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Planning Minister Soufan
Outlines Plans and Hopes.
page 3.

IFES Commits to Help the
SEC in Presidential Elections.
page 5.

Professionals Call on the State
to Free Electronic Media.
page 10.

Inhuman Torture Revealed in
Mahweet.
page 12.

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The Sanaa Authorities Fall Back on OLD Ways: Hard Times for the Free Press!

These are hard times for many members of the Yemeni press that are not controlled by the ruling politicians. Independent newspapers or those representing opposition political parties have to cope with mounting difficulties created by the authorities. "There are many ways to skin a cat."

Here are 7 of the tactics in vogue today as developed and applied by the Yemeni authorities in order to reign in independent and/or opposition media.

1: On Trial:

Today, 7 newspapers are on trial in Yemen.. These are Al-Ayyam, Al-Ray-Aam, Al-Haq, Al-Shoura, Al-Thawri, Ray, and Yemen Times. The charges vary, but it is always due to something the papers had printed. All cases were filed by the authorities.

2: Beating Up Journalists:

On Monday, May 10th, Saif Al-Hadhiri, Editor in chief of Al-Shumoo' paper, was beaten by masked men. Over the last 5 months, 8 journalists have been beat up.

3: Journalists in Jail:

Since the beginning of this year, 12 journalists have gone to prison for varying durations.

4: Tactics to Discredit:

Government controlled newspapers such as 26th September - managed directly by the Office of the President, and Al-Mithaq - mouthpiece of the ruling PGC party, constantly run stories to discredit any person or newspaper which criticizes the state. On 13th May, for example, 26th September - controlled by the Office of President Saleh - ran an article attacking the Aden-based At-Tariq newspaper. On 17th May, Al-Mithaq ran several articles in which it insulted the Yemen Times, Al-Ayyam and Al-Shoura newspapers.

5: Losing Income:

Many journalists and columnists who are government employees have been denied their salaries. A celebrated case is that of Noman Kaied Saif.

6: Clone Papers:

The state routinely finances clone and duplicate copies of independent/opposition papers. The objective is to confuse the public, discredit the original papers, and flood the market.

7: Using the Tax Excuse:

On May 17th, two persons claiming to work for the Tax Department showed up at the

Yemen Times head office in Sanaa. They carried a letter summoning the editor for questioning due to delays in tax payment. When they were confronted with a copy of a cheque made out to the Tax Authorities as payment for the last due month - through April 30th 1999, they were very surprised. Confused, they cursed and left.

In addition to the above tactics, traditional means of harassment, such as phone tapping, tailing, mail searching, threats, insults, etc., also continue.

In response to such deterioration of freedom of the press in Yemen, Ms. Ann K. Cooper, Executive Director of the New York-based Committee to Protect Journalists, wrote to President Saleh. She stated: "This recent spate of attacks on the press in Yemen has created a formidable climate of intimidation for all journalists." In a press release on May 17th, 1999, the CPJ also outlined various attacks on journalists, and concluded, "Since February (1999), (Yemeni) authorities have taken a series of other punitive measures against journalists..."

الرئيس: من تخزين القات إلى تخزين المعلومات President Leads War Against Qat

In several interviews last week, President Ali Abdullah Saleh pledged to stop chewing qat. Instead, he will now use the time to acquaint himself with the computer world, and to spend more time in sports. Moreover, the President said that he has urged his close aides to stop chewing. Some did.

That is wonderful news. As the President plays an important role model, his decision to quit chewing qat will hopefully convince many Yemenis to do the same. His interest in computers and sports should also spark more attention to these fields. It is a win-win situation. Thank you, Mr. President!



To Coincide with June 26th: Seminar in Support of Torture Victims

The Human Rights, Civil Liberties, NGOs Committee of the Consultative Council, in collaboration with several NGOs, notably Yemen 21 Forum, the Yemeni Committee to Combat Torture (YCCT), and the Yemeni Board to Support Torture Victims (YBSTV), is planning a major workshop to coincide with the UN Day in Support of Torture Victims - June 26. Several key experts have been asked to prepare documents on the types of torture that prevail in

Yemen, bodies/persons who engage in torture, and what reaction such violations normally generate from government, civil society and individuals. Key speakers are Abdulaziz Al-Saqqaf, Chair of the CC committee, Ali Saif Hassan, Secretary-General of the YCCT, Mohammed Naji Allaw, founder of the YBSTV, Dr. Mohammed Al-Mikhlaifi, a prominent lawyer, and many others who will make presentations and professional interventions.

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**OUR
VIEWPOINT**

**Yemen's
Transformation:
Meaning of the Process**

The real meaning and purpose of the democratic transformation and the economic reform is to remove traditional master-client relations in Yemen's power structure, as well as market distortions in the economy. Thus, the success of the nation's evolution will be measured exactly in those terms. Unfortunately, our political leadership does not understand the meaning of the intended change. Not only is there a problem with understanding the process by bringing about a substantive change as envisaged by the transformation, there are even complications because of the ingenuity of our politicians in creating new patron-client relations and new market distortions.

Let us get down to specifics. Yemen's traditional patron-client relations persist, and new ones are created every day. The President of the Republic has become some sort of "waliyu-ne'emah", which generally translated means 'He is the source of wealth.' This is amply evident from the direct gifts he showers on his followers, as well as in the posts he confers on them, which they use to amass wealth. Many businessmen get contracts and company agencies because they are connected to the power structure, not because they are good businessmen. Many journalists continue to issue their papers not because they have a profitable media, but because they are paid by the politicians. Many officials command influence and hold posts not because they earned them, but because they serve the master/s.

In other words, a lot of people who would have gone under if they were to depend on their own abilities or on market dictates, thrive because of the master-client relations. The master continues with this game because he gets people who will roll under his feet and fight his wars as surrogates. They do all the dirty and illegal work he asks of them. The clients continue with this game because they get resources and influence, which they would otherwise not get because they can't earn them.

The ultimate effect of this arrangement is that Yemen is held back and cannot make real progress. Efficient and capable Yemenis are marginalized, or even pushed out of service. The system is thus managed in a non-optimal manner leading to mismanagement and inefficiencies. Nepotism, favoritism, corruption, and other ills become the norm.

Political democratization and economic transformation aim to create a level-play in which all players compete on an equal footing. Accountability and transparency become standard tools to make all players, including top politicians, play by the rules.

After nearly a decade of trial and error in our evolution, it is clear that our decision-makers have not yet understood what the process intends to deliver. As one visiting pro-democracy activist once noted, "Your leaders did not fully comprehend where this political transformation is leading."

