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YEMEN TIMES



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Civilized society is perpetually menaced with disintegration because of violent hostility of men towards one another. Sigmund Freud

In an Unprecedented Arab Move, Qatar Abolishes Information Ministry

Qatar Leads Arab Transformation to Press Freedom

The State of Qatar took last week a daring move towards more press freedom. It abolished the Ministry of Information, and transformed all government media organs into independent corporations. Thus the radio, television, news agency, and various other organs now operate independently from direct state control, within the parameters of broad guidelines. A few months earlier, the State of Qatar nullified pre-publication and pre-airing censorship of the

media, thus unleashing progress towards a free press. Since then, the press, television and radio programs have become more vocal and aggressive. The State of Qatar's transformation towards a more open and democratic system, has intensified since the young ruler Sheikh Hamad Bin Khalifah Aal Thani has become emir in a peaceful take over last year. Qatar is also expecting to undertake local municipal elections later this year.

Performing Umrah and Doing Politics/Business:

Yemeni Officials Flock to Saudi Arabia

The number of Yemenis who have gone to Saudi Arabia is staggering. Most of the tribal leaders and elders are over there, ostensibly to get closer to God - performing the umrah. Umrah is a mini-haj (pilgrimage to Mecca). But there is also a lot of politics and economics going on the side. Or is it the umrah which is going on the side? General Ali Abdullah Saleh, President of the Republic, has also performed the umrah at the head of a very large delegation.

The Speaker of Parliament, Sheikh Abdullah Al-Ahmar, has gone there earlier. In top-level meetings, Yemeni and Saudi leaders have discussed bilateral relations (read, border issue) and regional developments (read, Yemeni-Eritrean conflict over Greater Hunaish). By the way, given the number of officials who have travelled last week, the recent decision of not allowing government officials to travel abroad, whose ink has yet to dry up, is practically dead.

عيد سعيد
Happy Eid

"Diplomats do not need permits to travel within Yemen"

Foreign Ministry Lashes at Yemen Times

The Ministry of Foreign Affairs sent a long letter which lashed out at the Yemen Times accusing it of many things. The basic message of the three-page letter, however, is that diplomats need not obtain a permit when travelling within Yemen. It states specifically that the circular of September 12th, 1995, "does not constitute an impediment to the free movement of members of the diplomatic corps". The objective of the September circular, the Ministry notes, was to serve as "merely a reminder of the substance of the 1991 circular" - which is still valid. Diplomats are merely required to provide prior notification to the Protocol Department on their travel plans in order to "enable the appropriate authorities to take measures commensurate with the importance of the traveling party". There are several points the Yemen Times wants to raise on this matter:

1. The Yemen Times regrets to be unable to accept the assertion that it needs prior clearance from the Ministry of Foreign Affairs to publish its articles, even if they are based on reports issued by the ministry. However, the paper is always willing and ready to publish a rebuttal. If it breaks the law, the Ministry is, of course, able to take it to court, which is the final arbiter.
2. The Ministry could write a more appropriate letter, rather than one full of insults - and mistakes. The Ministry's rebuttal is neither signed nor dated nor numbered.
3. The press is not an enemy. It is the job of journalists to look for information and present it to their readers. In the said article, the Yemen Times translated an official circular from the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and commented on it.
4. The Ministry could avoid contradictions in its statements. On the one hand, the Ministry's letter described the circular of September 12th, 1995 - which the newspaper reproduced in its issue No. 5/96 of January 29th - as a forgery. Then in the same letter, it says that the circular was an internal memo. The letter also describes the Yemen Times as an esteemed newspaper twice, and also describes it as ignorant.
5. Many diplomats have told the Yemen Times that they have not needed a permit to travel within Yemen, so far. While in practice that is true, the Arabic text of the circular of September 12th does speak of "issuing the necessary permits thereof". The Yemen Times feels that the best way to resolve this confusion is for the Ministry of Foreign Affairs to issue another circular expressing commitment to the free movement of diplomats in accordance with international laws.

appropriate letter, rather than one full of insults - and mistakes. The Ministry's rebuttal is neither signed nor dated nor numbered.



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OUR VIEWPOINT

Blaming the Messenger for the Message

Many senior politicians have started attacking the Yemen Times under the pretext of protecting the nation's general interests. They are saying that what the paper is reporting is damaging to the country's overall interests. Basically, what they are talking about is their interests as rulers, and they intend to build up pressure to curb press freedom under this pretext. My personal information is that the attack on the Yemen Times is guided by Prime Minister Abdulaziz Abdulghani. He has been freely speaking about how much damage the paper is doing to the country, and thus passing the word out that somebody should do something about it. He has not, as yet, given open orders to go after the paper, but his assistants and executioners already understand the message.

I would like to first explain what I understand as the general interests of Yemen, and how they are better served. The interests of Yemen lie in building law and order, in full adherence to the laws and constitution, in creating a system that works at least according to the minimum of standards, in making sure there is a fair distribution of the country's wealth and income so that Yemen's underclass does not sleep hungry, in promoting an environment of stability and harmony, in controlling monopolistic behavior in politics and the economy, in creating a Yemen that respects international norms and laws, in fighting terrorism and extremism, etc. Are the authorities in charge doing that? I don't think so, even if they say so.

Next, I want to explain the role of good journalism, as I see it. In my opinion, the main role of the media is to shed light on what is going on in society. This can be good stuff - like innovations in technology, excellence in arts, achievements in sports, neat feats in the professions, etc. Not much of that happening in Yemen. And it can be negative news, notably, the excesses and mistakes of the authorities. In Yemen, unfortunately, there is a lot of that. We do not make the news, we simply report it.

Let me give one example. The Prime Minister was angry at a front-page story with a map on the various clashes and violence going on in the country (Issue No. 5 of January 29th). He does not say that these things did not happen. He simply says that reporting them hurts Yemen's interests. That is like blaming the messenger for the message. What actually hurts Yemen is that these clashes do take place, and that, to a great extent, our top politicians are responsible for them.

The Government has often countered Yemen Times reports by providing an opposing story through the official media and the pro-authority private media (newspapers financed by the state). It is free to continue to do that. Readers, however, chuckle when the official media explain that conditions for the Yemeni people are actually bright and promising, not as the Yemen Times says.

Finally, let me stress that Yemen Times will continue with its work, until it becomes physically impossible to do so. It has put up with a lot of heat and intimidation in the past. It will put up with more in the future. **It will not bow to bad politicians**, of whom there are too many in Yemen.

The Publisher


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Japanese Assistance to Yemen

Notes concerning grant aid for the increase of food production for 1995 were exchanged in Sanaa on February 12th, 1996. According to the notes - signed by Mr. Abdul-Qader Ba-Jammal, Minister of Planning and Development, and Mr. Susumu Akiyama, Japanese Ambassador in Sanaa, the Government of Japan will extend to the Government of Yemen a grant of up to 500 million yens for the increase of food production. The money will be used to purchase agricultural chemicals, machinery, and other inputs for the production of wheat, corn, sorghum and millet. Japan has been one of the key aid partners of Yemen. Its aid program concentrates on the medical, media, and physical infrastructure sectors.

Cassette Politics

Political mobilization in the Republic of Yemen has recently taken a new twist. Opponents and proponents of the regime have started using cassette tape as a tool to carry their messages. So, today, there are about a dozen cassettes carrying various messages in the forms of songs, jokes, or simple narrations. The majority of these are critical of the government authorities and the way they are handling the country's affairs. This phenomenon is expected to increase, notably as the freedom margin to openly criticize the state is shrinking.

G-22 Works to Create the Freedom Forum

A Group of 22 persons (G-22) made up of intellectuals, public figures, opposition politicians, and leaders of the NGO movement in Yemen met several times over the last few weeks. The main topic of discussion has been the deterioration in press freedom, attacks on NGOs, suppression of groups, individuals and institutions, and the shrinking margin for free and peaceful democratic exchange. "The idea is to find ways and means to peacefully protect the democratization process of the country, and to create a mechanism for institutions that work towards a civil and modern society to support one another," said Mohammed Al-Maqaleh, Assistant Secretary-General of Hizbul-Haq and Rapporteur of the Opposition's Supreme Coordination Council. "The institutions that make up the civil society and NGO movement of Yemen are like separate islands. We need to create bridges between them," explained Ahmed Al-Soufi, a columnist and Secretary-General of the Yemeni Institute for the Development of Democracy. "We are not opposed to anybody, not even the ruling politicians. We are working to strengthen one another. That is all," added Dr. Mohammed Al-Mutawakkil, a professor at Sanaa University and the Vice Chairman of the Yemeni Organization for the Defence of Rights and Liberties. "The idea is to create an umbrella organization - like a club - which will serve as a contact point or channel of communication for all NGOs and pro-democracy groups to interact," said Yassin Abdul-Razzaq, a lawyer and Secretary-General of the Center for Legal Assistance. After the Eid Al-Fitr, the Group of 22 will hold more meetings to agree on the structure of the organization, they agreed to call Freedom Forum. Notwithstanding the right-wing connotations of the name in some countries, this is a liberal umbrella.

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Abdulrahman Bafadel:

"I feel targetted by the government which is not letting me do my work."

Yemen is a country that has a great fisheries potential. But looks like will remain a potential which refuses to be tapped.

Part of the reason why Yemen is unable to benefit from its extended shoreline (about 2,500 kilometers) is that the Government does not have clear policies, if at all. Recently, the cabinet decided to freeze some of the authorities of the minister of fisheries.

Another part of the reason is Dr. Abdulrahman Bafadel, the minister, who is a lone ranger. Mr. Bafadel refuses to comply with the old logic that governs the work of the cabinet, or as he says, 'I swim against the current.' It is probably not his fault, though. It is true that Prime Minister Abdulaziz Abdulghani manages the affairs of government by the laws and norms of the 1970s. "He has been unable to transform himself," as one advisor at the prime minister's office explained.

Ismail Al-Ghabri of Yemen Times went to speak to the Minister. He filed the following report.

Excerpts:

Q: You have some difficulties in dealing with the Council of Ministers. What exactly is the problem?

A: I wish you would ask that of the prime minister. I try hard to introduce change in my ministry, and to bring life to this sector, which holds great promise for economic prosperity. But, there has been consistent effort to block and frustrate my efforts. They are not letting me do my work as minister.

Q: Could you be more specific?

A: Yes, I could give you some examples.

1. The cabinet has met to discuss many issues regarding fishing in my absence. Not only did the cabinet discuss such matters, but it also took decisions which I was then asked to implement.

2. Over 13 national fishing companies have been authorized by this ministry. The licensing documents of none of them have been processed by the cabinet.

3. The cabinet passed a decision stating that fishing should only take place beyond 50 nautical miles from our shores. This means nobody can fish in the Red Sea, because this distance does not exist.

4. The cabinet formed a committee made up of six ministries to monitor the revenue from the fish sale and exports. This is the only ministry that has this kind of monitoring, although there are other ministries which have higher revenues. If the intention is to control corruption, our ministry is probably far less corrupt than many others.

5. The Ministry of Fisheries is the only ministry which has a supervisory committee from the cabinet. There are many other examples I can give you. The problem is that the cabinet is not made up of specialists so that they understand what they are doing. They poke their nose without adequate knowledge or information.

