteer. There's more to life than just one's job; volunteering is important both as a contribution to others and also for allowing us to grow as human beings. In that regard, I'd like to share one experience that has touched me most during my more than three years in Yemen.

A few years ago, Yemen was affected by a major polio outbreak, so the World Health Organization organized a door-to-door campaign to vaccinate all children against it. Being short staffed and needing volunteers, many U.N. staff volunteered to participate in the campaign, which they found to be perhaps one of the most gratifying experiences because they could see directly how much their work was impacting people's lives.

That's probably the greatest return one can receive from volunteering – the knowledge that you've done something of which you truly can be proud.

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فرع عدن: عقبة كريتر شارع الملكة اروى تلفون ٢٢٦٧٠٥٢ فاكس ٢٢٦٧٠٥١
فرع عدن مول: محل رقم (١٢) تلفون ٢٢٦٣٠٦٦
فرع تعز: التحرير الاسفل جولة المعتبرين تلفون ٢٨٠٢٠٠ فاكس ٢٨٠٠١١
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The way Yemen's democracy is supported

The National Democratic Institute that has been working in Yemen for many years reserved its report on Yemen's last year presidential and local council elections for nearly seven months. It has not released its report until it was April 2007 and that came one month before President Ali Abdullah Saleh's visit to the United States.

Through this report, it has been made clear that NDI has nothing to do with elections and democracy or the likes, the meanings of which become distinctive according to the nature of U.S. interests in any country. Such a report appeared to be politicized, particularly as it said in its opening sentence that "We think that Yemen's presidential and local elections, which took place on September 20, 2006, is a crucial step toward democracy in the country. Such elections can be described as democratic and competitive." Then the report proudly continues to say, "As soon as the Yemeni Parliament approved the final list of presidential candidates, it has been apparent that Joint Meeting Parties gave a practical answer to a very big question that had been evolving in Yemen's public opinion for several months. The question was about the possibility of having a real contender to President Saleh in the race toward the highest political post in the country.

Resembling Powell's Report on Weapons of Mass Destruction in Iraq, the NDI's report added that "The tense relation between Opposition Parties and Supreme Commission for Elections and Referendum had a negative impact on the elections, thereby delaying the electoral processes for more than one time. And, as SCER didn't give electronic copies of voter registers made in 2002, as well as the registers modified in 2006, in a way substantiating suspicions of the opposition and the international community that the registers contain some faults in favor of the ruling

party, this helped the relations become sharper, thus leading to a failure in implementing terms of the Agreement of Principles, reached by General People Congress and JMP on June 18. This agreement was endorsed by the Executive Authority with the aim of resolving any noticeable differences.

There have been high concerns and fears during the time period ahead of the elections that opposition parties would not name their candidates for election management committees, like what happened during the review and modification of voter registers in 2007. Also, there have been fears that the opposition parties may boycott the elections.

Despite the fact that SCER is primarily responsible for any faults and violations, which accompanied the electoral process, the opposition should have calmed its sharp address against SCER. The NDI's report on Yemen's most recent elections reminds its reader of Bush's Administration decision to invade Iraq first and then search for the reasons behind the invasion. It also reminds the reader of Bush's Administration charges against those opposing the stupid war decision, accusing them of being unpatriotic and allies with terrorists. Meanwhile, the advice given by Bush's administration to Yemeni opposition concerning SCER is merely a reflection of the lack of prudence, which Bush's Administration and its collaborators are famous for.

According to the report, "Since the local elections in 2001, there has been a great change in the political relations between Yemen's political parties. It is for the first time to see the major opposition parties are not engaged in negotiations with the ruling party ahead of the elections about settling some electoral issues before they occur." The report



By: Dr. Abdullah Al-Faqih

considered this a positive indicator of a serious opposition to demonstrate strong competition at the elections.

"Prior to 2003 parliamentary elections, seven opposition parties, including Islah and YSP, made up a coalition under the name of JMP. This coalition remained rigid during 2003 elections until now," said the report. The reader is required to understand that the report considers dialogues between ruling party and other major opposition parties before 2001 local council elections a national achievement. The report did not say that the killing of tens of people during that election is a national achievement.

Wonders of the NDI's report have no limit. When the reader believes that the report has already closed the file of conflicts between SCER and opposition parties, he/she will be shocked to see the report discussing the same issue once again. The way the report is written reminds readers of the former Deputy Chief of Mission at the U.S. Embassy in Sana'a Nabeel Khoury who completed his assignment in Yemen a few months ago. Khoury confused many observers who did not know whether he is a deputy chief of mission at the Yemeni Embassy in Washington, a deputy chief of mission at the U.S. Embassy here in Sana'a or a representative of the Pope.

Those who prepared the NDI's report seem to have forgotten the efforts exercised by the International Foundation for Election Systems (IFES), specialized in electoral affairs, its lengthy reports and the agreed-upon recommendations, which the ruler left in the drawers.

Part of the report concerned with SCER has reminded people of the behavior of Mr. Abdu Al-Janadi, SCER

member. This part reads, "The electoral process was managed in a relatively good manner, however, SCER's performance in preparing and organizing the elections was better than its performance in the area of preventing and correcting violations that occurred during the implementation process.

NDI knows more:

In the part devoted to the election results, the report celebrates the GPC landslide victory in the elections by saying, "Regarding the local council elections, GPC won 85 percent of the seats at the governorate level and 79 percent of the seats at the district level while Islah, which is the strongest opposition party in Yemen, obtained only 7 percent of the governorate seats and 12 percent of the district seats and YSP got only 2 percent of the seats at the governorate level and 3 percent at the district level. The result is totally different from that of 2001 election when GPC got 58.5 percent of the governorate seats and 85.6 percent of the district seats. In that election, the Islah party won 20.4 of the seats at the governorate level and 23.3 percent at the district level while YPS obtained 3.8 and 3.2 percent of the local council seats in the governorates and districts respectively."

In order not to raise questions about integrity of the elections and NDI, the report gave a scientific reason to such a democratic victory, attributing the low number of votes obtained by Islah and YPS to the inadequate use of resources, as well as the lack of training and organization for their local council candidates. It did not indicate that the election system in Yemen hinders win of opposition candidates.

The author is an activist, analyst, and professor of politics at Sana'a University. He welcomes comments by email to: draflfaqih@yahoo.com

Source: Elaf Weekly.

COMMON SENSE

Yemen's thieves outclass them all Ali Baba & Robin Hood would turn in their graves

"I can't believe that thieves can be so honorable as to devote their time to stealing from the rich, just so the poor can also have a slice of the good life. The writers who made up such tales must have been living in Mars or had something cooked in to their lunch to make them see a whole different world." Nabila could not help wonder at the fantasies that holders of the pen would come up with sometimes.

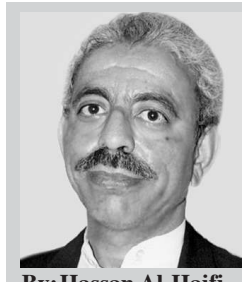
"What on earth are you talking about, Nabila? You should stop reading those fairy tales or watching those Mexican soap operas." Nabila's mother was not impressed by her daughter's remark.