A clear manifestation of this lack of understanding of the process has to do, for example, with elections. Our rulers see elections as a ritual which they have to go through. They apply the mechanics of the process, but forget its soul. They forget that the basic goal of elections is to bring about change, new blood, new momentum and new vision. They forget that elections are a tool to return the power of decision to the people.

Hence our nation is saddled with the same old ailments, but dressed in new clothes.

The Publisher
[Signature]

**Japanese-Financed Projects
Inaugurated in Aden**

Two major projects in Aden were inaugurated last week. The two projects were financed by the Government of Japan. The first is the Aden Telephone Network Expansion, which will cost 6,969 million yen (roughly US\$ 56 million), will add 49,200 new telephone lines to the city, and will enhance performance of existing lines. The second project is the Upgrading of Broadcasting Equipment at Aden TV station which will cost 947 million yen (some US\$ 7.6 million), and will improve the quality and increase the programs.

EU Finances Health Sector

The European Union has agreed to provide Yemen with 6.7 million Euro (about \$7 m). The agreement signed in Brussels by Yemeni Ambassador Gazem Al-Aghbari, Ambassador, and Mr. Manuel Marin, Vice President of the European Commission, on May 10th. The money will go to support health sector reform. The EU is one of Yemen's major aid partners.

New Leadership for Taiz Islah

The Yemeni Congregation for Reform Party (Islah), Taiz branch, held a conference on 19-20 May to discuss the problems of the party in Taiz. It then elected a new party leadership for Taiz.

EPC Commemorates 5 June

The Environmental Protection Council (EPC) plans to commemorate the 5th of June - the World's Environmental Day. For the same purpose, on June 4th, a television roundtable panel will bring a number of specialists and media personalities to discuss some pertinent local and international issues.

**Judge Luqman Victimized by
Military Officers**

Judge Mohammed Ali Luqman, wrote to President Ali Abdullah Saleh was subjected to a house siege by Officer Hameed Ad-Dahyani and twelve of his soldiers in Sanaa on 16th May. "They want to dictate the way I pass sentences or else," the judge said. The officer and his men were asked to please leave the judge alone by security forces summoned to the site.

Media Pharm Exhibition

Prime Minister Abdul Karim Al-Iriani inaugurated on May 23 the "Media Pharm Yemen" which will go on till 26 at the Expo Center in Sanaa. Representatives of 150 local and foreign companies and agencies participate in the fair.

**YEMEN TIMES ONLINE
Weekly Opinion Poll**

Yemen Times Opinion Poll Question is found weekly at:
<http://www.yementimes.com/#poll>
The results only reflect the opinion of the portion of people who use the Internet to submit their votes online.

Question:

Do you believe that the immigrants' conference currently being held in Sanaa will be able to resolve immigrants' problems, and increase their role in Yemen?

Answers:

- Yes, of course. (%20)
- It will help in some aspects, but it will not solve any real problems immigrants are currently facing. (%22)
- No. It is no more than empty talk. I expect nothing from it. (%58)

Yemenia Leads Efforts to Streamline Travel Industry

Yemenia embarked on a comprehensive assessment program of local agents. This program also calls on the company to provide local agents with multi-purpose training and qualifying programs.

Yemenia kicked off implementation of the program with a meeting with agents on Thursday May 20th 1999 at the Taj Sheba Hotel. Forty local agents attended the meeting, which focused on discussing the coming conference of Arab Ministers of Tourism due to be held in Sanaa in mid June. The conference is an indicator of the rising government concern with tourism. "Yemenia, a key partner in the effort, is collaborating with the Interior and Foreign Ministries on reception procedures of the guests, and with the Ministry of Tourism on the program," said Captain Abdul-Khaleq Al-Qadhi, Chairman of the company.



He called on the ticketing agents to effectively cooperate to make the event a success. The meeting also addressed a number of problems existing between the airline and the agents. The agents raised such issues as unequal payments of commissions, non-professionalism of some agents, and problems with reservations. Yemenia promised to look into those complaints. At the end of the meeting, the company officials and agents expressed satisfaction with what was achieved, and called for more meetings in the future.

By Yusuf Sherif, Yemen Times

**Yemen to Build
New Embassy in Kuwait**

"We are now looking into various designs to construct our embassy in Kuwait. The Kuwaiti authorities have assigned a plot of land, according to their specifications for this purpose," said Mr. Abdul-Qader Ba-Jammal, Deputy Prime Minister and Foreign Minister.

He also said that Mr. Abdullah Al-Mikhlaflay is serving as a care-taker diplomat until an ambassador is appointed in the very near future.

European Film Festival

Hosted at the Yemeni Cultural Center, the European Film Festival, 5-9/6/1999, promises to be a big social event.

The films scheduled are:

- 5 June: British: 24:7;
- 6 June: Italian: The Wide Oak;
- 7 June: German: Knocking on Heaven's Door;
- 8 June: French: Western;
- 9 June: Dutch: Amsterdamned

This annual event has proven to be extremely successful among the local population. The film-shows are open to the general public.

Correction:

Last week, the Yemen Times Issue 20, on May 17th carried a story about Canadian assistance to Yemen's demining effort. Mr. Fouad Gohery was described as representing the Canadian International Development Agency (CIDA). In reality, CIDA does not have an office in Yemen, nor does Mr. Gohery represent them. He is the Coordinator for the Canada Fund Development Program, which is a Canadian Government funded program, administered by the Canadian Embassy in Riyadh, and accredited to Yemen.

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Ahmed Soufan: "We have come a long way!"

The Ministry of Planning and Development is one of the key ministries of the Government of Yemen. It draws up overall guidelines for the nation's development process, approves the investment expenditures of the government, and channels foreign loans and grants to the various line ministries.

Mr. Ahmed Mohammed Soufan, Minister of Planning and Development, hails from Kohlan, a well-known tribe in Hajjah. He himself is successful business person with a keen understanding of market dictates.

He is also a good team player. A friend once described him as a smooth sailor, who does not like to make waves. Today, he is seen as one of the President's close technical aides.

Given the on-going reform program of the economy, Mr. Ahmed Mohammed Soufan agreed to discuss some of his plans with Yemen Times. Ismail Al-Ghabiry talked to him and filed the following interview.

Q: Where are we with the economic reform program?

A: The economic reform program is a continuous process. We only started it in 1995.