Q: Is this politically-driven?

A: I hope not, although I know that the Islah ministers have a tougher time than the others.

Q: What is the total export volume of fish products?

A: Most of the exports are lobsters, shrimp, and some fish. It is unfortunate that we are unable to do more, though the potential is there. On average, total annual exports is around \$13 million.

Q: Have you tried to invite foreign companies to carry out joint ventures in fishing, packing, etc.?

A: We have invited, but there has not been any real response. We have an offer from a Spanish company, but that is all.

The problem is that there is no real encouragement for this sector, in spite of the rhetoric. I know the president has often stressed the need to develop this sector. The Abdulaziz Abdulghani Government got its vote in confidence in parliament on a program that gave fishing a high priority. But I can honestly tell you that the government is frustrating all our efforts.

Q: As a minister, what part of your time is spent on policy-making, and what part on management of the ministry?

A: I have already said that I am unable to exercise much of my authority as a minister. So, I do very little policy-making in the strategic sense.

In terms of management of the ministry's affairs, I don't know what that means, but I do push a lot of paper. I have to answer this letter from the prime minister, that letter from parliament, a letter from the general prosecutor's office, some letters from here and some more letters from there. So, I keep busy writing letters and responses.

And my job is not very different from other ministers are doing. In general a minister's job is very hollow. The name and appearance are big, but there isn't much substance.

Q: Are some of your policies contradictory. On the one hand you promote monopoly rights, like in lobster; and on the other you call for privatization?

A: The contradiction is more apparent than real.

Yes, we have installed a state monopoly in lobster catching because we worry over-harvesting can destroy the whole specie. That is a real possibility given that the price of a kilo of lobster in the international market is around \$25. We have given the fishermen and companies stiff instruction as to what kind of nets they can use to catch lobsters.

Regarding privatization, we are moving ahead with this rather vigorously. But I am not happy with the way the government is moving ahead with privatization. I see privatization as a source of revenue. But this is not what is happening. For example, the government has sold several government companies and assets. Where is the revenue?

I call on the government to establish an independent corporation or even ministry to oversee and execute the privatization process.



At the moment, we are treating it as a side issue handled by very busy officials.

Q: Let us talk about the government's reform program. What is your assessment?

A: First let me say that reforms are important and badly needed. But here again, we are treating reforms as if they are simple changes in the exchange rate or interest rate. The main dimension to our reform package should be an overhaul of the administration and management.

What is wrong with Yemen is not meager resources, it is good management of whatever resources we have. That is why I feel that the way we are going about our reforms, there will not be much accomplished. May be just more suffering on the poorer elements of society.

I think the majority of the Yemenis see it this way also.

Q: Recently, the president sacked and jailed some middle and junior level bureaucrats and officers. We are told this is the beginning of a corrective revolution. What do you think of that?

A: Of course, all corrective measures are welcome. But I have to say that a corrective revolution should address some of the big sharks. You see the little guys are easy to control and bring back to law. It is the big shots who need to be tackled.

I can tell you that there are many files with the Central Organization for Control and Audit regarding squandering and misuse of government money. There are many big names mentioned, and hundreds of millions are involved. We can say, there is a revolution at hand if one of the big names in those files is prosecuted.

Corrective measures should not be based on arbitrary decisions such as sacking and jailing. They should take the form of fair and open trials. If the persons are innocent, that is fine. If they are guilty, the appropriate punishments under the law are handed down.

how the government wants to carry out reforms. Many of these revenue corporations are off-limits even to the cabinet. Let me give you examples.

The customs duty authority of Yemen is a big headache. Basically, you cannot control the system because of the so many big shots who are involved. They may be involved in the sense of having their fingers in it. But more importantly, they are involved by keeping this authority unable to check their 'import' activities. I am, of course talking of smuggling or simply 'imports' not subject to duty. In my estimate, 70% of the inflow of goods is not subject to customs duty payment.

Let us take the refinery. You don't know what kind of exchange rate they use, and a lot of money seeps through to individual pockets in the process.

Let us talk about the Tax Authority. What percentage of tax dues are collected, do you think?

What Yemen needs is to reign in all these organizations and authorities and make sure government funds do not go to private pockets. This way we will resolve many problems.

Q: Yemen has lost the island of Greater Hunaish. Rumor has it that there is risk of losing other islands. Couldn't your ministry help by inviting investments

around islands and issuing fishing licenses?

A: That is a possibility, provided we are allowed to do our work. I am telling you we are held back even in the territorial waters along our shoreline, let alone covering the far-away islands.

The job of protecting Yemen's islands goes to the marine forces and naval patrols. It is evident they are not doing their work. But our ministry can do very little in this matter, as well.

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Will the Opposition Political Parties Stay in Business?

It is all done under the name of the law. The Political Parties Committee, technically a non-partisan body, but which is effectively controlled by the ruling coalition, is basically going to determine which of the political parties will remain in business, and they are doing it with an eye to the April 1997 elections. Mr. Taha Ahmed Ghanim, a leading PGC member and Minister of Legal Affairs, is calling the shots.

The Committee has enacted for itself internal working codes and regulations which are ostensibly based on the Political Parties Law No. (66) of 1991. But these internal regulations have given the Committee a lot of clout which it uses to push around the opposition parties.

This is the way it works. Article (38) of the law requires that all political parties adjust their status and structure to fit with the law. On that basis, the Committee has asked all political parties to register with it. But the registration procedure has become a bit complicated, to the extent that the Yemeni Socialist Party (YSP) and other opposition parties have been unable to register. "What the Committee is after is neither a technical/administrative procedure nor a legal framework. It is politics," said Ali Saleh Obad, Secretary-General of the YSP.

Other opposition parties like Hizbul-Haq, Attagammu' Al-Wahdawi Al-Yamani, Harakat Attawheed wal-Amal al-Islami, and others, are also unable to register. "This is not based on the law. They are asking us to undergo procedures as if we were funding or establishing the party today. This is not right," fumed Omar Al-Jawi, Secretary-General of Attagammu' Al-Wahdawi Al-Yamani. "We will not comply with what they want. If they decide to push us out of business, then we will simply go underground, it is up to them," said Mr. Mohammed Al-Maqalaeh, Assistant Secretary-General of Hizbul-Haq.

The Committee is adding new requirements every day. Originally, it was just the charters of the parties, their internal regulations, structure of leadership, and financial standing and assets. Then came other demands. Detailed branch membership lists, including a 70-name founding members list and 2,500 members distributed to cover the whole republic, are among the new requirements.

Why can't a party like the YSP provide such lists. It is simple. "If we give the rulers a list stating these are the founding members of the party - in essence the owners, then what happens if some entices any number of them to splinter the party and lay claim to its organs and assets. We have seen this happen a few times already," a leading YSP politician explained.

"What we want is for the Committee to stick to the law. Any details it has worked out are irrelevant to us and we will not comply," Al-Jawi added.

For a proper and balanced evolution of democracy in any setting, certain bodies like the Political Parties Committee, the Supreme Elections Committee, etc., must be free from domination by any one party, let alone one person. Yemen has yet to establish independent bodies.

Saturday, the 21st of February is the last day for political parties to file for registration with the Committee. All opposition parties have done so, but the Committee says the files are incomplete. The Committee has not even acknowledged that some smaller opposition parties have filed with it. Nobody knows what will happen after the 21st, if the opposition parties are outlawed.

Technically, these parties have to go to the courts. But that is a procedure that could take a long time. In the meanwhile, the ruling coalition partners and the pro-regime opposition parties have been registered. Among the opposition parties of the Supreme Coordination Council, the Nasserite Unionist Party has broken rank and registered.

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HAPPY EID

Exploring the Prospects for the 1997 Parliamentary Elections:

YIDD Mounts Election Monitoring Campaign

The Yemen Institute for the Development of Democracy (YIDD) is planning a conference to be held in March, 1997 on the "Do's and don't's of a free elections in April 1997". Towards that end, the institute held a preparatory seminar for exchange of ideas on January 31st, 1996. The following article is based on the discussions of the seminar.

The unity of Yemen, initiated by the unification agreement of the 30th of November 1989, between the former Yemen Arab Republic and the former People's Democratic Republic of South Yemen was a historic step not only for the Republic of Yemen, but for the whole Arab World. The more significant aspect of the unification agreement was the introduction of democracy and political pluralism as a mainstream political system for the Republic of Yemen. The most essential element of the transformation towards democracy is the understanding that only through free and direct elections can the transfer of power take place. This is dubbed the peaceful and legitimate transfer of power through the ballot rather than the bullet: a significant political development knowing the history of Yemen. All Third World countries yearn for this ideal, but somehow cannot attain it.

The democratic experience in Yemen is only six years old. And yet, it has been subjected to severe tests due to strong totalitarian tendencies of the past which refuse to adhere to the minimal standards of democratic practice. The last civil war in the country underscores the tragic consequences that arise when organized political systems either fail to understand the basic fundamentals of democratic exercise, as modern societies practise them, or refuse to relinquish hold of any of the important instruments of power that give them the strength to impose their will, without regard to the legitimate interests of the general public.

The difficulties continue, but a rising number of individuals singularly and boldly - and at enormous risk to themselves - exert efforts to make sure that Yemen's democratic transformation does not hit a dead end. This is especially commendable when considering that the institutions that must undertake

appropriate action to guarantee a minimum of democratic legislative ordinances and practices. The current parliament, in particular, has yet to establish norms and reign in the executive authority in accordance with the laws. But then again, when we speak of democracy in a country like Yemen, we should not forget two important factors:

1) Democracy was introduced by the very same elements that had avoided any democratic practice, only as a means of achieving national legitimacy and international acceptance to enable these same elements to wither out the current international pressures towards democracy in a new world. These elements are working hard to keep the democracy of Yemen to as low a level with which they can get away. That is why they take an inimical attitude towards the individuals and institutions that push for as much democracy as possible.

In reality, the new circumstances dawned on the world, with the termination of the Cold War, have yet to take hold in Yemen.

2) The general population, while no doubt is best served by democratic practice, is unfamiliar with the roles required of the citizenry and to a large extent, and with what to expect from their government. There is also a tendency on the part of the rulers to belittle the value of human and civil rights, press freedom, political pluralism, etc., and to present such beliefs to the general as responsible for the lawlessness, chaos and even economic misery of the nation.

One may surmise that democracy may have been introduced to actually serve the interests of the rulers rather than to really allow more participation on the part of the people in the affairs in their country. But if this superficial entry of democracy into political life in Yemen can still be viewed from all that it is worth, it only becomes reasonable that the Yemeni people maximize their exploitation of the available channels for democratic practice.

The democratic experience in Yemen had created the atmosphere for a free press where criticism of the regime can be presented, although the official media still remains a monopoly of the rulers. Access to all media channels, including radio and television broadcasting would go a long way in

accelerating political awareness among the population, since the free press in existence at the moment only reaches a small segment of the population.

The first step participatory political decision-making came with the parliamentary elections of April 1993. The elections reached the vast majority of people and thus illustrated an important democratic activity. That is the essence of democratic practice in a free and open society. To be sure, the parliamentary elections were not fully clean and totally free. But the fact that they took place at all represents a major accomplishment in a society that has been ruled by totalitarianism of the extreme right (North Yemen) and the extreme left (South Yemen) for thirty years.