Nabila continued her talk not minding her mother's sly remark: "Look, Mom, you heard about the story of Ali Baba and his Forty Thieves or Robin Hood and his forest renegades. Can't you see, how times have changed, even in the criminal world? Imagine, even in the depressing world of the Middle Ages, these two chivalrous thieves of East and West saw comfort in being able to relieve the agony of the downtrodden of the world by stealing from the rich and redistributing their loots to the poor. The problem nowadays is that good thieves like that are hard to come by. Nowadays it is hard to distinguish between good thieves and bad thieves. In those days, the good thieves usually kept their arms hidden and avoided any bloodshed against their victims or those who chased them on behalf of the authorities."

Saboorah was not about to miss the opportunity her sister had opened for her. She was an avid newspaper reader: "Mom, the thieves of the land are now the authorities and they are chasing the downtrodden of the earth with helicopters moving them down whenever any of them has anything to say to get the thieves back to hiding. Ali Baba is an angel in disguise when compared to the thieves we have today. Look at how the guards of the big senior officials just chase the poor people who come knocking at the gates of the thieves' extravagant mansions, hoping to get the excessive leftovers of their overly delectable scrumptious meals. I remember my grandfather once telling me that in the past, the people of Sana'a used to get a few morsels of food packed and ready for any needy people who might knock at their doors during lunchtime. Mind you, these were not 'leftovers', but neat and well ordered meals. He said that people in his day would never be able to see the light of day, if at least a third of their food was set aside for feeding the poor. In fact the Ali Babas and Robin Hoods of their day were the only people unemployed, because, even these chivalrous masters of burglary were not needed, because charity and philanthropy was viewed as a human obligation and an inseparable cause of living itself. In fact, stealing was dealt with severely and thieves simply were not even heard let alone seen"

Her mother was behind her younger's daughter's comment: "Your grandfather, God bless his soul would turn in his grave, if he sees how the scales of society have turned upside down. Now, you see the biggest thieves in the country riding obscurely in the most luxurious of vehicles, that only allow the passengers to see out through three-inch glass, but those who are being seen can't see who is looking at them. Worse than that, you have the thieves of the treasury and everything on the ground, above the ground, below the ground, on the sea, beneath the sea – you have them protected by an accompaniment of at least five guards being paid from the Government's payroll! They have orders to kill anyone who dares to even lay a smudge on the thieves' cars. You have some thieves racing along our roads with a license to kill anything and everything that dare cross their paths at the wrong time. I have often wondered why these thieves must continuously be on the run, when they already have half of the armed forces and security apparatus protecting them and shielding them from the slightest contact with the people they purportedly govern. Why, Ali Baba would be at a loss at seeing how his fellow thieves have lost all sense of goodness and how the poor of the land have no one to turn to. Even Ali Baba to the thieves of our time would be denied the honor of being simply a petty thief to that of a 'terrorist' and then have every police department in the world looking for him. As for our honorable government licensed thieves, they are so busy being ceremoniously rewarded by the international community and the other 'straight' leaders of the world, who have robbed their own good people of the vision that enable their people to see the difference between good and bad.

Hassan Al-Haifi has been a Yemeni political economist and journalist for more than 20 years.



By: Hassan Al-Haifi

Be cautious against political HIV

By: Dr. Saif Al-Asali

There are two deadly and incurable diseases that exhaust energy of all human beings. The two diseases are cancer and

AIDS and both are known for their malignance. Malignancy of the cancer cell encourages this cell to expand and magnify at the expense of other cells, and then control the nutrition of all the cells, thereby causing death of the healthy cells and helping the malignant ones to multiply. To work with other cells in harmony, the healthy cells must take nothing except for their portion of nutrition, and if this nutrition is too much, all the cells in the human body will magnify. But if nutrition was little, the body cells will get thinner and thinner, and in both conditions, the body remains in a state of balance.

In case of HIV infection, its virus's malignance will motivate it to penetrate into the sound immune cells that are responsible for protecting the human body. This infection will then control nutrition of the immunity cells and destroy them to remain alone, but it is remarkable that eliminating these cells means leaving the human body without an immune system to protect it. Consequently, the body will fall an easy prey to the weakest germ that

destroys the body and the virus at the same time, and this germ doesn't know that via immortalizing the malignant virus that destroys all the immune cells, it destroys itself. If the human body is dead, the HIV will die too as it will have no nutrition.

It is clear that humanity succeeded in magnifying cancer via developing the means of its treatment, be they the ones related with surgeries or the use of chemical drugs and different X-rays. So, there is a great possibility in achieving complete success in exterminating this incurable disease in the near future if there is a God's will. But, when it comes to the Acquired Immune Deficiency Syndrome (AIDS), developing an effective medicine for this epidemic is still somewhat difficult.

Even if some people claim that they have discovered a medicine for this disease, they have not yet proved effectiveness of their medicine in real-life situation.

As far as the political field is concerned, cancer can be likened to corruption while AIDS can be compared to political malice and giving priority to personal interests. From the realistic viewpoint, corruption is not a phenomenon applicable to everyone, but it is limited to a small minority. The majority of people can be instigated against this

epidemic (corruption) and then start the surgical operations for eliminating the ailing cells, or using the chemical substance or X-rays to help the body (nation) escape consequences of this epidemic.

With regard to the AIDS, which here stands for political malice and giving priority to personal gains, it will destroy the body if it had proliferated throughout the body (nation). And if there is some medicine for curing this epidemic, it will be difficult to get rid of unless the nation is divided into smaller parts. This is why the best mean for dealing with this epidemic is the preventive measures.

One of the prevention measures is confining those infected with this virus in order not to communicate to others, and the situation necessitates hard work to make available isolated places for those infected with the virus, as there is no hope in the present time for treating it.

In this context, the national interest requires quick action against all the political parties and forces that are infected with malice in this manner, and this action should include all the newspapers and journalists infected with this virus.

Those who advocate apostasy under the pretext of citing some infringements and violations are infected with the political HIV, as

damaging the national unity may help increase such infringements and violations. And, those who instigate chaos and violence under the guise of price hikes are infected with the political HIV too, as chaos will only help prices to skyrocket.

Source: Al-Thawra State-run Daily.



By Samer

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First Political bi-weekly English Newspaper in Yemen. Founded in 1990 by Prof. Abdulaziz Al-Saqqaf

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Subscription rates:

Individuals: YR 7,000

Yemeni companies/corporations: YR 8,000

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Bush and the ‘Arc of Crisis’

By: Amir Taheri

When he first entered the White House in 2001, President George W Bush had little idea, and less intention of, becoming involved in the complicated politics of the Middle East. However, as he starts his last year in office, the United States’ foreign policy agenda remains dominated by three parallel crises in the Middle East the outcome of each of which could have a lasting effect on American global strategy.

The first is often referred to as the Global War On Terror (GWOT) fought in a number of countries, including Algeria, Somalia, Turkey, Iraq and Afghanistan, in the so-called Arc of Crisis.

Of the various theatres of this war, Iraq has attracted the most attention if only because it is there that American involvement in terms of military power and political commitment has been the most significant.

At the end of 2007, the tide of the war against terror appeared to have turned in favour of the United States and its allies, notably the new Iraqi regime. Levels of violence against US troops and Iraqi civilians were significantly down compared to 2006 while losses sustained by Al

Qaeda and its local Iraqi allies were higher than any point at the start of the insurgency in the autumn of 2003.

Nevertheless, good news from Iraq has to be tempered with developments that appear less encouraging:

The alliance of the willing, initially starting with 40 nations in 2003, was down to just 30 at the end of 2007 with important allies, notably Australia and Poland, under new left-of-centre governments, also preparing to withdraw.