We are continuing with the restructuring of the institutional and legal apparatus. I would say that we have shifted from the stabilization phase and moved on to the restructuring program. This involves changes in economic, administrative and financial institutions and policy of the various sectors.

Q: It seems that the economic reforms have put the country in a dilemma - damned if you do, and damned if you don't. What do you think?

A: If Yemen had not started implementation of the economic reforms in 1995, we would not have been in a real difficult situation today. Yemen has overcome the battles of the mid-1990s, and that is no simple accomplishment. What we have done in the first phase of the reforms is address the difficulties we have had, starting in the 1980s and running through the early 1990s. These are problems which were long neglected.

I believe Yemen is really on the right track, and we have done quite well until now. But, we still need lot of effort in order to achieve all the goals of the reform program.

Q: There is a feeling the reforms are on the right track.

Can you support that with numbers?

A: First of all, on the fiscal side, Yemen was really passing through difficult times during 1993-94-95. The budgetary deficit was huge, and we had lots of problems. The trade balance, the balance of payments, the fiscal deficit, and the resource deficit were all in the red. Budget deficit rose to 17.5% of GDP (Gross Domestic Product). There was negative growth rate, and a soaring inflation rate, which reached 100% in one of the years. The exchange rate was highly unpredictable as the national currency plunged.

From such a picture, only 4 years ago, look at the picture today. The exchange rate of the national currency is basically stable, albeit with some volatility. The budget deficit fell to 2% of GDP in 1997, though it rose again to almost 6% in 1998 because of the fall of oil prices, and thus our government revenue. We have achieved a growth rate of GDP in the range of 5-5.5% last year.

Q: What are your major headaches at this time?

A: We have many headaches. Consider the following:
1- We have a 3.7% annual population growth rate. This cannot be sustained. We have to put the brakes on this.
2- The functioning of the government bureaucracy really has to be streamlined.
3- Law and order and proper dis-



pensation of justice are both a real challenge to us.

4- The requirements of public investments are enormous. We need all kinds of investments in infrastructure, utilities, services and various projects.

Q: What kind of priorities are you working with?

A: I think we have to give top priority to human-power development. Education is critical. More than 3500 classrooms have been built over the last 3 years alone. The country's health sector has also received huge investments. Some 6% of our over-all budget was allocated to health.

Q: Let us go back to the challenges you outlined earlier. What policy measures are you adopting?

A: The major challenges could be summarized in three areas. First, there is the gap in gender productivity. 51.7% of our population is female, yet they are not able to contribute adequately to national production. In fact, I can say, they are not efficiently integrated in the modern economic activity.

One way to address this imbalance is to push education. Today, for every girl that goes to school, two boys get the same chance. In other words, we have to improve the chances of education for our boys and girls, but more to the point, the girls. Second, we have the issue of population explosion. Yemen's population grows by about 3.7% every year. This is really much too high. The female fertility rate in Yemen is about 6.7 now, down from about 7.6, but it is still one of the highest in the world.

This is very alarming, as this kind of population growth will not allow sustainable development in the long-term.

Third, we have the issue of water scarcity. Yemen is one of the poorest water-endowed countries of the world. We have to take this as a fact and work together to address this matter. The government, civil society, private business, academia, the media and all other partners must work together in order to control the misuse of our precious water resources.

Q: Your ministry is supposedly in charge of future planning. Yet, we have never heard of any futuristic vision of where we are going?

A: We are now preparing some projects related to our future vision in the ministry of planning.

We are starting to prepare a vision for Yemen 25 years from now. It will answer questions like where are we going, what are we going to be, what we need to do in order to be what we want or where we want, etc. All this will be part of the Yemen 25 Vision.

We are seriously preparing for this work, as it is going to be a major undertaking and will involve lots of Yemeni experts and academics, etc.

We also have several studies already under way to look at future trends and patterns in population growth. I cannot over-emphasize the need for better family planning. So, this study will address the population issue. In the Ministry of Planning and Development, we have embarked in preparations in those areas in terms of the challenges, goals and policies.

My ministry is now becoming more technical, more concerned with strategy than with day to day business. We are looking at the larger economic situation of the country, and advising the various line ministries and other institutions that require our advice on various policy issues on macro economic policies. We are now

setting up a macro economic committee that is responsible for forecasting trends.

Q: You are also the head of the Investment Authority. Nothing seems to be happening in new private investments?

A: Well, this is a long-term objective. I would insist that during the past three or four years, the environment for private investors has improved a lot. This has helped in increasing the volume of private investment since 1995.

Our continued talks and meetings with Yemeni emigrants fall within this effort. Yemenis abroad have shown more definite interest in investing in their native country. We are also thinking what more to do to attract foreign investments in order to augment domestic private sector involvement in the overall economic activity.

At the level of government investments, the years 1996-97-98 saw an ambitious investment program financed by both domestic resources and foreign aid. For the year of 1999, we have allocated around 33 billion Yemeni rials for new investments. We will exceed this amount by at least 20%, given the flurry of activities.

Q: The private sector complains about smuggling and laxity in enforcement the laws. How can you help?

A: Smuggling is widely spread around the world. No country can claim complete immunity from this problem.

We are trying to deal with this issue through reasonable policies in the form of traffic formula-

tions, as well as re-structuring of customs duties in order to remove incentives for smugglers. I think a lot of things have already been done, though we haven't been able to completely overcome this problem.

This problem not only hurts private industrial investors, it also wipes out part of government income. It also disturbs the correct functioning of the market by introducing price distortions.

The government is trying to come up with policy formulations to combat smuggling.

Q: How much assistance is available for the development process? And what are our main donor partners?

A: Yemen is one of the least developed countries of the world. The per capita GDP is less than one US dollar a day. Therefore, it is eligible for generous aid and credit conditions. Yet, what we receive is a small fraction of what other more developed Third World countries get.

Another problem is that only a few donors engage Yemen. In bilateral assistance, our leading partners are Germany, Japan and the Netherlands. In multilateral assistance, the leading partners are the World Bank, the UNDP, the EU, and UN organizations, and various international bodies. Among regional funds, the main ones are the Islamic Bank, Arab Fund and OPEC Fund.

We are constantly working to expand our cooperation with new donor partners, while at the same time retaining good working relations with our current donors.

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IFES Steps up Support for Yemen's Democratization

International Foundation for Election Systems (IFES) is a non-profit non-governmental organization based in Washington DC. It was created in 1987 for the purpose of providing support to emerging and established democracies worldwide. IFES has worked in over a 100 countries since 1987. Presently, the organization is busy in about 25 emerging democracies worldwide.