Democracy is an ongoing learning and evolving experience that becomes more applicable and enriching for the society as the people of the country are exposed to it. Thus the first elections (April 1993) provide sufficient cause for further democratic pursuits.

The Yemeni Institute for Development of Democracy, one of the institutions working to make sure that democracy is here to stay in Yemen, realize that democracy evolves with time and from the experience itself. Therefore, given that the second parliamentary elections are scheduled in 14 months' time, YIDD decided to focus on the 'past mistakes that need to be avoided and the positive aspects that need to be enforced and confirmed for continuous applications. In the preparatory conference held on 31st January 1996, a number of papers were presented and heard by various speakers representing a cross-section of the social/political elite of Yemen.

A paper entitled "Guaranteeing Clean and Free Elections in April 1997", by the Secretary General of the YIDD, Ahmed Al-Soufy, starts with a quote from Dr. Abdul-Karim Al-Iryani, Foreign Minister, who recently said in a newspaper interview, "The choice of democracy as a system for Yemen should not be seen as a political tactical course of expedience. The choice fits with the new geographic and political worldwide conditions, as well as from the unity of Yemen." Dr. Al-Iryani warned its coalition partner (the Yemeni Congregation for Reform or Islah Party) not to have mis-

conceptions or misunderstandings about the democratic process. It should especially not misuse its position in the ruling coalition to achieve narrow political objectives.

The paper was an invitation for all politicians of Yemen to meet and discuss ways of ensuring that the upcoming elections are free and clean. "We should reflect on the previous parliamentary election and observe other elections in the Arab World held recently. In addition, we need to establish adequate guarantees that will ensure that the elections will be clean and free from any irregularities and that it will set a respectable precedent for all future elections in Yemen," he said.

One of the main problems of Yemen is that the country suffers from a visible lack of confidence between the rulers and the people and between the political parties. Several presentations touched on this issue. There were serious violations in the 1993 parliamentary elections, and that experience casts its doubts heavily on the future.

Many suggestions were presented in the seminar regarding confidence-building measures. "Transparency on all sides is as major element that would go a long way in this process," said Dr. Mohammed Al-Saqqaf, a lawyer and a regular writer in the press. Another point he raised is that the ruling coalition should not be defensive about its mistakes. "Mistake are bound to happen. We should not say they haven't happened. We should work together to correct them."

The discussions suggested three areas that need a closer study:

- Assessment of the previous election experience.
- Legal framework governing elections.
- Local/international institutional monitoring.

Two final note needs to be stressed.

1. The opposition parties want to raise public opinion to the appropriate level of respectability and responsibility. "Public opinion should serve as the determining factor in resolving differences between the political forces."
2. The opposition parties suggest an independent committee be set up to monitor the fairness of the elections starting from the on-going preparations to the actual implementation process.



تتراپاک

بأحر التهاني والتبريكات إلى الشعب اليمني والقيادة السياسية والحكومة
بمناسبة حلول عيد الفطر المبارك
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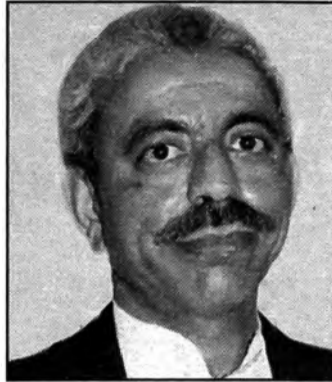
MANY HAPPY RETURNS

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Common Sense

By: Hassan Al-Haifi

Muslim Political and Economic Systems



We have looked at Islam in this column from various angles - locally, regionally and internationally. We have also discussed the circumstances that surrounded the launching of the Message that the Prophet Mohammad, peace and blessings of Allah be upon him (P), and some of the difficulties encountered by Mohammad (P) and his early followers. In last week's issue we looked into the most controversial aspect of the religion - the political circumstances that arose after the Prophet (P) passed away.

It was clear from the discussion that the specific details were left for the Muslims to work out. The religion provided sufficient guidelines which clearly established a religion, a way of life, and a political movement that must be based on democratic principles. As the Quran said: "Your (public) affairs (are decided) among you through consultation (dialogue)."

On the other hand the behavior of Muslim rulers of notable standing in Muslim history, beginning with Mohammad (P), the (4+1) "Orthodox Caliphs" (See Common Sense last issue) and other rulers of different nationalities that have become part of the Muslim nation, saw their positions and role as a matter of trust and responsibility that requires serious self-accounting and application of a heavy dose of conscience and a strong sense of pity. All that is strong testimony to the heart and spirit of Islam, though admittedly on much rare occasions than one would like to see.

What is disturbing today is that in most Muslim countries, the system and structures of government are neither politically mature nor close enough to be labeled Islamic. In looking objectively at Islam; it becomes somewhat puzzling why Muslim countries find it difficult to be in tune. Many Muslims who analyze the political predicament of Muslim countries rush to point the finger of blame on the rulers. While it is true that the ruling authorities of most Muslim countries leave a lot to be desired in terms of showing any serious interest or attention to

the functions expected of them, it would not be proper to just limit the blame the "ruling regimes" only. The condition of the Muslim World is a product of a factor mix - some of which are internal while others are external - but all contributing, in one way or another to the pathetic state that most Muslim countries find themselves in.

Let us look at the Muslim World today and where it stands in many of the factors that indicate our place in the world.

1) POLITICS:

The Muslim World today extends geographically from the Atlantic Ocean to the depth of the Pacific Ocean. Yet and in spite of the fact that this large stretch of territory commands a most strategic location, the Muslim countries enjoy minimal influence in the course of the world political direction. The truth of the matter is that the many individual countries that form this vast expanse of territory have yet to succeed in formulating proper structures of self rule that place the interests of the people above all interests.

Very few of these countries have succeeded in showing any political maturity, and those that tried to follow a healthy course are bogged down in so many difficulties. Their priorities become rearranged thus forcing them to sidetrack the important tasks that are needed to set the proper political machines in place. Some of the Muslim countries are also tied into international arrangements whereby their respective countries' governments are unable to take actions that would jeopardize these arrangements.

Some countries cannot find the stability needed to enable them to embark on any program that will put them on the right course. Thus, we have situations in the Muslim countries which range from the pathetic state of affairs in Afghanistan to the tragic situation in Bosnia.

For some Muslim peoples, their craving for independence has led to violence as in the case of

Chechnya and Kashmir. For many Muslim countries, the governments are nothing more than military dictatorships or family autocracies that continue to bleed the resources of the country in endless campaigns that work to satisfy the primitive egotistical drives of the leading elements in their regimes. These regimes have generally failed to provide their populations with the minimal expectations due from any government.

In fact, there seems to be an absence of any interaction between the people and government, except where the regime works diligently to suppress the people and limit their freedom. Some countries are under traditional despotic forms of government where the ruling family and their cronies are the main beneficiaries of the country's resources while the rest of the population are still under serf-like status and do not count in the rulers' considerations. Other Muslim countries have become subjected to experimentation with regimes that have taken Islam as a platform to justify their existence, yet are still far from arriving to the minimal requirements of justice, tolerance and the application of human rights and civil liberties in keeping with the dictates of Islam. Still other Muslim countries have embarked on efforts at democratization, but apparently have failed to truly reflect any appropriate institutionalization of democratic practices that clearly define the role expected of the government and the country's citizenry, or have failed in arriving at the appropriate systems for the equitable and orderly application of law.

2) ECONOMY:

As varied as the political circumstances are which Muslim countries are subjected to, so are the economic conditions that each country faces. There is no pattern that any of the states can fall into. The overwhelming majority of them are classified among the least developed and among the most poverty-stricken countries. A few have been fortunate to accumulate substantial capital as a result of the production of crude petroleum, gas and other key raw materials, especially needed for energy. In all cases, Muslim countries provide the basic inputs and raw materials for the production facilities of the industrialized countries. But even these states are mostly not free to channel their funds in the direction they may desire, or are unable to correctly manage the accumulation of liquid wealth. The large cash portfolios of these states is mostly retained with the "providers" to reinvest worldwide. A good part is also used to build "defense" arsenals that will probably never serve their purposes!

On the other hand, the investment environment in most Muslim countries wards off any hope that some of this accumulated wealth could be directed to investments in other capital hungry Muslim

countries that have good potential and offer a higher return on the investments, and at the same time, will help improve the lot of their citizens.

Primary blame for this situation lies with the Muslim states themselves for not exploring any means for resolving this problem, or for not even trying to. It is really an issue of poor management and careless government, because Islam insists that "inactive capital" is just as bad as any vice that God will not forgive. The freezing of investible funds is the same as betraying a trust. Islam regards money or capital as a trust and urges its owner to utilize it to serve the interests of the people.

Yet Muslim countries, in need of investments are themselves not showing any serious desire to try to attract the capital, nor do their procedures encourage the would-be investors to risk their capital in countries that seem to work diligently to drive out surplus funds.

Yemen is a good example of this. We have Yemeni individuals who are estimated to hold in the neighborhood of US \$30 billion or more in assets abroad. Of course, they would be interested in investing some of that in their original home country. That could transform economic conditions in Yemen miraculously. But alas, irrespective of the rhetoric, the factors that attract investment to the country are not yet in place.

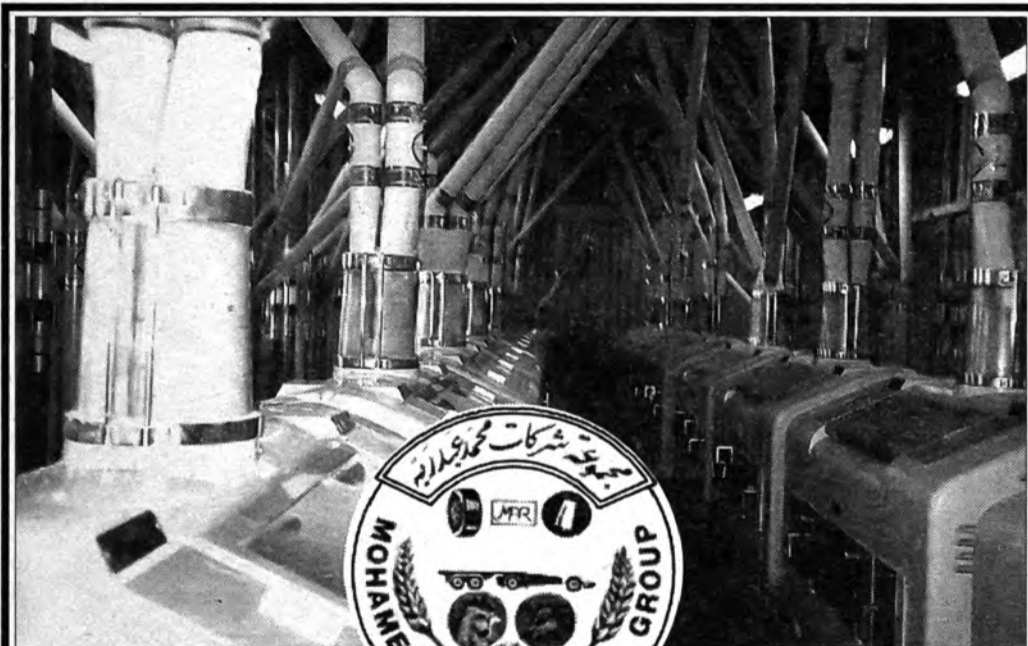
These factors include stability and security, a smoothly functioning bureaucracy, the absence of or minimal level of corruption, adherence to law and order, and a well directed and clear economic policy that encourages the achievement of favorable returns to the investor. Yemen is cited here as an example and not the exception to the rule of Muslim countries.