Even the United Kingdom, which has had the second largest contingent after the US in Iraq, has announced that it would cut the number of its troops to just 1500 next year.

The Iraqi government of Prime Minister Nouri al-Maliki, a Shiite dominated coalition, and the Iraqi parliament have failed to enact crucial legislation needed to promote national reconciliation, create new federal structures, and regulate the sharing of oil revenues on a regional basis.

It had also failed to set a date for the all-important municipal elections, needed to propel the newly emergent leadership elite of the country into positions of local power, thus providing effective government presence at all levels.

In the new year, the Bush administration needs to do a number

of things if it is to bequeath a reasonably stable Iraq to its successor. The administration must negotiate a new basis for the US military presence in Iraq.

This means doing away with the current United Nations’ mandate by signing an accord with the Iraqi government.

Most experts agree that while the need for a large US force will diminish in the next year or so, stability in Iraq would continue to require some American military presence for at least another decade.

Such a US commitment, however, should not be granted without a quid pro quo in the form of the political reforms needed in Iraq.

The US might even want to insist that the date of the next general election, scheduled for 2009, be brought forward to allow the new emerging political elite to seek representation at central government level.

As Iraq seems to be slowly moving towards stability, Afghanistan appears to be entering a new phase in its war against insurgents. The Taliban’s defeat by NATO forces in the crucial province of Helmand, in the southeast, in a straight military battle last summer has forced the terror movement to seek other methods, including suicide attacks.

To prevent Afghanistan from sliding into greater instability, it is

vital to create a central mechanism to coordinate the military, political and economic policies needed to fight the insurgency. At present, however, Afghanistan looks like a patchwork of separate commands with the United States, NATO, the United Nations and the government of President Hamid Karzai in Kabul conducting different, and at times contradictory, tactics.

The second crisis that the US faces is related to the perennial Israel-Palestine conflict.

While the so-called “peace conference” held in Annapolis, Maryland, last November, might provide a framework for resuming negotiations between Israel and the beleaguered Palestinian Authority President Mahmoud Abbas—something welcome on its own—prospects for an agreement on the creation of two states in just 14 months remain unpromising, to say the least.

The third, and potentially the most important crisis, stems from the Islamic Republic of Iran’s challenge to the United States’ leadership in the region.

While Tehran’s nuclear ambitions provide the focus of that challenge, its more immediate effects are felt in a number of other domains.

The Islamic Republic, under its radical President Mahmoud Ahmadinejad, is emerging as the

central plank of a new “Rejection Front” opposed to President Bush’s two-state solution for the Israel-Palestine conflict. Ahmadinejad and committed Tehran to the creation of a single state in the historic Palestine is a roundabout way of calling for the destruction of Israel.

Under Ahmadinejad, the Islamic Republic has become the principal source of support for Hamas, the Palestinian Islamist movement that also rejects the existence of Israel.

Tehran is also challenging Washington’s position in Lebanon. Tehran may be prepared to push Lebanon into a new civil war to prevent pro-West forces from maintaining their hold on the government in Beirut.

The current view in Tehran is that the United States has lost its will to fight for its interests, let alone its purported values, and that, once George W Bush is out of the White House, a new administration would respond to the public mood by scaling down American involvement in the Middle East. That, in turn, would enable the Islamic Republic to assert its position as regional “superpower” setting the agenda for the region.

What is needed is a comprehensive debate in the US concerning a region that all American presidents, since Franklin D Roosevelt, have regarded as vital for American interests. Over

the past quarter of a century or so, the Islamic Revolution in Iran, the end of the Cold War, the war of Kuwait, and the liberation of Afghanistan and Iraq have shattered the regional status quo.

As long as no new balance of power is established, the region will remain in crisis with inevitable consequences for American economic, political and geo-strategic interests.

At the end of 2007 the key question is: who will set the new status quo in the ‘Arc of Crisis’? Will it be the United States and its Western and moderate Arab allies or the Islamic Republic as the leader of a new coalition of radical forces?

Amir Taheri was born in Iran and educated in Tehran, London and Paris. Taheri has been a contributor to the International Herald Tribune since 1980.

He has also written for The Wall Street Journal, The New York Times, and The Washington Post.

Taheri has published nine books some of which have been translated into 20 languages, and In 1988 Publishers’ Weekly in New York chose his study of Islamist terrorism, “Holy Terror”, as one of The Best Books of The Year.

He has been a columnist Asharq Alawsat since 1987.

Source: asharqalawsat

“Persianizing” the Arab Gulf!

By: Jamil Theyabi

In 1981, six Arab Gulf nations declared the foundation of the Cooperation Council with a hope to achieve a number of political, economic, social and security-related objectives, to “build” the human being in the Gulf, and to confront common threats, particularly arrogant Persian policies.

The 28th conference held by the Council in Doha hosted the President of Iran, the country that represents a continuous “headache” to the state members. Some had wished that the guest would not arrive, especially as he spoke of a “Persian Gulf”, thus ignoring the Arab identity of the Gulf and its states.

President Ahmedinejad brought no assurances to the Gulf States, nor did he express a change in Iran’s attitude and approach. He did not present a

single practical solution to avoid the dangers facing the countries of the region, except the raising of more slogans and challenges. He completely ignored his country’s nuclear issue and the fact that Iran was still enriching uranium which adds to the existing fears of the Gulf States.

He also deliberately ignored the fact that his country has been occupying the three UAE islands since 1971 and the “unacceptable” Iranian intervention in Iraqi and Lebanese affairs, not to mention Iran’s meddling in the Palestinian question.

I believe that Nejad got what he wanted at the Doha summit. He came as a spokesman and analyst, stealing the lights, setting the tone to his desire, saying what he wished, and ignored what he was expected to say or the issues on which he was demanded to provide assurances.

He even repeated the “Persian

Gulf” terminology, an Iranian complex par excellence, as he considered his nation to be a Gulf State, especially when in the opening session he stated “Our seven nations enjoy enormous capabilities and potentials.” Hence, he exceeded his capacity as a guest at the conference to classify his country as one of the GCC states.

Iran suffers several crises in addition to the domestic authoritarian rule. There are issues such as the oppression of some minorities as the case is in the oil-rich Ahwaz where the population, particularly the Arabs, lives below the poverty line, suffering deprivation of access to pure water.

In fact, isn’t Iran in desperate need to utilize its capabilities to resolve its domestic problems and to bestow prosperity upon its own citizens?

Nejad flaunted his vocal muscles, raising his voice with “regional” slogans, and strayed away from

offering assurances to calm the Gulf “anxiety” toward the Iranian nuclear plant. Nor did he offer fair and conciliatory solutions over the occupation of the three islands that belong to the United Arab Emirates.

It is certain that through the agenda that he proposed to the Gulf States, Nejad wished to settle accounts with the United States by replacing Gulf-US relations with Iranian ties.

The Iranian President, however, offered nothing to prove the goodwill of his country or the termination of its nuclear ambitions. Instead, he ignored commenting on or discussing the major issues in which Iran is a major player or acts as a threat to the security and stability of the region.

Iran’s policies are in fact one of the sources of real danger lurking in the region, and as Nejad mentioned in his statement at the summit, “The security of the (Persian) Gulf nations is intertwined, and any potential security tensions anywhere in the

region will affect the other nations.”