Tom Bayer, Director of Programs for Africa and the Near East with IFES, recently visited the country. Hatem Bamehriz of Yemen Times talked to him.

Q: We understand relations between IFES and Yemen go back several years. What is the history of cooperation?

A: Indeed, our cooperation with Yemen goes back to 1993, when IFES first came to assist the Supreme Elections Commission (SEC) in the parliamentary elections held then. The cooperation covered training, development of training materials and the provision of various election commodities.

IFES was active in Yemen once again in 1996, when it sent a small team of regional election specialists who came to assess the pre-election environment in

Yemen and to discuss how IFES could help. In 1997, IFES engaged in on site technical training programs. It sent 66 co-trainers who trained 39,000 Yemeni election supervisors across the country in preparation for the 1997 elections. In 1998, IFES signed a memorandum of understanding with the SEC to develop the first national curriculum on elections administration held in the Arab World. The curriculum was applied in March 1999, in a seminar attended by former election supervisors and members of election committees as well as members of the current SEC.

Q: On Saturday, May 15th, IFES signed a cooperation agreement with the SEC. What is that about?

A: We reached an agreement of cooperation with the SEC in terms of the assistance we will provide leading up to the presidential elections later this year. This is mainly focused on capacity development for the SEC. The declared objective of the State of Yemeni is to have a permanent SEC institution and structure. The agreement also relates to poll-worker training and to some degree voter education, including political parties, government



Tom Bayer, Director of Programs for Africa and the Near East with IFES

officials and the general population. Our work is not limited to the SEC. IFES deals both in the area of technical support to election procedures and processes as well as in the area of general public awareness, not only about elections, but also about good governance, democratization, accountability, rule of law and civil society.

We try to inform as many people as possible, and to give as many people as possible access to information about the election system. It doesn't stop at knowing how to vote, but also what it is they are voting for, and why they are voting.

Q: Are you going to expand your assistance to cover general public awareness programs?

A: The SEC has approached us about helping the department that addresses issues in regard to voter awareness programs and civic education. They have asked us to help them think through some of the challenges, as well as the best ways to reach out to both urban and rural populations. We think we can be of assistance in this regard.

One of the fundamental elements of our work is to incorporate in everything a strong belief and understanding of several key values. Examples include the fact that the vote is an individual right, and that it must be secret. We encourage voters to ask questions of those who are campaigning to find out what it is they are offering, and what sort of solutions they have to the numerous challenges Yemen faces.

Q: Is IFES going to monitor the coming presidential elections?

A: Yes, of course. Our field representative will be here and if it is appropriate and resources allow, we hope that some members of our staff will be here as well. This, of course, depends on the regulations that the SEC establishes regarding who they are inviting as monitors, as well as the qualifications required of observers.

By: Hatem Bamehriz
Yemen Times

ANNOUNCEMENT

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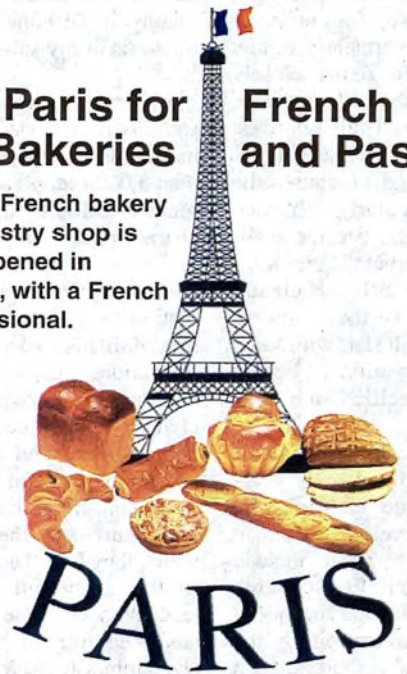
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Telephone 231733; Fax 231530

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- Agricultural water use surveys
- Urban water use surveys
- Community/stakeholders participation studies
- Exploratory drilling and aquifer testing

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This is an OPINION page.

Every week, a different intellectual writes a FOCUS on a pertinent issue!

Ideas for the 1st Conference for Emigrants

Adnan Saif
Birmingham, England

Reading recently in Yemen Times about the debates that took place in the Consultative Council on Yemeni emigrants, and the forthcoming First Conference for Yemeni Emigrants, triggered me to put on paper the thoughts that are going through my mind.

As a British Yemeni, the mere mention of Yemen raises all sorts of emotions in me. Although my last visit to Yemen was ten years ago, and my comments might seem to be those of an observer from afar, I nevertheless follow all the events in Yemen closely through a number of channels, including letters from relatives, discussions with visiting friends and relatives and of course the media, particularly Yemen Times, since it has become available on the internet. Therefore, I believe I am still sufficiently informed to make the following comments. I shall start with some general observations, before dealing with specific issues

Firstly, it is widely acknowledged that the last twenty years have seen some of the most important developments in Yemen's history. These include the re-unification of the country, some democratization and modest progress in exploiting the country's natural resources. I am not attempting to downplay the disasters of the armed conflicts of the early eighties, nor the civil war of 1994, but the fact that these events have largely been overcome to the long term benefit of Yemen is in itself testimony to the generally positive trend in the country's development.

Secondly, living in a country like the U.K. gives me the ability to view and compare developments in many other less developed countries like Yemen, largely due to the wealth of information available here. I couldn't fail to note that potentially the most significant asset that Yemen possessed over this period has been in the person of President Ali Abdullah Saleh. He has demonstrated admirable capabilities in managing a historically challenging country, in a troubled region and in an exceptionally troubled period in world history, i.e., the Cold War, then the New World Order, etc.

Thirdly, in relation to Yemeni emigrants, and having read the various points and suggestions made in the debates of the Consultative Council, I would humbly suggest that although the participants might be well intentioned, some of the papers presented contain proposals which indicate that their authors live in a dream world.

My final general observation is based on first hand experiences that I personally had with the Yemeni authorities in the shape of Yemeni institutions dealing with Yemenis abroad, and the experiences of relatives and friends who either live in Yemen or are fortunate enough to be more frequent visitors to the home country than my self. Put simply, the relationship between the state and its organs on the one

hand and the citizens on the other seems to be in need of a revolution on a scale not less than that which gave birth to the Republic.

Now, I will go to specifics. Having spent most of my adult life serving the Yemeni community in the city and country where I live, either full-time or in a voluntary capacity, and having witnessed its development since the mid 1970s, I have some first hand experience of the issues that concern most of us. Therefore, in order to articulate these, let me take the case of the Yemeni community in Birmingham, UK, as the basis of my submission.