Furthermore, because of the nature of the regimes in many Muslim countries by "aid donors" or credit providers to these countries, without taking into consideration the impact of policies which would have on the general population. In other words, the welfare of the citizens is almost disregarded as textbook policies and methods are implemented without case-by-case analysis, and without understanding the after-effects of such policies.

As economic difficulties persist, the general conditions of the people get worse and their hopes and dreams are squashed. A vicious poverty cycle seems to have taken hold in most Muslim countries as a result of misguided economic policies, the result of textbook economics and useless institutions responsible for economic policy.

One might also add that efforts by Muslim countries to find ways of enhancing economic cooperation among Muslim countries have hit a dead end. Whether at bilateral, regional or even multi-lateral levels, the volume of trade exchange, joint investments, aid, credit, etc., is negligible.

Happy Eid!



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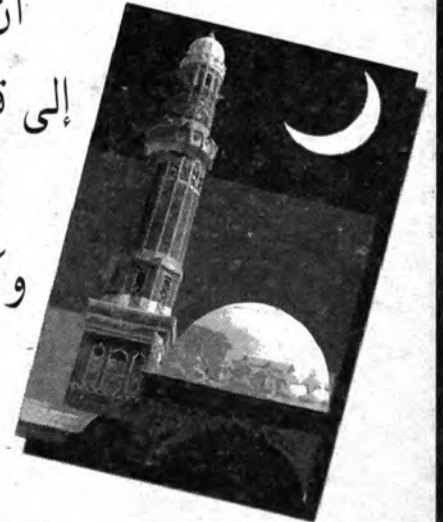
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إلى قائد الشعب اليمني ورائد نهضته الحديثة

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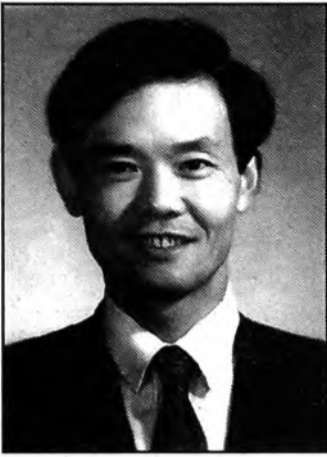
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وحكومته الرشيدة



كل عام وأنتم بخير

Messianic Drive by Chinese Doctors to Help Yemeni Patients



By: Dr. Li Jun, Ophthalmologist of CMT, Aden General Hospital.

There are at least 10 million totally blind people in the world today. The percentage varies from country to another and from region to another. In Africa, the prevalence of blindness among the population is 2.3%; in Saudi Arabia and India, it is 1.5%; in China, it is only 0.4%.

Here in Yemen, it is roughly 1%. In other words, of the population of about 16 million, some 160,000 Yemenis suffer from visual impairment. These may not be totally blind, but they have problems seeing well, if at all. The leading causes of preventable blindness in Yemen are cataract, glaucoma, retinal detachment, diabetic retinopathy, amblyopia, eye injuries and others congenital eye diseases.

In this article, I would like to discuss this important, based on my experience at the Aden General Hospital, as well as my personally experience with Yemeni children who suffer from congenital ocular diseases. Let me start with a warning. Most of these conditions can be helped, just take the patients for treatment as early as possible. Let me now elaborate on the main sources and kinds of eye problems in Yemen.

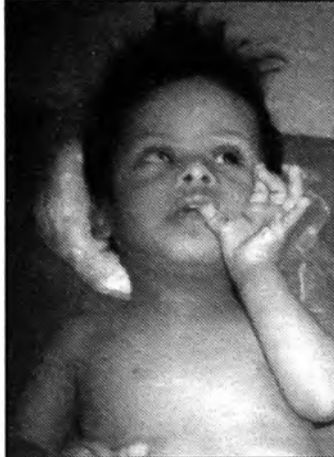
1- Congenital Cataracts:

It is still not known why the incidence of cataract is so high in Yemen. The basic fact is that Yemen now has a great need for more cataract surgeons.

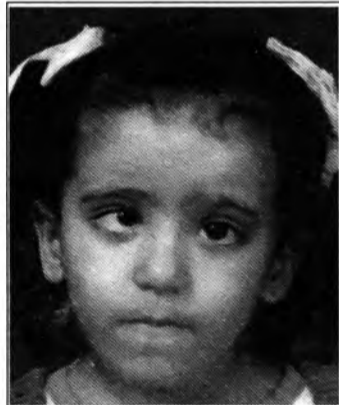
In Yemen, cataract is the cause of

65% of the blindness cases. Congenital cataract represents 15% of all cataract cases. Most congenital cataracts are bilateral and probably genetically determined. They occasionally occur as a consequence of maternal rubella during the first trimester of pregnancy.

The parent notices that the child does not see well during the few months or years of life. The pupil may be (partly) white. The opacities vary greatly in density. Lens extraction by ultrasonic fragmentation, and vitreous cutter should be done on one eye by the age of 2 months to permit normal development of vision and to prevent nystagmus. Extracapsular cataract extraction, together with the implantation of an intraocular lens behind the iris, provide a level of visual rehabilitation that surpasses that achieved with aphasic spectacle lenses. It



has been achieved and the children have regained vision. Some families often have many children who have congenital cataract. One mother brought to me three daughters who had congenital cataract for operation.



BEFORE and AFTER the operation

would also require the provision of operation microscopes, microsurgical instruments, intraocular lenses and other equipment, which are currently far beyond reach of in most developing countries.

Surgery on the second eye can be performed soon after, but it is better if delayed 1-2 years until the eye is larger. Most congenital cataracts are not dense enough to blur the vision significantly or progressively.

I have used the double needle washing and extraction of the opacity lens with SB and have operated on about 40 cases of children's congenital cataract since my arrival in Aden 10 months ago. Good results have

2- Congenital Glaucoma:

Glaucoma is that state of high intraocular pressure (IOP), which is not compatible with normal health and function of the eye. Sometimes where the pressure could be as high as 40-50 mmHg. About 1-2% of all people over 35 years old have glaucoma. In the USA, alone it is estimated that there are at least 300,000 people with undetected glaucoma. About 90% of them have chronic glaucoma which can ultimately lead to blindness. Patients often do not seek treatment until late in the disease's life.

Glaucoma, in a recently developed concept, is described as an abnormal accumulation of extracellular material spaces of the

endothelial meshwork. There are secondary effects which include scarring and sclerosis of trabecular meshwork.

Congenital glaucoma is also called 'infantile glaucoma'. It appears to be a specific type of hereditary glaucoma in which the angle appears to be "open", in the sense that iris and the cornea-sclera trabecular meshwork are separated. There is resistance to aqueous outflow which may be either due to incomplete development of the angle. More recent studies suggest that most cases are caused by multifactorial inheritance.

Clinically, the main signs of congenital glaucoma are avoidance of light. In an infant corneal diameter measures 10.5 mm whereas in infantile glaucoma, it

may be 12mm, or more. Ultrasonography may be helpful in documenting progression of infantile glaucoma by recording changes in the axial length. Congenital glaucoma treatment use medicine to control IOP in early cases. If necessary, acetazolamide may be given orally, 15mg/kg body weight per day. 0.5% Epinephrine or Dipivefrin may be helpful in reducing IOP. Following surgical procedures may be carried out; 1, Goniotomy, goniodiathermy; trabeculodialysis, laser goniotomy. 2 trabeculectomy, cyclotherapy.

There are 3 main objectives in the treatment of strabismus:

1- Good visual acuity in each eye.

2- A good cosmetic appearance. The eyes can be "straightened" by surgery.

3- Binocular vision, which also depends on surgery. Orthoptics and refractive lens is an unobtainable goal. The ideal age at which to begin therapy is 6 months. Patching can be scheduled up to age 7. Surgery is the main method to correct the strabismus.

When the pupils are positioned, the image falls upon the fovea of one without the other, the second eye is deviating (squinting). If one eye pupil deviates, the image of the object observed by the non-deviated eye falls on an extrafoveal retinal area of the deviating eye. Under these conditions of diplopia and visual confusion, suppression rapidly occurs. Suppression consists of the development of a scotoma that involves the macula as well as the point on which the image falls. With the non-deviating eye covered, there is no discernible loss of vision or demonstrable scotoma. If monocular strabismus persists untreated, suppression will usually deepen-into amblyopia of the deviating eye.

A few years ago, few doctors did strabismus operations in Aden's hospital. Some cases of strabismus treatment may have been done abroad. I have performed some successful strabismus operation in Aden general hospital.

One girl named Rizin, 4 years old, had alternating isotropia when she was birth. One month ago, I operated on her double eyes. Now she see objects correctly. There is no deviation, her eyes are beautiful and vision is fully restored (Picture above).

Monocular strabismus is most likely to cause amblyopia. Amblyopia decreases vision. If vision is not developed up to age 7, there is no chance that it will. Strabismus patients should be warned to visit an eye doctor and get medical care.



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I have treated and operated many infantile congenital glaucoma cases in Yemen. One family once came to see me and I will never forget them in all my life. The family has three sisters all congenital glaucoma (picture above). Their eyes are not visual, but often they suffer from severe pain due to raising IOP. Another case involves two brothers - one is 6 years old, the other is 1 year. The 6 year child had been operated by a Chinese doctor 3 years ago. He has limited vision and no pain. The second child needs an operation (picture above). A third case involves one girl who had interocular bleeding. I operated on her and she is now fine.

3- Congenital Strabismus:

Strabismus is present in about 3% of children. Under normal conditions, light reflection of the image of the object falls on the

fovea of each eye. When the pupils are positioned, the image falls upon the fovea of one without the other, the second eye is deviating (squinting).

Family history strabismus is frequently present, and autosomal dominant inheritance is common. Age is the single most important factor in prognosis. Children need to be attended to as early age as possible.

Then there is need to determine the type of deviation. Under what conditions does the patient notice strabismus? When viewing near objects? When tired? Is the extent of deviation constant? Does the patient shut one eye in the sunlight? It is most important to know if the strabismus of the eye that deviates/alternates? The conditions are useful for the doctor in diagnosis.

Treatment should begin as soon as the diagnosis is definite in order to ensure the development of the best possible visual acuity, a good cosmetic result, and increase the chance for normal binocular visual function.

There are 3 main objectives in the treatment of strabismus:

1- Good visual acuity in each eye.

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3- Binocular vision, which also depends on surgery. Orthoptics and refractive lens is an unobtainable goal. The ideal age at which to begin therapy is 6 months. Patching can be scheduled up to age 7. Surgery is the main method to correct the strabismus.

4- Helping Patients:

In Yemen, there is a serious shortage of surgeons. At Aden's General Hospital, there only are 10 beds for eye disease inpatients. Over all, maybe there are 600 cases a year that need operation. Thus, a patient may need to wait 3-6 months before he/she can be operated on. This is a long time !!