In this, I believe, he was sending an indirect message to the Gulf states, linking the Iranian crisis to the security of the Gulf States in the event of an American strike against Iran.

Undoubtedly, the continuous tensions in the region are among the outcomes of Iranian policies. All what the Arab Gulf States can do is to do whatever it takes to deliver security for their countries and people while Iran abstains from expressing any attitudes to serve the security and stability of the region. In fact, I do not believe that Iran will offer any assurances to its neighbors.

Iran’s policy is expansionist, demagogic, and threatening to the interests of the states and nations of the region.

This may warrant consideration for the calls upon the Gulf States to adopt the proposal to develop regional missile defensive systems to

form an umbrella to protect and defend the region in the face of the Iranian threat that may become a reality upon a military confrontation between Iran and the US.

The propositions that Nejad made at the Doha Summit are nothing but temporary tactics, exposed maneuvers, and evasion of realities. They are worthy as headlines in the press and in the news.

I believe that the Iranian attitude will not change as long as the strings to power and decision making in Teheran are held by the grand mullahs, and regardless whether the reformist Khatami protested, the zealous Nejad raised slogans, or Larijani continued to negotiate.

The real decision is the hands of others whose greed will not stop at turning South Iran into an Iranian settlement, but will also attempt to “Persianize” the entire Gulf region.

Source: Dar Al Hayat.

The Transatlantic Muslim divide

By: Marcia Pally

Compared with the tension that exists in Muslim communities across Europe, America’s Muslims are a more contented lot.

A recent Pew Forum study found Europe’s Muslims to be “markedly less well off than the general population, frustrated with economic opportunities and socially isolated,” while most American Muslims say that “their communities are excellent or good places” to live; 71% say they can succeed in the US if they work. Both income and college graduation levels match the national norms. 63% of American Muslims report no conflict between religious devotion and living in modern society.

Although 53% of US Muslims think that life is more difficult since the terrorist attacks of 2001, most think that this is the fault of the government, not their neighbors. Indeed, 73% said they had never experienced discrimination while living in America. Moreover, 85%

said suicide bombing is rarely or never justified, and only 1% said violence to defend Islam was “often” permissible. In Europe, significantly higher percentages of Muslims believe that suicide bombings are “often” or “sometimes” justified.

“What emerges,” according to Amaney Jamal, an adviser to Pew, “is the great success of the Muslim American population in its socioeconomic assimilation.” Yet “assimilation” is not what succeeds. “Assimilation” means dissolving into the mainstream, but Muslim-Americans do not, remaining devoutly Muslim in a country overwhelmingly Christian.

America’s Muslims do not so much assimilate as *participate* in economic, political, educational, and social life. This might reflect a self-selection process: only the most educated Muslims immigrate to America, as poor social services allow only the best-prepared to survive. Yet even middle-class Muslims in Britain become alienated, and, unlike the Muslim poor in Europe, poor Muslims in America don’t express alienation or sympathy with al-Qaeda.

It can be argued that only those poor eager for the harsh but open possibilities of American life immigrate to the US. Yet this doesn’t explain why these poorer immigrants remain religious; wanting to succeed US-style, they should want to be quick to “assimilate.”

Why do US Muslims do well while remaining devout and distinctive-looking? Why can they participate without assimilating?

Two factors seem significant: first, relatively porous economic, political and educational arenas that allow immigrants entry to these key areas of American life. Despite the discrimination and poverty that immigrants often suffer initially, barriers to economic and political participation are relatively low.

The second factor is America’s pluralistic public sphere, an arena not without religion but with many religions, which are visible and active in civil life as the basis for institutions, publications, and symbols that influence values and conduct. The US is not a secular society; it is a religiously pluralistic one with secular legal and political

structures.

Indeed, America’s secular institutions were designed to support pluralism. They allow people of many creeds to work in them—a workplace of multiple faiths. The prohibition against a state religion together with freedom of conscience preserves the plurality of religion in civil life.

This design was crafted not only from enlightened principle but from necessity: America needed to persuade people to cross the ocean and endure the hardships of the frontier and, later, industrialization. Freedom to practice one’s religion was an advertisement for America.

The benefit of that accidental generosity was the American deal: immigrants have to participate in the economic and political fracas of the nation, but without much of a social service safety “net.” On the other hand, they can get in.

And they can keep not only their private faith but practice it publicly. Tolerance for other people’s religion is the price paid for tolerance of one’s own. Prejudice has tended to fall as participation increases. It has been in no one’s interest to disturb

this live-and let-live pragmatism for very long.

One result of the deal is the paradoxical-sounding “familiarity with difference.”

Because immigrants participate in America’s economic and political arenas, Americans are used to different sorts of people and so distinguish those differences that might damage the country from those that will not.

Americans, indeed, are familiar with difference, or at least they tend not to panic. Even after 2001, there were only a few anti-Muslim incidents.

Europe, however, demands greater assimilation and offers a less porous economy and politics. This means less participation and thus less familiarity with difference on the host country’s side.

On the immigrants’ side, there is more resentment against the host, more lassitude about the economy and politics, possible violence or an insistence on maintaining symbolic differences—ironically, in a society less able to accept them precisely because of its discomfort with difference.

This is Europe’s headscarf debate in a nutshell. It speaks to none of the barriers to participation or to immigrant responses to them, but demands symbolic assimilation.

But such demands are a dead end. To get out of it, greater entry into the economy and politics is needed, but also less demand for quick-fix assimilation.

All the religions that descend from Abraham have internal mechanisms for change that allow them to reckon with new circumstances in ways that the confessional community can respect. Both fundamentalism and the demands of assimilation — be like us, now! — pre-empt these mechanisms.

They should be allowed to work. But Europe demands assimilation before participation in an economy that immigrants can’t get into anyway. This, sadly, is a road to the ghetto.

Marcia Pally teaches at New York University.

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Nasr M. Nasr:

“casual and unorganized development of areas surrounding cities will result in catastrophic consequences for the real estate industry”

The development of the real estate industry in Yemen a complicated issue, while we see land disputes filling commercial courts and we hear about the associated risk of investing in real estate, apart from the increasing costs of Cement and Steel which raise the cost of such investments, population growth especially in urban centers result in enormous stress on the real estate industry. YemenTimes has interviewed the published of Yemen's first real state magazine and asked him a few questions around the subject.

Can you brief us on Al-Aqaria tabloid and its scope of work?

Al-Aqaria magazine is the first publication in Yemen concerned with the real estate and construction sector in Yemen, published by Future legacy company. Since the establishment of the publication in 2007, two pilot issues has come out, and starting January 2008, the magazine will be issued on monthly bases, due to the high demand on the magazine. We also plan publishing special supplements which on specific areas or for specific activities such as lease, purchase and constructions.

The editorial section of the magazine will also tackle the issues facing investors in the real estate sector, ranging from home owners to large-scale investors, and will communicate concerns to decision-makers in both the private and public sector in order to shed the light on the problems which constrain the development of this sector. The magazine will also undertake investigative reports and expand our classified ads section to be more inclusive and comprehensive. Additionally, we have signed a Memorandum of Understanding with Al-Aqaria Satellite Television to expand their coverage to include Yemen, as well as help us provide regional news of the real estate business which might affect the local market.

How do you see the development of the real estate sector in Yemen? And what are the drawbacks that the sector needs to overcome?