The City of Birmingham and its suburbs have about 600 Yemeni households, with probably more than 5,000 individuals. The community exhibits the following characteristics:

1. For most of its history, the community has been living a life that is very detached from the rest of British society. Its main institutions, such as the various community associations, have always concerned themselves with Yemeni and Arab issues, and rarely focus on any issues of direct concern to the future of the community or the society in which they live. The main reason for this has been the fact that the leadership of these associations has been from a highly politicized minority, which is strongly allied to one political movement or another back in Yemen, and the influence that such movements have had on the direction taken by the associations.

2. The most effective institutions to serve the community have been the charitable ones, as they tend not to concern themselves with the divisive political issues. In recent years, such charitable institutions have made a marked difference to the life of the community, particularly in relation to the teaching of the Arabic language and Islamic religion to the children of the community.

3. A study of the socio-economic condition of the various British communities will show that the Yemeni community is amongst the most deprived. The reason for this is simple. Most community members came from rural areas in Yemen where illiteracy is high, and went straight into unskilled, low pay jobs in the old British manufacturing industry. So when this industry declined, they were left without jobs and had no basic education to fall back on. This led to Yemeni families remaining in poor areas of the inner-city where, for example, the educational provision in local schools which their children attend, is also poor by comparison to the national average. This is particularly troubling when you consider that 50% of the community is under the age of 16 years!

4. To add to the social isolation of the community, it is extremely painful to observe the dominance of what I can only describe as 'qat culture'. Whichever city or town you visit in Britain, where members of the Yemeni community have settled, you find this sad culture pervasive. I describe this 'qat culture' as 'painful' and 'sad' because I believe it is costing the community and Yemen a high price. For, instead of using their spare time to make use of

the excellent opportunities for self-development in the many educational and training institutions, members of the community - especially the young - spend their time chewing qat. Also, instead of saving the little money they have to improve theirs and their families' standard of living or invest in their children's future, the money goes for qat! 5. The structure and age profile of the community has also changed.

Whilst until the early eighties the community was made up largely of men who left their families back in Yemen, for more than a decade now the community is made up of family units, and increasingly, you find three generations of one family settled in Britain. Another alarming trend relates to those who have reached retirement age. Instead of spending their retirement in Yemen where the cost of living is much lower, many of them now choose to spend their last days in Britain.

6. So far as the younger members of the community are concerned, in a recent straw-poll survey, it was found that there were only about 25 young people who held university degrees from British universities, with a similar number currently in the process of doing so. This is extremely low and less than would be expected in other communities.

7. Working with the local government in a multi-ethnic city, I have come to know many people outside the Yemeni community. One of the most distinguishing characteristics of the Yemenis is their attachment to their home country - Yemen. Even those who were born here and have not had the chance to visit Yemen are attached to and supportive of their country.

The above brief outline of the Yemeni community in Birmingham may not reflect the picture of all emigrant Yemeni communities, and has been deliberately skewed to emphasize the problems and challenges facing Yemenis abroad. For I fear that the potentially unique opportunity of the First Conference for Emigrants, which represents a generous and timely intervention by President Ali Saleh and the Minister for Immigrants, will be filled with rhetoric and lofty promises from participants who are far removed from the reality of everyday life experienced by emigrants.

I would therefore take this opportunity to give three examples of the type of contact that emigrants have with the Yemeni authorities. These examples are of real life stories that I personally have witnessed, or received direct account of from the people concerned.

On one occasion I happened to be in Gatwick Airport, near London, receiving some friends. I came across a Yemeni family of seven: father, mother, three sons, a daughter and a grandson, who were stranded in the airport in great distress. As I knew the family from Birmingham I tried to find out what had happened to them only to find that the trip of a lifetime which they thought they were about to start has just been abruptly and cruelly can-

celled by the officials of Yemenia in the airport. The family planned their trip for months, having booked and confirmed their booking they arrived to the check-in desk at the airport where the English lady working at the counter processed their tickets, passports and luggage in the normal way, as all their papers were in order. Some time later, the senior Yemeni official responsible located the family, brought back their luggage and gave them back their tickets and simply told them their booking was not in order! The family was absolutely shattered, they did not know what to do or who to turn to. Having saved enough money for the trip, and placed two of their children who were severely physically handicapped in care while they were going to be in Yemen, and planning to arrive to Sana'a in time for the wedding of one of their relatives, they were devastated. The Yemenia official cancelled their trip seemingly without any feeling. After decades away from Yemen, this was their first encounter with Yemeni officialdom.

Trying to find out why the Yemenia official cancelled their booking when every thing was in order, I found out that the true story was that he had received a request from a group of high ranking Yemeni officials wishing to board the same flight in Rome or Cyprus, and they did not have a booking at all. The official's response was to pick on the weak and vulnerable, and simply cancel their trip. After numerous telephone calls and interventions I managed to get the female members of the family on the flight while the father and his sons had to return to Birmingham and take the next flight.

Real life story number two relates to another member of the community who decided to move his family back to Yemen. Before he did, he bought a piece of land in Sana'a in order to build a house for the family. Most readers who know about land deals in Sana'a will know what happened next. Having paid the money, and got the paperwork done he traveled to Yemen to arrange for the building work. No sooner had he arrived, than some high-ranking official claimed the land was his and the sale was false. Years later, having worked and spent all the money he had saved to build the house to no avail, the man returned sick and died months after arrival in Britain. No member of his family is now thinking of going back to visit Yemen, let alone settle in Yemen.

Story number three: A family saves enough money to travel to Yemen and spend a year to get the children to know the country and their relatives. Having arrived in Taiz, the family stayed in the house they had already bought. The first problem they encountered was the lack of space for their children in the local schools. The second problem came when the younger children contracted malaria, and they could not find any reasonable attention from the local doctors and hospitals. Basic facilities were also lacking. For example, water was rationed, and they could only receive it for so many hours a week. They cut their visit short and returned to Britain.

Last but not least, a very common problem encountered by British Yemenis and probably Yemeni emigrants elsewhere,

particularly it seems when dealing with British embassy staff in Sana'a, relates to the recognition of documents issued by Yemeni authorities. For whatever reason, these documents do not seem to be credible any longer. So you can imagine what it is like when, for example, a woman tries to prove she is the wife of her deceased Yemeni husband who worked all his life in Britain. How can the woman prove she is the legal wife of the deceased? There appears to have been many such cases, where such women have not been able to claim their pensions because the documents used as proof of the marriage do not carry any credibility with the British authorities. Such UK authorities might have a valid reason to be skeptical, but surely there is a role for the Yemeni authorities to restore credibility in their systems, procedures and documents.