Most doctors spend all their time in curative treatment. There is need to increase surgical output by training additional personnel to perform cataract, glaucoma, and strabismus surgery, strengthening support infrastructure, and improving management.

I think there are the following 4 ways to increase eye surgeons:

1- Increase/intensify training of ophthalmologists to undertake cataract surgery.

2- Increase the number of eye and cataract surgeons among the ophthalmologists in regional government hospitals such as district hospitals.

3- Re-training of existing general surgeons in eye surgical skills. Such training could range from 3 to 12 months. It would ensure that adequately trained staff are available more quickly to meet immediate needs.

Community participation in eye health activities is essential. Making the community more aware of the problem of congenital eye disease blindness is a prerequisite for promoting such participation.

Prevention is a key aspect to modern medical service.



ANNOUNCING THE GOOD NEWS

The Yemen Specialized Hospital is pioneering specialized professional medical services in Yemen by inviting highly qualified surgeons and physicians. We are happy to announce that Professor Abe Fingerhut, Chief of Surgery in Intercommunal Center-Paris is going to be at the Yemen Specialized Hospital from 17th February through 26 Feb. He will perform laparoscopic operations such as laparoscopic antireflux surgery, laparoscopic Cholecystectomy.

Also, Dr. Ali Moanis, Professor of Medicine at Ain Shams University, Cairo, will arrive at the hospital on the 22nd of March and will stay till 29 March. He will see patients with liver and gastrointestinal diseases.

For reservations and/or inquiry, please call:

The Yemen Specialized Hospital, Sana'a, Al-Hurriah Street, west of Almithaq Institute, Phone: (01) 224963

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أعطر التهاني والتبريكات

بمناسبة حلول عيد الفطر السعيد ، وكل عام والجميع في تقدم ورخاء

شركات هائل سعيد أنعم : دعامة قوية للإقتصاد اليمني

THE HAYEL SAEED ANAM GROUP

مجموعة شركات هائل سعيد أنعم

1. Yemen Company for Industry & Commerce Ltd.

2. Yemen Company for Ghee & Soap Ind. Ltd.

3. National Company for Sponge & Plastic Ind. Ltd.

4. General Industries & Packages Co.

5. National Dairy & Food Company

6. Middle East Trading Co. Ltd.

7. United Industries Co. (Rothmans)

8. The Yemen Company for Agriculture & Livestock

Development

9. MidEast Shipping

١- الشركة اليمنية للصناعة والتجارة المحدودة

٢- الشركة اليمنية لصناعة السمن والصابون المحدودة

٣- الشركة الوطنية لصناعة الاسفنج والبلاستيك المحدودة

٤- شركة الصناعات المتنوعة ومواد التعبئة

٥- شركة الألبان والأغذية الوطنية

٦- شركة الشرق الأوسط للتجارة (ناتكو)

٧- الشركة المتحدة للصناعات (روثمان)

٨- الشركة اليمنية للتنمية الزراعية والحيوانية

٩- شركة الشرق الأوسط للملاحة



ASGA

Hayel Saeed Group of Companies

presents

to the Yemeni people, political leadership and government the best wishes and felicitations on the occasion of Eid Al-Fitr.

We wish all many happy returns.

**THE HAYEL SAEED GROUP:
A STRONG PILLAR OF YEMEN'S ECONOMY**



كل عام وأنتم بخير

EID AL-FITR: Festival of Discipline

By: Ismail Al-Ghabri,
Yemen Times.

After Ramadhan comes Eid al-Fitr.

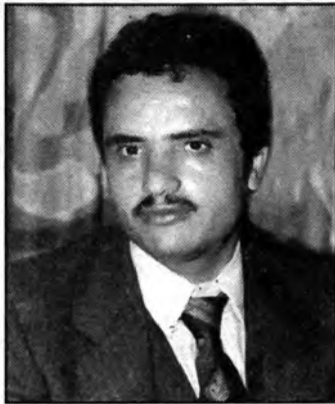
It is a day of rejoicing and festivities. But Muslim festivals have a character of their own. Unlike festivals in other societies, the festival of Eid is celebrated with restraint, friendship and charity, and a sense of gratefulness to the Almighty.

It is an occasion for successful ending of the holy month of Ramadhan, during which the Muslims fasted from dawn to dusk every day. The fasting was not a penance, but an act of self-discipline, undertaken at Divine command.

During the 30 days of Ramadhan, ordinary things permitted in normal life had become prohibited. Even water, that essential life-giver, was abjured. This was done not to punish oneself, but in obedience to Allah. And obedience to His command is the prime duty of a Muslim.

This obedience is rendered without question, and with utter submission. The fasting develops *taqwa*. *Taqwa* is a difficult word to translate. "Piety", "devotion", "godliness" do not fully convey its meaning. It is a combination of them all and indicates a state in human beings in which one cheerfully abstains from everything God has prohibited, and indulges liberally in all that He has allowed.

If, for example, God has enjoyed charity, a person of *taqwa* is generously charitable, and his/her actions are not perfunctory. They are driven by an inner spirit. He/She feels an inner bliss in doing



what God has ordained.

In Ramadhan, a Muslim renews his/her commitment to Islam. He/She goes through a refresher course, a reminder of how he/she should act and behave and what his/her duties to God and other human beings are. Eid is a time to celebrate the successful completion of that refresher course.

But if the lessons of Ramadhan are forgotten after Eid, all those benefits are thrown away. Eid is also a promise that those lessons have been learnt and will be put into practice in everyday life, for the rest of the eleven months of the year.

Ramadhan is also the month when the Holy Quran was revealed. The Quran is the greatest gift of God to humanity, it is the Life-giver's instruction book of how to live one's life. For the Quran is not just a book of rituals. It is much more than that. It not only regulates man's relationship with God, but it also tells what man's relationship with the universe should be. It guides him in conducting relations with society - his/her parents, his/her

spouse and children, his/her friends and enemies, and his/her community. It even tells him/her how to treat animals; what to eat and what to abstain from. It guides him/her in occupation and business; it guides him/her in affairs of state; even in his/her talk and conversation.

Eid is thus the double festivity for receiving the Quran, and for having acted on it. It is rejoicing at completing, let us say, a month of probation, and a promise to live accordingly from then onwards. The Muslim who gives alms so generously during Ramadhan does not become miserly after that. If he/she gives Zakat during Ramadhan, he/she starts with Fitra on Eid.

Eid is the celebration that the spirit of Islam has been absorbed by the Muslims. But while fasting is an individual act, Eid is a communal celebration. This is a lesson by itself - a lesson to live harmoniously in society, to share the joys and sorrows with the community, and a reaffirmation that the individual, with all his/her rights, is tied with the community.

The Islamic World will be celebrating Eid in two or three days. The festivities will begin as soon as the new moon is sighted. There will be great feasts, new clothing for all, new toys for children, presents for each other, new furniture and furnishings for homes. Early in the morning, the faithful will assemble for a special prayer. Before the prayers, they will distribute alms; and after the prayers they will join their families and friends for further celebrations.

But will that be enough? Giving the required amount of Fitra is all very well, but does our



responsibility end there? The Prophet (P) had said that a Muslim cannot be a true Muslim if he/she eats while his/her neighbor starves. In that spirit, and after fasting for the whole month of Ramadhan, shouldn't we all ask ourselves whether we have really discharged our duty to the poor and the needy, by paying

a few riyals in alms?

An Islamic state is a welfare state. Apart from the poor tax, Zakat, it leaves it to the individual himself to contribute to the welfare of his/her fellow citizens of one's own free will. After Ramadan, the rich can better understand what it means to go without food, and they should

with the coming of Eid, search their hearts to find whether they are doing all they should to improve the lot of their neighbors and the poorer members of their families.

Sadaqah (benevolence, charity) is a continued process. It should not stop after Eid. It is part of a Muslim's behavior. It is something he/she must show not only in Eid, but ever afterwards.

There are other habits that a Muslim inculcates during Ramadhan, and their adoption is the cause for the celebration of Eid. These include self-discipline, in contrast to self-indulgence; forgiveness and toleration; fellow-feeling and consideration of others; keeping in harmony with the community, and acting in unity.

If all these habits are strengthened and made part of one's character, a Muslim would be a much better human being. But we have to think. Do we remember these lessons of Eid, or do we consider, albeit unconsciously, that with Ramadhan, the chapter of good behavior has closed?

This is a question we should all ask ourselves on Eid. We should do some soul searching, and decide whether the lessons of piety and charity, sacrifice and self-discipline, benevolence and good conduct, toleration and unity, that we gladly learned, should not be our guide in our everyday lives.

تتقدم شركة نيبورس يمين المحدودة

بأطيب الأمانى وأزكى الأمنيات إلى اليمن - شعباً وقيادةً وحكومةً

بمناسبة عيد الفطر المبارك

أعاده الله علينا وعلى اليمن بمزيد من التقدم والرخاء

وكل عام والجميع بخير



NABORS YEMEN LIMITED

is happy to join the Yemeni people its celebrations
on the occasion of EID AL-FITR.

We wish that this occasion may return
with more blessings and joyous moments to Yemen.



كل عام وأنتم بخير

Will Iraq Return to the Oil Supply Market ?

The international oil market is getting jittery, given the prospects of a possible return of Iraqi oil to the market. Iraq and the UN are conducting intensive talks on the implementation of UN Security Resolution 986 allowing Baghdad to sell oil worth US \$2 billion over six months to meet urgent humanitarian needs.

OPEC countries have already started their maneuvering to see who will cut back on supplies to give room to the new Iraqi supply in order to maintain current price level, which hovers around \$ 16 per barrel. UAE Minister of State for Financial and Industrial Affairs, Ahmed Bin Humain Al-Tayer, said last week that there must be an adjustment. "It is unfair that if Iraq starts to produce, the others will continue producing at the same level," he said.

Market observers are expecting the price could fall by as much as \$1 a barrel, unless the supply of other countries drops to accommodate the Iraqi supply.

Iraq, which has the second largest oil reserves, used to produce more than 3 million barrels a day. It was barred from pumping oil in the aftermath of its disastrous adventure into Kuwait, when the UN Security Council slapped it with sanctions in 1991, which have since crippled the Iraqi economy. Most of the resulting slack in supply at the time was picked up by Saudi Arabia, which now pumps around 7 million barrels a day.

In Iraq, and in response to these prospects, the value of the US dollar plummeted from 3000 dinars to the dollars to under 500 dinars.

Forgotten Afghan War: Peace at Last?

Several top Afghan leaders held talks to hammer out a solution for the establishment of broad-based government in Afghanistan. Pakistan has stepped efforts to resolve the crisis, and hosting the meeting was one reflection of this renewed interest.

Former Afghan President Sibghatullah Mojaddedi met with Gen. Abdul Rashid Dostam, who flew into Islamabad last week. Dostam, who commands considerable influence in several provinces in northern Afghanistan, also met with Ustad Mohaqqiq, vice-president of the pro-Iranian faction Hezb-i-Wahdat, and Sadeq Modabbari of Harkat-i-Islami.

Official Pakistani sources did not rule out the possibility of representatives of Taleban Islamic joining the talks among the key rivals of embattled Afghan President Burhanuddin Rabbani, who remains in power in Kabul despite his two-year tenure ending in December 1994.