Yemen is witnessing a large real estate revolution, especially given the invest-

ment laws which have been relaxed, taking into consideration the best practices and derived from the best legislations in the region in order to promote investments. The real estate sector in Yemen is bound to attract the largest portion of investments in the country, however, the prime obstacle which limits attracting more investments in this sector is the land-disputes problem and the inefficient real-estate registrar agency.

The government of Yemen is trying hard to solve these problems, however the main mechanism for resolving disputes, i.e. the judiciary, is an inefficient mechanism, there are simply too many land and real estate related disputes. And also the increase in real estate prices, the increasing costs of construction and raw materials, and the highly inefficient mechanism of construction make investing into real estate a more difficult decision.

Time and again we hear news about massive residential and construction projects in the country, but none of these projects have materialized yet. How do you evaluate the attractiveness of such projects to investors?

We have also heard of such announcements during last April's Invest-in-Yemen conference, however, since then, we haven't seen any real progress in terms of realizing these projects, perhaps due to the reasons I just mentioned. Or perhaps due to financing problems as the banking sector is reluctant to finance large construction projects due to the risks associated or perhaps due to the non-affordability of the



Nasr Musain Nasr, General Manager of Future Legacy co. and Publisher of Al-Aqaria Magazine

banks to finance such projects, according to several investors we have dealt with.

What effect does the increasing cost of cement and building materials have on the construction business in Yemen?

Cement and Steel are the lifeblood of the construction industry, however, due to the large demand on these two products in Gulf countries, there is a global increase in the prices of these two products. And Yemen has been affected by the increase especially since the legislation regulating market prices and supply of these products are not being practiced, and the existence of a huge black market in Yemen where such commodities are auctioned to the highest bidder.

What are the problems of urban planning in Yemen, considering the population explosion and the rapid growth of cities?

One of the prime issues which face Yemen's urban development is that there is no planning for the areas to be developed surrounding the cities, resulting in casual and unorganized development of these areas in turn resulting in catastrophic consequences for the real estate industry and home owners in such areas. In a conference in 2001 in



Real Estate investments are becoming less lucrative due to the associated problems and increases in construction costs.

which I participated in, it was anticipated that real estate development increases by 15 percent per year in Sana'a, while other infrastructure services and urban planning moves at a pace of 3 percent, the conference pointed out that in 2010, 70 percent of Sana'a city will suffer from shortage in infrastructure services such as Water and Sewage, and now we are well on the way towards that.

Issues of land ownership and property registration makes investment in real estate a risky one, how do you comment on this statement?

This is a very known fact in our industry, you can pay a visit to a commercial court and see for yourself the different cases and people disputes, or even go to the real estate registrar to be shocked of

the sad realities we have to live with.

From your experience through Al-Aqaria, what trends do you see in the real estate market?

In spite of all the problems we have discussed, Yemen has an exceptionally interesting and possibly lucrative real estate industry, due to the geographical diversity and the tremendous increase in urban populations which demand housing. These factors should attract investors to enter into the sector. However, the ball is in the government's court to facilitate these investments.

Any last comments?

I'd like to thank you for the opportunity and I hope we will see the sector developing in a faster pace for the sake of our country's prosperity.

Oil Ministry, Total E&P Yemen hold workshop to promote Yemen's Gas Sector

By: Abdulalah Taqi
For Yemen Times

Sana'a, December 8, 2007. The Ministry of Oil and Minerals and Total E&P Yemen held a Joint Gas Workshop aimed at increasing the common understanding on the importance of gas as a new source of energy. Indeed, less polluting than other fossil fuels and in abundant supply, natural gas is growing faster than any other fossil energy in the world and is the focus of much attention. Total presented its global view and experience in the gas business, covering current and forecast international and national energy situations, environmental issues, markets and regulations. The Ministry explained the new contractual framework contemplated for gas exploration and production. The workshop saw participants engaging in lively discussions.

The workshop was attended by the Minister of Oil and Minerals, H.E. Khalid M. Bahah, Deputy Minister Mr. Abdul Malik Alamah, the General Manager of Total E&P Yemen, Mr. Jean Michel Lavergne, a number of oil and gas-related officials and TOTAL's regional experts team. This team consisted of Mr. Pascal Laroche, Middle East business Manager, Mr. Olivier Journy, Gas & Power business development, Mrs. Anne-Laure Pelcerf, Senior Legal advisor for Middle East, and Mr. Xavier Mine, Senior Economist.

Mr. Jean Michel Lavergne, the General Manager of Total E&P reviewed the Yemeni energy environment, saying that gas has an important role to play in meeting the needs of Yemen's energy matrix due to the growing energy demand which, in turn, is a result of a demographic and economic expansion. He called for the exploitation of the largely untapped gas potential in Yemen. Concluding his presentation, Lavergne spoke about the increasing gas initiatives from both sides. On the Ministry side it is allowing access to gas for contractors under Production Sharing Agreements (PSAs), the leading the promotion of domestic gas projects for the utilization of gas reserves in Yemen's Eastern Region. "TOTAL, for its part, is co-operating pro-actively with the Ministry," Lavergne committed, "to promote gas projects in and around Block 10, as well as assist in open discussions, workshops and trainings in order to help authorities promote gas exploration in Yemen."

Pascal Laroche presented the currently increasing demand for gas

worldwide, projecting the demand in 2020. He said that gas production is far from having reached its peak and this will make gas one of the leading energy sources in the 21st century. He added that the Middle East with the large gas reserves held in Qatar and Iran will be a key player in the gas markets.

Olivier Journy then explained the gas chain specifications and challenges. The development and promotion on a large scale basis of a new industry and market such as gas involves many things in terms of regulations, infrastructures, investments, technology, etc. Journy proceeded with a brief comparison of the processes and stages through which the oil and gas go from the production process to the end user phase.

Anne-Laure Pelcerf analyzed the new PSA gas clause tabled by the Ministry of Oil and Minerals and the elements spurring gas development. "The decision to grant to contractors, under certain conditions, the right to explore, develop and produce gas on awarded blocks," Pelcerf stated, "is a very significant step forward in the direction of gas". She compared the gas provision in existing PSAs with the new one and pointed out to the worldwide acceptance that the PSA terms for gas must be better than those for gas, especially at the promotion stage of this energy. Some international examples of incentives to promote gas exploration were provided.

Economist Xavier Mine, highlighted the economic impact on the fiscal terms and especially the cost recovery and gas marketing aspects.

The Minister of Oil and Minerals concluded the workshop by confirming that Yemen intends to take the turn towards gas decisively. He added that gas exploration and production is the main goal for government and this workshop was a good opportunity to better understand gas business issues from one of the leading players in the Yemen petroleum industry. He stated that continuing exchange of information and views on gas is highly needed for Yemen and that the workshop was a good initiative by TOTAL to offer its experience in this matter. "The Ministry of Oil and Minerals is working side by side with this French Company," he added, "and its partners in the Yemen LNG project, as one of the largest projects in the country".

*Abdulalah Taqi is head of public relations in Total E & P Yemen

Business in Brief

Oil Ministry extends the 4th bidding round to January 5

Minister of Oil Khalid Bahah announced that the deadline for receiving the expression of interest for the 4th international bidding round has been extended until January 5, 2008. 23 International Oil companies have submitted expressions of interest in several fields. This round bids off eleven off-shore oil fields; several of those fields have proven oil reserves.