For me it will be a sad day if the agenda for the First Conference for Emigrants becomes dominated by talks about nationality laws and passports, and allowing the children of emigrants to study in Yemeni schools for free, or focus on attracting investment to the country, and avoids discussing the more basic needs of the vast majority of Yemeni emigrants. This, together with the cases I have outlined above, leads me to put forward the following:

1. President Ali Abdullah Saleh, the Minister for Emigrants, and other senior politicians have already acknowledged that Yemeni Emigrants have always given Yemen more than they have asked of it. The least then that emigrants can expect in return is that the 'contact authorities' such as officials of the state airline - Yemenia, staff of Yemeni embassies, and other officials at ports of entry treat their needs with respect and professionalism. Ensuring that people are appointed to these posts are the right people can do this.

2. Ambassadors in particular, and embassy staff generally, need to realize that British Yemenis, American Yemenis and all other Yemenis abroad potentially represent a strategic depth for Yemen which needs to be realized. Lobbying on behalf of Yemen, in Britain, for example, is perfectly legal and the Yemeni community can play a role in strengthening Yemeni-British relations. However, instead of promoting unity and acting impartially, sadly we often see embassy staff importing and planting Yemeni party-politics among the Yemenis to the detriment of the community.

3. The outline of the Yemeni community in Birmingham clearly indicates that Yemeni communities abroad, if they are to do anything to end isolation in their host societies, need Yemen to stop exporting problems to them, such as qat and meaningless party-politics. Good institutions serving the Yemeni emigrants need to be supported and encouraged, not ignored or sidelined.

4. Senior Yemeni politicians and officials will no doubt come across a lot of emotional outbursts from delegates to this conference. My advice would be not to rush into making resolutions and agreeing to programs that are not based on sound study of the problems raised, and will only serve to further erode the credibility of the authorities concerned in the long run.

5. Many of the problems encountered by Yemeni emigrants when dealing with Yemeni authorities, in Yemen or outside Yemen, are often extremely harmful because emigrants find it difficult to deal with Yemeni bureaucracy, which I am told is unique in the world. Can I suggest therefore that, as a first practical sign of acknowledging the role of Yemeni emigrants in Yemen's development, the Ministry of Emigrants becomes not just an agency of the government, but the 'champion' of the Yemeni emigrant? Making the channel of communication between the Ministry and every emigrant as direct as possible can start with this. An internet site and an e-mail address are also possibilities.

6. In Britain, there is debate which has been going on for a long time, about how communities who have recently settled in Britain should integrate into British society. However, it seems such a debate is increasingly pointless, because many second and third generations of such communities see themselves as British first, and Yemeni or Pakistani or Indian second. This is the reality of our communities. In the words of an American Yemeni, who wrote on the Yemenis Abroad Web Page at www.yementimes.com/yemenis.htm, 'But you, old country (i.e., Yemen), if you want us, you must make us feel welcome'.

What I mentioned above can go a long way to making Yemeni emigrants feel welcome in their homeland.

7. Another area for consideration relates to the credibility of the public records, archives and systems for documentation. Many Yemenis in Britain are losing out because they rely on documents issued in Yemen, such as marriage certificates, birth certificates, etc. which are increasingly losing their credibility here. Therefore, one of the greatest services that can be provided to Yemeni emigrants is the review of such systems and the establishment of a central unit to restore credibility to these important documents.

8. My last suggestion is that when accountability, security and justice are established in any society, it does not need to give special attention to any of its citizens, because each one of them should be equal under the law. Given that President Ali Abdullah Saleh has accomplished a great deal for Yemen, he must protect those achievements by devoting increasing attention to these basic building blocks of a civilized society. Only then will all Yemenis, emigrants or otherwise, feel able to give their best to ensure Yemen's prosperity. Should the President decide to embark on such a revolution, he will find me, and every Yemeni emigrant, as supportive as our fathers were when the September and October Revolutions took place.

Finally, some people reading this might think it is unnecessary criticism. My reply would be to quote from Albert Camus' 'Letters to a German Friend' when he said: "To criticize one's country is to do it a service and pay it a compliment. It is a service because it may spur the country to do better than it is doing, it is a compliment because it evidences a belief that it can do better than it is doing."

“Water conservation calls must be directed to farmers, not to households.”

Last week, the Ministry of Electricity and Water, GAREW, the Technical Secretariat for Water Supply & Sanitation, the World Bank and the UNDP organized a workshop on national rural water supply and sanitation program in Yemen. Hatem Bamehriz of Yemen Times spoke to Dr. Robert Boydell, and Mr. Robert Mertz, of the WB and Mr. Anwar Sahooley of the Technical Secretariat.

Q: What is the DRA?

A: DRA stands for the Demand Responsive Approach. In the past, the government used to go to villages and say this is the system that we will give you and this is the water supply that you should have. The villagers didn't have the means to support such a system. As a result, it often broke down. Now, the villagers themselves will be the owners of the system. The project has a certain criteria, which the villagers have to meet. One of the eligibility criteria is the village's willingness to pay the full costs for operation and maintenance and perhaps to contribute a small part to the investment cost. Another criterion is willingness to manage the system after installation. Thus, the DRA makes the community more involved in the project.



Q: Given the worry about water scarcity in the country, there are calls for people to conserve water use, especially in rural areas. What do you think?

A: Indeed, Yemen is a nation lacking in water. But, the people we are asking to conserve water may not be the right ones. Rural areas, where an individual consumes an average of not more than 10 liters a day, and where water is used for domestic purposes, is not the place to go for conservation. Personal water consumption is probably only 5 to 10% of all water used.

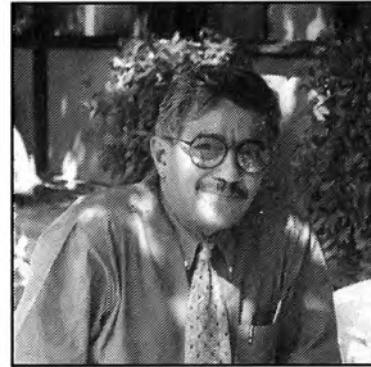
If we talk about water management, we have to address agricultural use of water. If we introduce more efficient irrigation systems, I think we can do with half the water we now use. For example, rather than flood irrigation, we

can use more efficient ways.