The Pakistani diplomatic initiative to resolve the Afghan conflict also involved Iranian Deputy Foreign Minister Alaeddin Borujerdi and UN special envoy on Afghanistan Mahmoud Mestiri who were also in Islamabad last week. Ghulbu-Deen Hekmatyar, who heads his action of

Hezb-i-Islami, also arrived in Islamabad to join the intra-Afghan dialogue aimed at ending the nearly four-year Afghan civil war. The Taleban militia, besieging the Afghan capital Kabul for the past four months, with the purpose of toppling Rabbani and enforce Islamic laws in the war-torn country, eased its military siege.

Dostam's National Islamic Movement and Hekmatyar's Hezb-i-Islami along with Hezb-i-Wahdat and Mojaddedi's National Liberation Front are grouped in a four party opposition coalition, which also demands Rabbani's resignation to pave the way for transfer of power in Kabul, who they accuse was "not sincere" in transferring power. Rabbani did say he will step down but he never said to whom he would transfer the power.

He said there would no vacuum if the Afghan president declared that "I have resigned." It would end the war as Rabbani rivals were already controlling 90% of their country.

In order to overcome food shortage in Kabul, the ICRC has planned to airlift one thousand metric tons for flour, cooking oil and beans from Peshawar to Kabul for 16,000 vulnerable families. Without the ICRC, starvation would set in.

Indians Turn to Gold as the Rupee Falls

A sharp fall in the value of the Indian rupee and poor returns on the stock market are feeding India's hunger for gold, driving up prices of the precious metal to unprecedented levels.

"People have diverted their investments to gold as stock prices have gone down," said V. Raghuraman, secretary-general of the Associated Chambers of Commerce and Industry. "They are getting better returns in gold." India is already the world's largest consumer of the precious metal and demand for gold rose by 14% last year to 475 tons, according to the World Gold Council.

"There is a shift toward using gold as an investment instrument due to the volatility in the value of the rupee against the dollar," said a World Gold Council spokesman. India imports some 200 tons of gold a year and some 70 tons of gold is recycled. The remaining

demand of about 200 tons is met through gold smuggled into the country, he indicated.

Raghuraman said the shift to gold could be clearly seen in the fall in bank deposits.

"Gold is being considered a better form of investment in terms of consistent appreciation and security by the vast Indian middle class," he said. "The uncertain political climate and weak stock markets have also driven funds to gold." They (investors) are buying gold because of its steady price vis-a-vis hard currencies, interest rate from bank deposits, and yield on stock and bonds.

Shantilal Sonawala, president emeritus of the Bombay Bullion Association, said that if the rupee continued to fall against the dollar, gold could cost more than 6,000 rupees for 10 grams - the standard Indian measure known as the "tola" - in the next few weeks.

In India, gold is not only an important jewelry, it is also the most liquid form of investment.

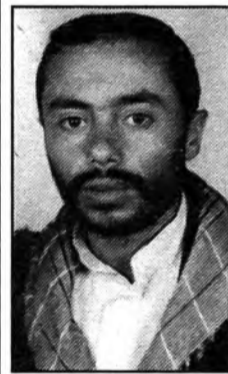
Gold hit an all-time high of 5,800 rupees a tola last week.

Bullion dealers said the price of gold was not likely to fall in the near future with the rupee losing strength against the dollar for the past six months.

The India currency has lost about 20% of its value since August and presently sells for over 37 rupees to the greenback on the exchange market.

"There is bound to be an appreciation in gold prices in the near future," said S. Bhinde, director of the National Council for Applied Economic Research.

The jump in gold prices locally has mirrored a rise on the international market with gold currently selling at more than \$400 a troy ounce in New York. A year ago, a troy ounce fetched only 375.60 dollars.



تهانينا آل العماد

نزف أجمل التهاني والتبريكات الى
الاستاذ أحمد حزام العماد
بمناسبة دخوله القفص الذهبي .

المهنؤون :

د/ محمد نعمان الحاجي

د/ حسين المريش

الاستاذ/ العزي الصلوي

أشيد عبده صالح القباطي

غسان عبد الباقي نعمان

مصطفى سعيد الصلوي

عماد أحمد السقاف

تهانينا القلبية

نزف أجمل التهاني والتبريكات

للشباب وضاح عيروس عبد الخالق السقاف

والشابة إيناس محمد عبد الواحد السقاف

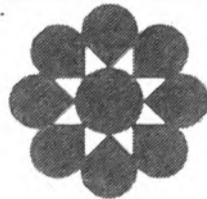
بمناسبة زفافهما السعيد .

متمنين لهما حياة زوجية سعيدة، وبالرفاه والبنين .

المهنؤون :

جمعية الحضارم الخيرية عن جميع آل السقاف

TAJ SHEBA HOTEL



فندق تاج سبأ

Your home when you are not at home

بيتك عندما لا تكون في البيت

presents

to the Yemeni people, political
leadership and government
heartfelt felicitations and
well wishes
on the occasion of

EID AL-FITR.

May Yemen enjoy
prosperity, progress
and stability.



يتقدم

بأحر التهاني والتبريكات إلى
الشعب اليمني والقيادة السياسية والحكومة
بمناسبة حلول عيد الفطر المبارك
جعل الله عام رخاء وإستقرار وتقدم لليمن
وكل عام والجميع بخير

MANY HAPPY RETURNS

البنك التجاري اليمني



تتقدم

بأحر التهاني والتبريكات إلى

الشعب اليمني والقيادة السياسية والحكومة

بمناسبة حلول عيد الفطر المبارك

جعله الله عام رخاء وإستقرار وتقدم لليمن وكل عام والجميع بخير

Yemen Commercial Bank

extends

its congratulations and best wishes
on the occasion of

EID AL-FITR.

to the Yemeni people, political leadership
and government.

May Yemen enjoy prosperity, progress and stability.

كل عام وأنتم بخير



فندق شيراتون صنعاء
Sheraton Sana'a
HOTEL



فندق شيراتون صنعاء

يهدي

الشعب اليمني ، والقيادة بزعامة ابن اليمن البار

الفريق علي عبدالله صالح - الرئيس الجمهورية

أحر التهاني والتبريكات بمناسبة حلول عيد الفطر المبارك

نتمنى للجميع المسرات والأفراح

SHERATON SANAA HOTEL

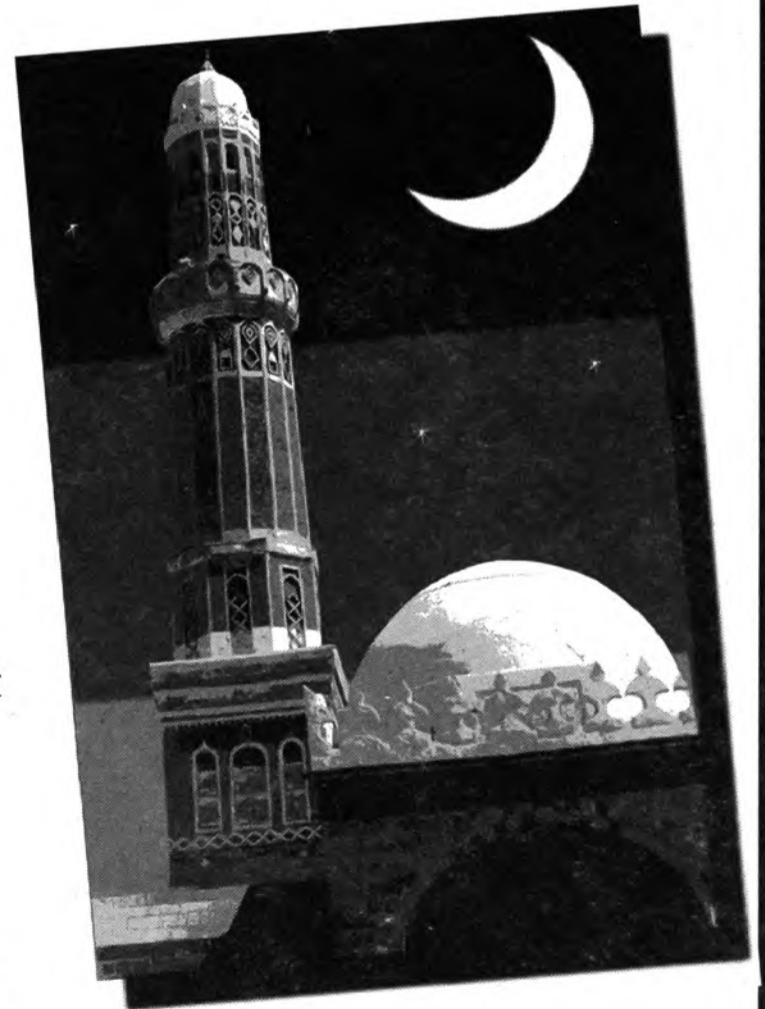
presents

to the Yemeni people, political leadership and government
felicitations and well wishes on the occasion of

EID AL-FITR.

We wish all happiness and joy.

SHERATON HOTEL: THE PLACE OF COMFORT AND JOY



MANY HAPPY RETURNS



LIST OF GOVERNMENT OFFICIALS & MILITARY/SECURITY OFFICERS WHO HAVE BEEN ASSIGNED HOUSES IN THE LIBYAN HOUSING COMPLEX

The names and titles/work places are given in Arabic for the sake of clarity and accuracy

كشف بأسماء الأشخاص الذين خصصت لهم فلل في مجمع الوحدة الذي مولته ليبيا

أولاً : المجموعة (أ) : مجموعة قصور وفلل راقية - لم يتم توزيعها بعد ، وينتظر أن يحصل عليها أعلى المسؤولين في الدولة

ثانياً : المجموعة (ب) : أربعون فيلا من دورين - تم تخصيصها للأسماء التالية

الاسم	العمل	الاسم	العمل	الاسم	العمل
عبدالقادر باجمال	نائب رئيس الوزراء وزير التخطيط والتنمية	علي منصور رشيد	نائب رئيس الجهاز المركزي للأمن السياسي	عبدالله بن شمالان	رئيس هيئة الأركان العامة للقوات المسلحة
احمد مساعد حسين	وزير النقل	محمد راجح لبوزه	نائب رئيس هيئة الأركان العامة للقوات المسلحة	عبدالله علي عليوه	وزير الداخلية
محمد عبدالله البطاني	وزير التامينات والشؤون الإجتماعية	احمد ابويكر السومحي	نائب رئيس هيئة الأركان العامة للقوات المسلحة دائرة المناضلين	طه احمد غانم	محافظة عدن
عبدالله احمد غانم	وزير الشؤون القانونية رئيس لجنة الأحزاب	علي محمد القفيش	عضو اللجنة العامة للمؤتمر الشعبي العام	علي شيخ عمر	محافظة شبوه
فيصل بن شمالان	وزير النفط السابق	علي احمد السلامي	مستشار رئيس الجمهورية الأمين العام المساعد للمؤتمر	احمد علي محسن	محافظة أبين
عبدالله علي عليوه	رئيس هيئة الأركان العامة للقوات المسلحة	عبدالله البار	مستشار رئيس الجمهورية	د. عبدالله بامطرف	محافظة لحج
حسين محمد عرب	وزير الداخلية	حسن احمد السلامي	قائد القوات البحرية	د. علي حسن الأحمدري	محافظة حجة
طه احمد غانم	محافظة عدن	احمد عبدالله الحسني	قائد محور الغيظة	محمد حسين عشال	وكيل محافظة أبين
علي شيخ عمر	محافظة شبوه	حسين الجرادي	عمليات القوات المسلحة	محمد علي الشداددي	رئيس فرع المؤتمر في أبين
احمد علي محسن	محافظة أبين	سليمان قيس	قائد لواء (١١٩)		
د. عبدالله بامطرف	محافظة لحج	فيصل محمد رجب	قائد لواء شلال		
د. علي حسن الأحمدري	محافظة حجة	سالم علي قطن	قائد لواء		
محمد حسين عشال	وكيل محافظة أبين	عبدالله منصور	قائد لواء		
محمد علي الشداددي	رئيس فرع المؤتمر في أبين				