Germany to provide US\$ 107 in assistance to Yemen during 2007/08

Yemen and Germany have signed four bilateral cooperation agreements totaling 73 million Euros (US\$ 107 million), through which Germany will fund development programs in Water, Education, Health and Sustainable Economic Development. The programs will be implemented through the German Technical Cooperation Agency (GTZ), the German Development Bank (KfW), the German Development Service (DED), among other German agencies working in Yemen.

Qatar's Al-Qudra to construct Sana'a Towers project

Al Qudra International, the international investment arm of Al Qudra Holding, has recently signed an agreement with the General Investment Authority in Yemen, to develop the Abraaj Sana'a (Sana'a Towers) project in Sana'a city. Abraaj Sana'a comprises residential and commercial towers, a shopping centre, a luxurious hotel, as well as villas, diplomatic club, and a variety of services and innovative facilities with the highest standards of security and safety.

Survey: Farmers unaware of Yemen's water shortage

YemenTimes survey regarding the water sector has revealed that large numbers of farmers are unaware of Yemen's severe water shortage, and the impact of traditional irrigation practices on the sustainability of water resources in Yemen. Yemen has the world's seventh worst water crisis.

Total buys 40 percent of two oil blocks

France's Total oil company has acquired a 40 percent stake in two onshore exploration blocks operated by China's Sinopec, namely block 69 in Mareb governorate and block 71 in Al-Masilah basin, Hadhramout governorate.

Yemen participates in 1st Gulf Social festival

The Ministry of Social Affairs and Labor prepares to participate in 1st Gulf Social festival, which would be hosted by UAE early next year.

Mr. Ali Ubad, the advisor to Minister of Social Affairs and Labor for Foreign Relations, told "26sep.net" that coordination is underway with a number of associations to participate in the festival.

Explaining that they would review Yemeni experiences and activities of associations working in the Yemeni field of social care of the disabled, the blind, as well as Juveniles.

He pointed out that the establishment of this festival comes in implementation for the decisions of Council of Ministers of Social Affairs and Labor in Gulf states, in order to exchange experiences in the area of social charitable work and to develop it.

Economic Affairs Minister emphasizes the importance of reinforcing banking competing abilities

Deputy Prime Minister for Economic Affairs and Minister of Planning and International Cooperation Abdul-Karim al-Arhabi met on Tuesday with a delegation from the International Monetary Fund (IMF) and discussed with it a number of cooperation issues.

The two parts dealt with discussing the economic growth and the economic policies the country is implementing in the framework applying decisions of the Third Five Year Plan.

The meeting also dealt with discussing related issues on the offered support by the IMF for Yemen in fields of investment with relation to reframing the general budget of the government as well as other related aspects.

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VACANCY ANNOUNCEMENT

The Office of the United Nations World Food Programme in Yemen is currently seeking qualified candidate for the following post:

Post Title: Snr. Programme Assistant (Monitor & Evaluation) YEM07/PRG/002
Duty Station: Sana'a
UN Category: SSA-7 (2 Months Initial period)
Closing date: 23 December 2007

Supervision received: The Snr. Programme Assistant (M&E) reports to the Head of the Programme Section.

Accountabilities: Within delegated authority, the Programme Officer (Monitor/Observer) will be responsible for conducting continuous monitoring and reporting of relief food activities in assigned areas, identifying potential problems and supporting the overall programming process:

- 1) Monitor the overall number and status of persons in need of relief assistance and prepare assessments of overall relief requirements in assigned areas;
- 2) Participate in the preparation and implementation of food aid monitoring and reporting systems in the territory;
- 3) Monitor food arrivals and verify quantity and quality of deliveries to extended points and sites, as per instructions;
- 4) Record shipments received and channel to appropriate authorities and relief partners the information needed to update distribution plans and status reports;
- 5) Report on the effectiveness of relief activities, constraints and present recommendations for improvement;
- 6) Visit distribution sites to check food availability in relation to the number of beneficiaries, rations, commodities and quantities distributed;
- 7) Report on food security, monthly arrivals, losses and logistics aspects
- 8) Coordinate with implementing partners and liaise with NGOs, local authorities and other entities aimed at improving efficiency and timely food access to beneficiaries;
- 9) Perform other related duties are required.

Qualifications:

Education: University degree in one or more of the following disciplines: economics, agriculture, international affairs, business administration, social sciences, development studies or a field relevant to international development assistance.

Experience: At least one year of postgraduate professional experience in commerce, business administration, development, or food aid support.

Language: Fluency in both written and oral English and Arabic.

Applications must be received by the deadline and only short-listed candidates shall be contacted. (Snr. Programme Assistant (Monitor & Evaluation Vacancy, YEM07/PRG/002 at the following address: World Food Programme , Sana'a , Villa No.22-Nwakshut St. No. 21, Diplomatic Area, P.O.Box 7181, Republic of Yemen

Vacancy Announcement

The Yemen Red Crescent (YRC) and the International Federation of the Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies (IFRC) invites Yemeni nationals to apply for the following positions with its Community Based Health Development (CBHD) Programme.

Position: Programme officer
Duty station: Sana'a with at least two weeks of travel per month to the project areas in Hajjah and Hodaidah governorates.
Reports to: The YRC/IFRC health coordinator.

Responsibilities:

The programme officer will be responsible for management, implementation and monitoring of the CBHD programme in selected communities in Hajjah and Hodaidah governorates. The programme officer will be responsible for preparing quarterly reports in English.

The ideal candidate should have the following qualifications:

- Health/social science or other relevant background, preferably a master degree.
- A minimum of 3 years working experience with community based development.
- Proven experience of programme implementation through participatory approaches.
- Fluent in Arabic and English.
- Excellent computer skills.
- Excellent leadership skills.
- Excellent team building skills.
- Ability to deal with complex situations.
- Able to travel and stay in remote rural areas at least 15 days per month.

Position: Accountant
Duty station: Sana'a with at least one week of travel every month to the project offices in Hajjah and Hodeidah governorates.
Reports to: The YRC secretary general and on a daily basis the health delegate.

Responsibilities:

Responsible for inventory and financial management and reporting of the community based health development programme in Hajjah and Hodaidah governorates. This includes coaching and supervision of the project officer employed in Hajjah and Hodaidah governorate.

The ideal candidate should have the following qualifications:

- University education in accounting.
- A minimum of 3 years working experience with international accounting procedures.
- Familiar with Navision accounting system.
- Ability to communicate financial information to non technical audiences.
- Fluent in English and Arabic.
- Excellent computer skills.
- Good organizational skills.
- Cooperative attitude.

If you meet the above requirements please send your CV with a covering letter indicating which position you are applying for to: IFRC Yemen Office, Sana'a, P.O. Box: 5456 or by fax to: 01 293228 or by email to: mohammed.sharif@ifrc.org. The deadline for receiving applications is Sunday 6 January, 2008 at 12:00 noon.

Only shortlisted candidates will be contacted.



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At UBL, we work on every way possible to serve you.

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By: Salwa Yehia Al-Eryani

When the events you experience throughout your day rest on land just shaken by an earthquake, it's a little silly to try to arrange what you'll do tomorrow or how you'll spend your next summer.

When your days fight each other like waves in an angry, frustrated ocean, then it's a bit ridiculous to imagine yourself floating with closed eyes on the surface of the sea. Even imagining yourself relaxing under the shade of an umbrella on the beach and reading or listening to music is a little difficult.