There is another reason why rural households cannot consume less water. Only 20% of rural people have access to piped water. Therefore, this project is actually trying to increase access to safe drinking water in rural areas. Going back to your question, it is not a question of better management of water at the household level. We cannot ask those people who don't have access to water to conserve it.

Q: But there is a lot of talk about conserving water?

A: I think there is a confusion in that the whole country is talking about water saving and water conservation. That is very good and we are supporting that, especially in urban areas. But we have always emphasized that water saving should start with the biggest consumer - agriculture.



abuse water use is because of distorted cost structures. Water should be priced in an optimal way so that people don't abuse it.

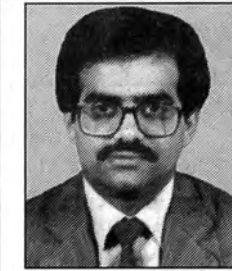
Q: How can ordinary villagers be sure there is no overpricing?

A: If you are talking about a village project, you can look for elements that can lead to overcharging, such as corruption. Another dimension to the cost

aspect is to make sure that people don't give you the wrong equipment. Therefore, villagers have to be very careful about how the equipment is procured and how the project is implemented. The worry of project over-pricing is legitimate.

Q: How many organizations and agencies are involved in these project?

A: There are many agencies involved in this project, the World Bank, UNDP, CARE, the Ministry of Electricity and Water, the Technical Secretariat of GTZ. This project is now managed by NOWRA and the National Water Resource Authority.



Gulf Air Manager Appointed

Gulf Air has appointed Mr. Jawad Abdul Ghani Mohammed, a Bahraini national, as its new Area Manager of Yemen. He succeeds Abdul Razaq Al-Raisi who has been posted to Bahrain Headquarters.

Mr. Jawad Abdul Ghani joined Gulf Air in 1978 and held different positions at Head Office. He had served as Area Manager of Sri Lanka and The Maldives. This is his second overseas posting in his 22 years of Gulf Air service.

Mr. Jawad. A. Ghani is married and has three daughters. He is a keen sportsman and is looking forward to serve the people of Yemen and build a good and a healthy relationship.

He can be contacted at the following telephone numbers:

TEL. 0967-1-248105; FAX: 0967-1-269120

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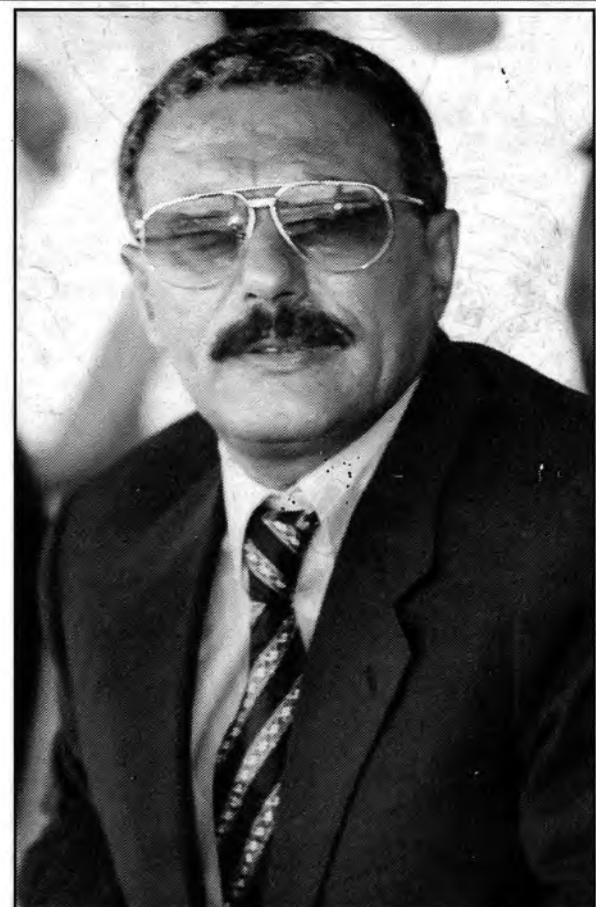
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“Yemen has a wide variety of endemic plants and herbs which have medicinal properties.”

In recent years, the world has increasingly returned to the use of plants in medicinal use. Yemen has a large variety of medical herbs, which occupy a large size of the land, they grow all over the country.

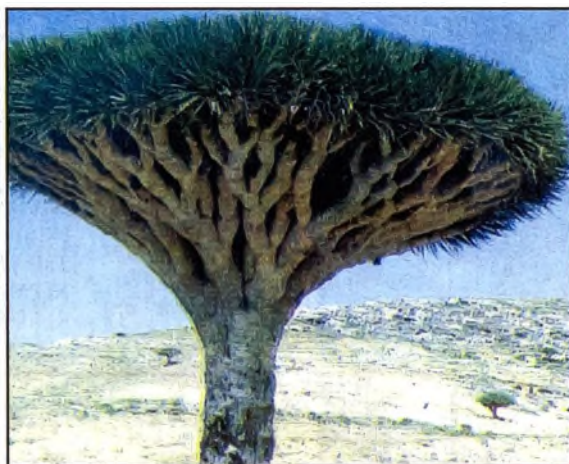
Socotra is one of the best environment where many medical herbs grow, for this reason the Island is known as the medical plants Island.

This Island is distinguished by its unique collection of plants and medical herbs, such as Dragon's Blood tree, Aloe etc. which grow there. Unfortunately this plants had not been studied by scientists in order to make use of them, an intensive and appropriate studies of these plants might influence new medical discoveries.

This unusual wealth must be preserved and developed to a full industry, to be able to manufacture medicines of high quality and export them to save the hard currency, and to provide the Socotra people with more employment opportunities.