ثالثاً : المجموعة (ج) : خمسون فيلا من دور واحد (نوع راقية) - تم تخصيصها للأسماء التالية

الاسم	العمل	الاسم	العمل	الاسم	العمل
صالح حسين الزومري	مدير عام مرور الجمهورية	محمد سعيد المحمدي	عضو مجلس النواب	صالح احمد باشماخ	عضو اللجنة الدائمة
ويحيى علي رشيد	وكيل محافظة عدن	محمد يحيى جابر	عضو اللجنة الدائمة للمؤتمر الشعبي العام	محمد بامسلم	عضو مجلس النواب
النفير البحيري	سفير اليمن في روسيا	علي مقبل حسين	دائرة الرقابة	عوض بانجار	شخصية عامة
احمد باحاج	وكيل محافظة شبوه	سعيد سالم العريف	محور الجوف	عبدالرحمن بكير	رئيس فرع الإصلاح في حضرموت
عمر وكيل	وكيل محافظة صعده	سالم البان	الدفاع الساحلي	محمد عيدروس	عضو اللجنة الدائمة
حسين علي هيثم	مدير عام البحث الجنائي	يحيى عبدالله قحطان	عضو مجلس النواب	محسن علي ياسر	عضو اللجنة الدائمة
توفيق عويبي	عضو اللجنة الدائمة للمؤتمر الشعبي العام	محسن خشاع	محور ثمود	علي حزام	عقيد في المساحة العسكرية
علي حميد شرف	وزير الإسكان والإنشاءات والتخطيط الحضري	محمد الخضر الشقي	عضو اللجنة الدائمة للمؤتمر الشعبي العام	احمد محمد الدنبوع	عقيد في وزارة الدفاع
عبدالله صالح الجرو	شخصية عامة في حضرموت	ناصر منصور هادي	وكيل مساعد للجهاز المركزي للأمن السياسي	محمد عمر اليافي	وكيل وزارة الأوقاف
محمد عبدالله السياربي	عضو اللجنة الدائمة للمؤتمر الشعبي العام	نجيب قحطان	عضو اللجنة الدائمة للمؤتمر الشعبي العام	بالليل بن راجح لبوزه	عضو اللجنة الدائمة
علي محمد الطميلة	مدير عام أمن شبوه	عوض محمد فريد	قائد محور صعده	احمد عيادي امفدي	الدائرة الجوية
علي ناصر هادي	محور العبر	محسن بن شمالان	وكيل محافظة حضرموت	عبدالله علي عبدالرحمن	نائب وزير الخارجية
عوض صالح عبيد	عضو اللجنة الدائمة للمؤتمر الشعبي العام	فضل يسلم الصنبور	عضو اللجنة الدائمة للمؤتمر الشعبي العام	عبدالله علي طرموم	سفير
عاقب باعوضه	عضو اللجنة الدائمة للمؤتمر الشعبي العام	محمد علي محسن الأحول	وكيل مساعد للجهاز المركزي للأمن السياسي	صالح احمد الشاعري	عضو اللجنة الدائمة
رياض العكبري	سفير اليمن لدى الصين	د. نجيب غانم	وزير الصحة (التجمع اليمني للإصلاح)	جعفر باصالح	نائب مدير عام مكتب رئاسة الجمهورية
محمد محسن عطروش	فنان/عضو اللجنة الدائمة للمؤتمر الشعبي العام	د. عبدالرحمن بافضل	وزير الثروة السمكية (التجمع اليمني للإصلاح)	محمد ناصر احمد	نائب مدير دائرة الإمداد
فيصل العطاس النعيري	عضو اللجنة الدائمة للمؤتمر الشعبي العام			امبارك مساعد حسين	أمن محافظة الجوف

رابعاً : المجموعة (د) : ستة وخمسون فيلا من دور واحد - تم تخصيصها للأسماء التالية

الاسم	العمل	الاسم	العمل	الاسم	العمل
محمد احمد باشماخ	عضو اللجنة الدائمة	عبدالله الأشطل	سفير اليمن لدى الأمم المتحدة	محمد سعيد باقطني	عضو اللجنة الدائمة
محمد بامسلم	عضو مجلس النواب	سعيد عمر العكبري	وزير سابق	عمر الجاوي	عضو مجلس النواب
عوض بانجار	شخصية عامة	علي هود باعبياد	رئيس جامعة حضرموت	علي محمد الحدي	عضو قيادة في الجيش
عبدالرحمن بكير	رئيس فرع الإصلاح في حضرموت	صالح لزنم	الأمن السياسي (شبوه)	عبدالواسع سلام	عضو قيادة في الحزب الاشتراكي اليمني
محمد عيدروس	عضو اللجنة الدائمة	علي لخشح	الأمن السياسي (البيضاء)	سالم عمر بكير	عضو قيادة في الحزب الاشتراكي اليمني
محسن علي ياسر	عضو اللجنة الدائمة	عبدالقوي شاهر	عضو اللجنة الدائمة	عثمان عبدالجبار	عضو قيادة في الحزب الاشتراكي اليمني
علي حزام	عقيد في المساحة العسكرية	راجح العطري	شيخ العظيمة	محمد سعيد مقبل	عضو قيادة في الحزب الاشتراكي اليمني
احمد محمد الدنبوع	عقيد في وزارة الدفاع	سيف حسن	شيخ ردفان	سالم الحبشي	عضو قيادة في الحزب الاشتراكي اليمني
محمد عمر اليافي	وكيل وزارة الأوقاف	طارق الفضلي	رئيس شؤون القبائل في أبين عضو اللجنة الدائمة	مثنى مساعد مثنى	عضو قيادة في الحزب الاشتراكي اليمني
بالليل بن راجح لبوزه	عضو اللجنة الدائمة	جمال النهدي	عضو اللجنة الدائمة / الأمن السياسي	احمد علي السلامي	عضو قيادة في الحزب الاشتراكي اليمني
احمد عيادي امفدي	الدائرة الجوية	احمد صالح سيف	عضو اللجنة الدائمة / الأمن السياسي	محمد مفتاح	عضو قيادة في الحزب الاشتراكي اليمني
عبدالله علي عبدالرحمن	نائب وزير الخارجية	عوض محمد العولقي	مدير مديرية نصاب	علي سعيد عبيد	عضو قيادة في الحزب الاشتراكي اليمني
عبدالله علي طرموم	سفير	عوض الريزي	رئيس فرع الإصلاح في شبوه	احمد تاصر الدنمي	عضو قيادة في الحزب الاشتراكي اليمني
صالح احمد الشاعري	عضو اللجنة الدائمة	علي سالم باقفيش	مدير مديرية ميفعه	مهدي عبدالله سعيد	عضو قيادة في الحزب الاشتراكي اليمني
جعفر باصالح	عضو اللجنة الدائمة	حيدر بن صالح الهبيلي	مستشار رئيس الجمهورية	محمود مدحي	عضو قيادة في الحزب الاشتراكي اليمني
محمد ناصر احمد	نائب مدير عام مكتب رئاسة الجمهورية	عبدالله محفوظ الحداد	شخصية عامة	عوض عبدالله بامطرف	عضو قيادة في الحزب الاشتراكي اليمني
امبارك مساعد حسين	نائب مدير دائرة الإمداد	علي عوض الصيعري	عضو اللجنة الدائمة	عبدالله سالم الجفري	عضو قيادة في الحزب الاشتراكي اليمني
فريد مجور	أمن محافظة الجوف	نسيم حامد كشمييم	بطل الملاكمة اليمني/البريطاني	حسين علي حسن	عضو قيادة في الحزب الاشتراكي اليمني
	نائب وزير الزراعة			محمد غالب احمد	عضو قيادة في الحزب الاشتراكي اليمني

a) This list is subject to change.

b) There are apartment complexes which have not yet been assigned.

c) An amount of \$11 million is due to contractors yet unpaid by Libya.

أ- هذا الكشف قابل للتعديل
ب- هناك مجمع كامل مكون من الشقق التي لم يستقر بعد تخصيصها للمستفيدين
ج- هناك مستحقات للمقاولين على المشروع بحوالي (١١) مليون دولار لم تدفعها ليبيا بعد

ملاحظات :

NOTES:



AL-WAHDAWY: Sanaa (Weekly): 13/2/1996
(Nasserite Unionist Party)

Main Headlines:

- 1) A Senior Official Met with a Delegation from the Supreme Jewish Council.
- 2) What Is behind the President's Decision to Tag Along the Leaders of the Opposition with Him in His Visit to the Governorates.
- 3) Expectations to Release Yemen's Most Famous Prisoner of Conscience.

Article Summary:

What Does Yemen Need?

Mr. Mohammed Saleh Al-Hadhiri, a regular columnist with the paper, writes extensively about the place of Yemen within the new world. He starts by listing Yemen's resources, stressing the country's water scarcity.

But that is not the point. Al-Hadhiri speaks about how Yemen should handle itself within the world of nations. "It is a competition out there. When a nation competes against us, it does not necessarily mean that we are enemies." But the system has to make room for the qualified Yemenis "who are with us and who can help elevate the country. It is only through our qualified and able people that the country can rise up."

The writer states that in spite of the potential, the country suffers from repeated crisis, which are due to the negligence and carelessness of our officials.

AL-GUMHURRIYA: Taiz (Daily) 10-2-96
(Official)

Main Headlines:

- 1) The President in Taiz: "There must be a revolt against corruption and a war against the corrupt wherever they may be."
- 2) The Brother of the President of Sudan by the Southern Rebels (in the Sudan)
- 3) The Return of Nationalized Movie Houses (in the Former PDRY)

Article Summary:

Water Is the Problem of Our Times

The column: "An Issue in a Column" by Zeid Al-Ghabiry discusses the water problem. It starts by pointing out that twenty years ago, much greenery covered vast areas of the country throughout the year. But the migration of rural residents outside of Yemen and to the cities has decreased the area under cultivation and tree planting. Moreover previous agricultural projects seemed to be a waste of money and a waste of arable land.

Yemeni Press in a Week

by: *Hassan Al-Haifi*

The writer calls for more attention to agriculture and forestation programs with careful periodic adjustment and analysis of results achieved.