When the entirety of your life is stuck inside a narrow bottleneck, dreaming of a deep sigh is simply impossible.

All of these thoughts and imaginations were pricking me like needles from all directions. They were hurting so much that I wanted to yell, "Ow!"

I wonder who made our expected dreams bleed to death? Who broke, plastered and then made our days walk like a cripple? You gambler, quit messing around with our precious goals!

I was standing on the balcony of our flat. I don't know why I dared to stand there that night because in Yemen, balconies are built for demons to receive their guests. I stood there before sunset, not bothering about whether someone may pass and see me. Or maybe I felt safe and assured that our flat is in a quiet, residential area and it's very rare for people walk there. Only cars pass by hurriedly, rushing toward nothing but getting out of breath nonetheless.

My previous thoughts once again plunged me into the world of hopelessness with its bitter taste. I saw

the door to my flat as a person hanging with a rope around it. These days, rents are very high, so I may no longer be able to pay it. Where on earth would I go with my tribe consisting of my husband and six children?

The expenses of food, drink, clothing, medicine, education and many other things I saw hanging beside our flat's door. I saw the poor father – the sole source of income – hanging too. I saw an onion, a potato and a tomato hanging there alongside the many other things we were about to lose.

Food is beginning to be a serious problem. Staying alive is a necessity for all living things, but it's becoming an illegitimate necessity. Now what will we do? Nothing but sigh and then enter a long hibernation, after which we wake up feeling tired and experiencing a soreness in our souls.

There is injury in being sure that we've never solved a problem or stopped an injustice nor intended to correct any mistake. How can we, when we are such people, respect ourselves or make others, including our children, respect us? Why would our children appreciate our gifts to them when we fail to even beautify their future or reach out our hands to support them?

My flat's balcony directly faces a large plot of land, around which the owner has tried several times to build a wall. However, each time he builds it, some enemy comes and breaks it to pieces. Because this has happened so many times, we the residents no longer can remember how many times it has occurred.

The landowner and the man who bought it have disagreed several times and as a result, the wall has been built and shattered regularly. These two sides simply are playing and messing around, with no one to stop or even question them.

We the residents are watching a live movie without paying any money or buying any tickets for it. Twice, the problem has included shooting, which occurred when a second owner for the land showed up, not mentioning the first battle between the buyer and the original owner or the seller. This second owner said the first owner had forcefully taken a handful of his soil. They initiated a stubborn struggle, which was both childish and evil at the same time.

Numerous sheikhs came to the cinema, meaning the land, to try to solve the problem peacefully, but all failed to do so. Many cars arrived at that poor piece of land carrying many old and young men with weapons.

With my female eye, I used to examine some of those young guards with guns on their backs. How could their lives be so cheap? They're content to sell themselves for YR 1,000 a day, but what if a battle occurs? What will YR 1,000 do when they're facing bullets? They'll lose their lives, their youth, their families and their dreams, if they happen to have any.

What kind of culture do these poor young men believe in? Or is it simply the culture of poverty? Selling their day for YR 1,000 and sleeping inside cars all night with their guns behind their backs certainly is a great deal for the buyer, just like the girl who stands on the street, willing to go with any stranger in his car as soon as he gives her money.

I guess that's it. The man in the car takes away the girl's innocence and virginity just as the landowner takes away these guards' lives.

Suddenly, I heard a tremendous explosion followed by heavy shooting. I guessed that as soon as the guards heard the explosion, they'd become so nervous and confused that they'd probably shoot each other, that being

the normal reaction of one expecting to be shot dead and wanting to defend himself.

I felt my knees buckle and I fell to the ground. I couldn't run. I sat for awhile like a Greek statue before running inside and hiding in the bathroom, which was on the other side of the house and away from the shooting. I heard yelling, crying and the noise of things breaking and glass shattering.

On my way to the bathroom, I had grabbed and taken my children with me. I now heard their hearts beating like drums and their lips were blue. Our whole family was hiding in the bathroom.

If one can't feel safe in the bathroom of his own home, then where can he? Torturing the innocent and stealing away others' safety – isn't that worth a battle between the government and those doing this crime? If that isn't worth it then, excuse me, what is?

Because we're neither the sellers nor the buyers, this deal is none of our business. So why on earth are we suffering? What did we do? Several years ago, people here and even outside Yemen fought against increased prices, especially for bread and petrol, as well as against unemployment.

People fight against many things; it's a normal feature of life. It's normal to have demands. It's normal to object and refuse. These are fights people tolerate willingly because it's *their* fight. However, this fighting over land that others live near and for which they must pay their lives is a very unfair fight.

Since when does the audience die in a Western action or whatever type of movie?! Since when is the audience forced to get involved in the movie? Honestly, as funny as this whole thing is, it's just as serious and tragic.

Your soul's candle!

By: Fuad Noman
fn_0012000@yahoo.com

To no end,
Clouds bringing the signs of blunder,
Always
Within a long winter's slumber,
The dark hours creating my home's tangle.
Sometimes, my soul goes in anger,
For I am not a godly angel.

Before the summer's tour,
The sun's faintness sleeps on life's shore.
The buried ardor sense alters time's minutes

To an ice-covered essence.
In the pink spring,
Roses never shed tears.
Free birds still promenade
Around the blocked circle.
Untrue dreams ramble,

The trampled never grumble.
Love is a great tree
Reflecting our actual will,
Growing in the soul's root.
In time, it becomes stronger

As proof of its tasty fruit.
On our hearts' sill,
Our souls still own the control to till,

So my heart's logic can feel no ill

Forever and a day,

My soul's bird can warble

Nonchalantly,

Recollecting in mind and thought

My darling's innocent core.
How to be brought

To my soul's peaceful court,
When I recall your beautiful soul
With your sprouted eyes

On my heart's cradle.
I feel a child's gentle smile rise,
Granting me a fabulous surprise
Brighter than the moonbeams,
Milder than the sunrise.
That is

The light of your soul's candle,
Aware of your true acumen.

So you are my great omen,
Thou art my marvelous rhyme,
Thou art my society verse.
My hope's light comes to pass
warmly,

Awarding me the perfect path
Because thy soul is my just bliss.
My love's strength starts to sparkle,
Soothing my heart's firestorm,

So, my soul's joy flies delirious,
Its reflection grows great, funny
But sincerely serious
Within my lifetime's struggle.

Do not be afraid

To be my own and fate.

My heart's sense can't kneel down.

He would surrender only
For your soul's candle.

AMIDEAST
اميد إيست

MEPI



Position Vacancy

AMIDEAST announces recruitment of a senior professional to fill the position of MEPI Alumni Coordinator.

The US Department of State's Middle East Partnership Initiative (MEPI) provides funding to support programs in four areas: political governance and participation; economic liberalization and opportunity; educational quality and access; and the empowerment of women.

MEPI selected AMIDEAST as its partner to create an Alumni Network for the many professionals who have already participated in MEPI-funded programs. AMIDEAST is accepting applications to hire an experienced professional to serve as MEPI Alumni Coordinator to manage this program.

The Alumni Coordinator has significant work experience with a wide variety of civil society bodies. The coordinator will support an active alumni chapter with clear organizational direction and structure, and will support the professional development of its members.

The Alumni Coordinator will serve as: (1) the local AMIDEAST delegate to the alumni chapter; (2) the principal liaison among the alumni chapter, AMIDEAST, and MEPI; and (3) an objective consultant to the chapter for issues concerning organizational goals, structure, growth, and the design of activities.

Salary and benefits will be competitive and commensurate with the experience of the incumbent.

Specific Responsibilities

- Enable communication networks with Yemeni alumni, and maintain regular contact;
- Oversee the active Yemeni alumni chapters;
- Support members for the steering committee and attend steering committee meetings;
- Lead the chapter in organizing national conferences and meetings in Yemen;
- Work closely with chapter members in continuing to forge the identity of the groups;
- Maintain contact with MEPI alumni and regularly share (in detailed and regular written reporting) news of alumni accomplishments.
- Administer MEPI scholarship programs and related MEPI activities; and
- Liaise with U.S. and regional MEPI officers and colleagues

Qualifications

- Minimum two years professional work experience, including supervisory experience;
- Outstanding skills in organizing, motivating, and energizing individuals and groups;
- Demonstrated ability to network and interact with young professionals as well as those with more seniority, in both the public and private sectors;
- Strong verbal and written communication skills in English and Arabic (non-native speakers of English must present a TOEFL score of 500 or higher);
- Creative thinker and self-starter, who can work well on a team or independently with limited supervision;
- Bachelor's degree in a relevant field, and citizen of Yemen.

To apply:

Please send by e-mail your curriculum vitae, contact information for three professional references, and a cover letter explaining your interest in applying for the position to yemen@amideast.org. The closing date for applications is **December 31, 2007**. Late applications will not be considered. Only those applicants selected for further consideration will be contacted for interviews. No phone calls, please.

بِسْمِ اللَّهِ الرَّحْمَنِ الرَّحِيمِ

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المعزون

إدارة مركز صنعاء التجاري

ممثلة بالأستاذ / طه الكبسي

Socotra depicted in British exhibit

By: Yemen Times Staff
Foto credit: RBFD

The British Council will open a major exhibit Dec. 16 entitled, "Socotra-Land of the Dragon's Blood Tree comes home to Yemen," at Aden's Jamal Ghanem Fine Arts Institute.

In a statement, the British Council said the exhibit was created by the Royal Botanic Garden Edinburgh. Botanists from Edinburgh have been exploring and documenting the island of Socotra since 1880 and their experts are working with the Yemeni government to conserve its unique biodiversity.

British Council Director Elizabeth

White says, "I'm very glad that the British Council and the Royal Botanic Garden Edinburgh have been able to bring this exhibit to Yemen. Socotra is significant not only because it's one of the world's the best preserved island ecosystems and a treasure house of rare flora and fauna, but also because the Socotran people's lifestyle has much to teach the modern world about living in harmony with the environment."

She notes that the exhibit also highlights the fragility of this balance now under threat as development and tourism start to change the island forever. "I hope many people will have the chance to attend the exhibit, either in Aden or in Sana'a, and learn a little more about this treasure of an island," she adds.

The exhibit was first shown in Edinburgh in 2006, attracting more than 50,000 visitors and creating much interest in Socotra. The original exhibit was supported by the Socotra Archipelago Conservation and Development Program, the Yemeni British Friendship Association and the British Council, which now brings the exhibit (in both Arabic and English) home to Yemen.

The Aden opening will be attended by Minister of Water Abdul-Rahman Al-Eryani, as well as the British Ambassador in Sana'a and leading Edinburgh botanists, Dr. Tony Miller and Dr. Sabina Knees.

The Aden exhibit will run until Jan. 31, after which it will be taken to Sana'a for exhibit at the National Museum throughout March.



Socotra exhibit attracted both adults and children.



The exhibit held in Edinburgh in 2006 attracted more than 50,000 visitors.



National polio campaign kicks off

By: Yemen Times Staff

A 3-day nation wide polio immunization campaign kicks off across Yemen from December 15 to 17 to save all children from polio as part of enhanced national efforts to stay on top against any chance of the outbreak of the disease, the UN Children Fund (UNICEF) has said.

The National Immunization Days will be inaugurated by the Deputy President, Ali Mansour Hadi in Sana'a city in the presence of key officials, development partners and media representatives. The nation wide mass vaccination is being led by Ministry of Public Health and Population with the support of UNICEF, Centre of Disease Control (CDC), World Health Program (WHO) and USAID.

2.5 million doses of oral polio vaccine, procured by UNICEF at a cost of 635,500 \$ US Dollars arrived in Sana'a last Monday and have been dispatched to the Governorates for in-time delivery to the districts. The 3-day intensive drive will cover all the 353 districts with particular attention high risk districts.

During the countrywide effort, supported by a communication social mobilization component, more than 4 million children, under five years, will be given polio drops during the 3-day National Immunization Days as part of the National Expanded Program of Immunization to save children from polio.

This is the 11th round of door-to-door campaign that aims to reach all children under 5 through home visits. Supplementing routine immunization, the door-to-door visits by vaccinators were started in 2005 after re-emergence of polio in Yemen. The outbreak was at its peak in July 2005 when a total of number of children were infected by the polio virus reached 479 cases. Hodeida and Ibb were among the worst affected Governorates.

The Ministry of Health and Population has finalized all preparations by mobilizing over 2062 vaccinators from health facilities and a total number of 36162 vaccinators will be on the move in mobile teams to cover houses in rural areas and urban areas of the country.

UNICEF Representative in Yemen, Aboudou Karimou Adjibade said "Polio is an incurable disease and it is

parents' responsibility to get their children the polio drops as the unvaccinated children can fall prey to this disease that can cause paralysis within hours". He commended the enthusiastic support extended by the religious leaders, Imams and community leaders for their previous support to the door-to-door campaign and urged them to add their voice and influence for making the new round successful. He particularly, appreciated that leading role that Ministry of Endowment plays in helping to make these campaigns a success. Two drops of vaccine must be given to every child and vaccinators need to ensure that vaccine vials are carefully maintained in cold boxes and only removed and opened when they are needed.

As part of the efforts to accelerate vaccination of children against polio, the Ministry of Health and Population has put together a communication and social mobilization component that includes a mix of interventions such as inter-personal communication and motivational messages through posters, banners, leaflets, jingles and flashes. Motivation material has been distributed by Districts' Health offices, to message across to the largest audience.

Mass marriage aims at reducing spinsterhood

By: Radhwan Al-Saqqaf

A local charitable association organized on 6 December a mass marriage for 600 brides and grooms in the southern province of Aden.

Aref Anwar, Chairman of the Wisdom Society, which organized the celebration, told the Yemen Times that the Aden governorate leadership made efforts to make such a celebration successful.

Anwar added that this mass marriage is part of the Society's charitable projects. It cost 50 million riyals to help youth get married, he noted, adding it also aims at achieving social integrity as well as reducing the phenomenon of spinsterhood.

The Society would continue conducting such projects in addition to humanitarian programs that will be announced as early as possible, he added.

The marriage celebration was held in Palestine Hall of Aden city and was

attended by Aden Governor, Ahmed Mohammed Al-Kuhlani, who delivered a speech in which he said the mass marriage would help reduce the brunt of spinsterhood among youths.

Additionally, Majdi Fareed delivered a speech on behalf of the grooms in which he stressed on the importance of supporting youths to get married. The mass marriage is a charitable act that helps the community preserve religion, self, and keep away from committing sins and misdeeds, he said.

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Printed by Yemen Times Est. for Press, Printing & Publication
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