ALTHAWRAH: Sana'a (Daily) 12-2-96
(official)

Main Headlines:

- 1) In a Telephone Call from Mubarak, the President Renews Yemen's Welcome to Efforts Aimed at Resolving the Conflict with Eritrea Peacefully.
- 2) The President: "The Nation Can't Stand Corrupt Officials Anymore. The State's Organs Must Correct Negative Practices and Hold Anyone Who Acts Irresponsibly Accountable."
- 3) The Supreme Economic and Investment Council Discusses the Power Link Project to Make Use of Surplus Power in al-Masila Region with Canadian Occidental.

Article Summary:

A Clean Country: Is It Only a Dream?

Abdulla Al-Haifi, a popular Yemeni media personality and commentator, gives a sad review of how pathetically dirty the country has become. He mentions the historically civilized and clean nature of Yemen.

"It was only twenty years ago when the people and government seemed to have thrown the idea of living in a clean country out the window." He described sadly the ugly overflow of septic tanks and the streams of sewage that have plagued the city, in addition to the piles of garbage littering the cities, and the plastic bags that have distorted the beautiful scenery of which Yemen was once so proud.

"We are in need of cleaning our houses, our streets and all the country. We are talking about collecting the garbage. We are in need of cleaning up the consciences of the government officials. We are in need to wake up the thieves who steal public property. "I look forward to the day when the thieves are locked up, and when my country is dressed in a white gown which reflects Yemen's purity."

AL-BELAGH: Sana'a (Weekly) 6-2-96
(Monotheism and Islamic Action Party).

Main Headlines:

- 1) Frightening Numbers that Call for a Change in Government
- 2) Income from Oil Exports is US \$650 million every Year: Where Does It Go?
- 3) 10,000 Government Employees to Be Retired as Part of the Reform Program

Article Summary:

Why No-Native Muslim Thinkers Adopt Islam?

Mohammed Alexander Russel: Born in 1896, District of Columbia (USA): A Politician, writer and journalist (Chief Editor of 2 important magazines; Consul General for the USA in Manila, the Philippines). It was due to the latter that he became acquainted with Islam after which he toured around the Islamic World and decided to convert to Islam, after which he became the Chairman of the Islamic Missionary Association of the United States. He died in 1/10/1917.

Russel states that he was not impressed by all the clerical efforts to convince him of Christianity, nor did he find comfort in the new philosophical works of Kant, Mills and Hegel. He could not find convincing logic of complete answers from the clerics, and the philosophers could not satisfy his desire for a spiritual explanation to life and death. Russel states, "My conversion to Islam was not due to having gone astray or due to a spontaneous impulse or due to a sentimental or emotional rush.

It came as a result of sincere, in-depth, investigative studies not affected by any prejudice or prior inclinations. It was actually a result of a desire and determination to know the real truth . . ." Islam calls for universal brotherhood, to love all people, goodness for all mankind. Islam requires purity of mind, of work and of talk. Islam is the simplest of all religions, yet the most capable of lifting mankind to the greatest of heights!

26 SEPTEMBER: Sana'a (Weekly) 8-2-96
(Mouthpiece of the Military).

Main Headlines:

- 1) On Orders from the President, Dismissal of a Number of Rank and File in Hadhramaut and Their Transfer to the Prosecution
- 2) The Council of Ministers Applauds the Presidents Instructions to Make Government Officials Accountable for Shortfalls In the Performance of Duties.
- 3) US \$50 Million from Spain for Yemeni Development Projects

Article Summary:

New Law of the Judiciary

The "Judiciary Forum" finalized a proposed Judiciary law that will give the Judiciary Administrative and Financial independence.

The law will also separate the Presidency from the Chairmanship of the Supreme Judiciary Council. The bill goes to President and Parliament for ratification later this week.

AL-TAGAMMU: Sanaa (Weekly) 12/2/1996
(Mouthpiece of the Yemeni Unitarian Party).

Main Headlines:

- 1) The Second Dose of the Economic Reforms Disrupts Social Harmony.
- 2) Yemeni Jews and Politics.
- 3) Security in the University Campus.

Article Summary:

The Triangular Problem and the Solution:

The famous columnist, Saeed Aulaqi, writes about the rising phenomenon of begging. "From my personal experience, I notice the rising wave of beggars in street intersections, market places, etc." he wrote.

"I think there is a positive co-relation between the growth in the number of beggars and the success of the first phase of the reform program." The truth is that the reform program has reduced the income of the beggars. According to the Dow Jones and the Financial Times, the income of beggars has fallen by 60% because of the program. Is there a legal case to be won against the triangular culprits - the World Bank, the New World Order and the Yemeni Government?

The article then moves from the problem to the solution by urging the government to find it in its heart to achieve reconciliation with the opposition. But, of course, it will not listen. If the rulers of Yemen cannot reconcile themselves with the opposition inside the country, how can they reconcile themselves with the opposition in exile, which is headed by Abdul-Rahman Al-Jafry.

Letters to the Editor

Letters to the Editor

Letters to the Editor

Letters to the Editor

YEMEN TIMES

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What is the Reform Goal?

The government says it has been promised US \$500 million from the World Bank and other donors to support the economic reform in Yemen. The exchange rate of dollar is still jumping up and down and one dollar now fetches 120-130 Riyals. This price is very high.

Now the Eid is coming, and this represents a lot of problems for the poor people. The underclass, those who are very poor suffer, and they cannot provide for their families and face the Eid's needs. Garments and other wear are very expensive. Clothing one child could cost up to YR 3000. Now, imagine the situation of a poor person who has seven children. You know, this is true in our country, where the average number of children in a family is more than six.

Think about the predicament of a father who has to provide for the family. From where will he get money, especially if his salary is ten or even twenty thousand Riyals? That is if he were fortunate enough to work at all. I demand the government to have mercy on us and stop raising the cost of living under the pretext of economic reforms. What are the reforms supposed to achieve?

By: Mohammed Al-Samey,
Taiz.

Is German & Dutch Aid Helping Yemeni People?

It is sad to see the Dutch and German governments providing so much of their tax-payers' money to give sustenance to a corrupt regime that is working hard to destroy our country and to humiliate our people. We intellectuals who studied abroad, understand and believe in what the Western democratic countries preach about democracy and human rights. That is why I am unable to find any convincing excuse/justification for what these two countries are doing.

The sad part in all of this is that our aid donors believe they are actually helping the Yemeni people. In reality they are not. They are helping strengthen a bad regime, and in that sense, they are prolonging the suffering of our people.

The ambassadors of Germany and the Netherlands in Sana'a see the suffering of the majority of the people of this country everyday. They need to explain to themselves and to their countries why they continue to support a bad system.

As a citizen of this country and a Professor at one of its universities, I believe assistance from these countries is misused and most of it goes to the pockets of a small group of bad officials. I thus question the purpose behind the efforts to keep a corrupt regime going.

I know my statement will be twisted. Let me make two points clear.

- 1) I believe that the ambassadors and their countries honestly feel they are helping a poor country. They need to open their eyes and see whether they are doing that or whether they are helping our bad officials get richer.
 - 2) I am not opposed to any country or organization helping my Yemen. I welcome assistance to my country. I just want to make sure the assistance goes to the people, not the officials.
- That is why I urge all aid donors to help the people of Yemen, and not the corrupt officials.

By: Dr. Yassin M. Ali, Sanaa.

Yemen Times prints the above letter as it came. We will print a rebuttal, if we receive any.

Why Can't the warlords of Somalia Reach a Solution?

Since 1990, when the civil war began in Somalia, the warlords have not been able to reach a solution for the country's turmoil. I believe there are two reasons for this:

- 1- The warlords of Somalia don't think of the problems of the people. They only think of themselves and how to rule. In other words, they give precedent to their self interest at the expense of the public interest.
- 2- Most of the warlords in Somalia are uneducated and they have military backgrounds. Their methods are based on might and violence rather than on dialogue and reasoning. That is why the various warlords are afraid of each other, and of the people. Meanwhile, the Somali people wait. I think they are waiting for God to do something.

By: Mohammed Hassan Ali,
Sanaa.

YEMEN TIMES: A VOICE OF LIBERTY AND THE YEMENI PEOPLE

We in Yemen started our struggle against the Imam. The Imam used to send his soldiers to subdue the people. They used their guns to collect the peasants' crop harvests, and slaughter their livestock, intimidate them, and abuse everybody. What the government soldiers did in Hadhramaut last week was a repeat of the past. The Republic of Yemen's soldiers are behaving like the Imam's soldiers. Two revolutions (September 1962 & October 1963) later, and the Yemeni people are still not free from the Imam. The government is scared of the new revolution which is led by the Yemen Times - a voice of a new kind of revolution to liberate the Yemeni people from humiliation and from the new IMAMS.

By: Abdulaziz Mohammed Saeed Mosa'bain,
Aden.

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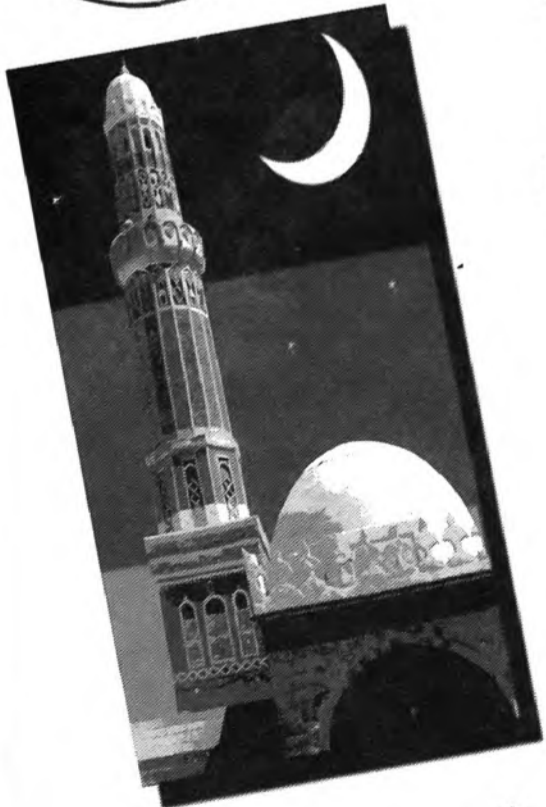
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**Mansoor Rajih:
Still in Prison Despite High-Level Promises**

President Ali Abdullah Saleh made a promise. Sheikh Abdullah Bin Hussain Al-Ahmar, Speaker of Parliament made a promise. Dr. Abdul-Karim Al-Iryani, Foreign Minister, made a promise. The promises were made to many parties - Amnesty International, Human Rights Watch, UNESCO, the Norwegian Writers' Union, etc. It all has to do with sorting out the problem of Mansoor Rajih, Yemen's most famous prisoner of conscience. Rajih has spent more than 14 years in the Taiz Central Prison and he is still there. He is accused and convicted of murder in a trial that has been characterized with many irregularities.

The Norwegian Government has officially written to the Yemeni Government informing it of its decision to offer Mr. Rajih political asylum (along with his wife) and to provide medical care. He is said to be extremely sick and to have lost much weight. The authorities in Yemen have raised hope that this matter will be resolved immediately. The Norwegians have been calling in on almost a weekly basis for the last three months. By freeing Mansoor, Yemen would be set a major injustice straight, and would have won a lot of international prestige. The question is: "Will our officials see light?"

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