Socotra Island

Socotra Island is filled with plen-



Lets have a look at some of these significant plants. Dragon's Blood Tree or Dracaeba Cinnabari Balf is a 3 meters high perennial tree. Roots and twigs of this tree are thick and twofold. Sharp and sword like leaves grow at the end of the twigs. The tree flowers grow in clusters also at the

ty of medical plants e. g. Dragon's Blood tree, Frankincense trees, Socotra Aloe and many other medical trees and plants. These trees and plants have been associated with the Island since ancient times because of their importance. Medical plants cover the biggest part of the Island, some reports indicate that there are about 200 different kind of medical plants. In spite of the lack of medical and pharmaceutical researches, the Island inhabitant of the Island had discovered many medical uses to some of the plants, such as Adenium abesum Roem which is used to reduce the Malaria fever, Jatropha Unicosata Balf, which is used to heal wounds.



end of the twigs. Generally, Dragon's Blood tree takes a shape of an umbrella. Naturally, this tree grows at heights and it is very common at the town of Momi 500 meters above sea level. In fact this tree



is rare and does not exist in any other place in the world. D. Cinnabari, another kind of this tree is common in mountains areas in Louder and Moudiah in Abyan and also on mountains surrounding Mukalla city. Locals in these areas call it the Godfather. Eighty kinds of dragon's blood tree are now known in the world. This tree, with all its different kinds, contain a 'juice of a red

liquid called the dragon's blood. It is this juice that is used for medical purposes especially for colic treatment.

of this plant is the juice of leaves which is used in a number of medical purposes such as constipation, TB, and anemia. It can also be used in healing wounds.



Frankincense

Frankincense or Boswellia Sacra Flueck is a 5 meters high tree with an upstanding trunk or trunks branched from the ground. Twigs are dense and intertwined. Leaves are also twisted with thin crusts. There are five kinds of this tree in Socotra Island. The tree grows in the coastal line and mountains slopes in the Republic of Yemen. Frankincense is used as painting and coating for its instant drying. It is also used in perfumes industry. When boiled in water, it can be in cough and throat inflammation.

By Ismail Al-Ghabiry,
Yemen Times,
Dhamar

Socotra's Aloe.

Aloe, Spp or Aloe Perryi Baker is a plant that has light green thick leaves that grow on a short trunk, the edge of leaves is covered with thorns. There are fifteen kinds of aloe trees in Socotra Island. The medical part

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At the global level, the SDA would promote the implementation of UNCED-related activities, including the Conventions/Protocols on Ozone Layer Depletion, Climate Change, Biodiversity, Desertification, etc. He/She would assist in the preparation of potential national project under the Global Environment Facility.

Qualification and Experience:
The successful candidate should possess an advanced degree at the maximum level of PH.D and minimum master Degree, in environmental studies, ecology or related field. He/She should also have at least 2 years experience in national resource management and related aspects of economic and social development. Ability of writing programme/projects documents and fluency in both writing and spoken English and Arabic is essential.

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Applications should be received not later than 31st may 1999.
Applicants who applied for this post before, need not apply again.
Applications received after this date will not be considered.

A Good President Makes a Good Country

I was watching the president's interview report with the Middle East News Agency, which was broadcasted on Sharja Satellite TV Station a few days ago. The thing that impressed me most was the part in which he expressed his intention to quit chewing qat, and to redirect his energy to computer technology. I was so happy, because he is our role model, and many Yemenis will follow him. I was happy that our president came to realize the dangers of this evil plant which has been devouring our resources and freezing our mental capacities for so long.

He realized that it is time for our country to rise above this daily qat chewing habit, and begin a mission of thorough and intensive reconstruction. Neither the people, nor the president want Yemen to be left behind in this technological era. This is why the president emphasized that catching up with computer technology is an important step that we must take. I had trouble believing my ears when I heard that our president won't be chewing qat any more, but I was happy. It is a courageous commitment.

I know the president will keep his word. I congratulate him from the depths of my heart. To be honest and frank, I did not expect him to address this problem in front of millions of Yemeni qat chewers. It was not an easy task, but he had the courage and vision to do it. He didn't worry about the thousands of qat traders and distribution agents who are benefiting from the destruction of our lives and our country's economy.

I also think that some of the gratitude should go to the Qat Combating Society. Members of this society are the people who started the intensive campaign against qat this year. It is noticeable that many people have started to realize the negative effects of this destructive plant from various public and private media organs, and have stopped chewing it. Their role was really a noble one.

The president's pledge to quit chewing qat not only impressed me, it also impressed millions of other Yemenis who are suffering directly or indirectly from the effects of qat. The president was keen and smart to realize that it was time for a nation famous for its wisdom to seek a way out of this troubling qat habit, and to get rid of it for good. By announcing that he had stopped chewing, the president has given us a great example of a good leader who wants a brighter future for his people.

I thank the president for his decision, and ask him to continue his efforts to discourage the bad habit of chewing qat. Mr. President, the leader of a country is its example for the rest of the nation. Thank you for being a good one.

By: Walid Al-Saqqaf
Yemen Times



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the Consultative Council Headed by Abdulaziz Abdulghani,
and the Yemeni people

on the anniveary of Unity Day, May 22.

Many Happy Returns



Media Specialists & Professionals Call on the State to End Its Monopoly on Radio & TV Stations!

The Republic of Yemen is slowly trying to find its way to a new system - democracy. The regime is constantly torn between those who are comfortable with the old ways and in which they have deep-rooted economic and power interests, and those who call for continued progress in the nation's march forward to join the world community and the 21st century.

One manifestation of this power struggle has to do with freedom of the press and the media.

The Republic of Yemen co-hosted - along with the UN, UNESCO and many local and international media and NGOs, a seminar on "Promoting Independent and Pluralistic Arab Media" in January of 1996. This resulted in the Sanaa Declaration, which called on all member governments of the UNESCO and UN to promote independent and pluralist media, and to allow private ownership of the press, radio and television.

The Sanaa Declaration was later adopted as a binding document of the UNESCO by all member states, including Yemen.

More down three years down the road, the Government of Yemen continues to stall and waver in its commitment.

1. The Yemen Times had applied two years ago to start a small FM radio station in Sanaa. The Minister of Information said he was unable to act on the request as there was no law to offer guidelines to exercise this right. But he has failed to initiate any action to enact such law.

2. In the meanwhile, the College of Journalism at Sanaa University applied to operate a small radio/television station as a training facility to its students. Again it couldn't be done.

3. Several weeks back, the Science and Technology University rector wrote to the minister to request permission to operate a small radio station for the students. Again, the minister simply said there was no law to govern such an activity.

Given the lack of interest on the part of the Minister of Information to promote more independent and pluralist media, especially in the electronic field, Yemen Times called for a brainstorming session to discuss this matter. Professors of journalism, leading media personalities, the President of the Yemeni Journalists Syndicate, several columnists and public figures, as well as the Minister of Information and several of his assistants were invited to a discussion followed by a business lunch - both hosted by Yemen Times. The minister and his team never showed up. Everybody else did.

Ms. Khairiyah Al-Shabibi and Mr. Yasser Mohammed Ahmed of Yemen Times offer below a summary of the important and lively discussions.

Discussant #1:
Dr. Mohammed Abdul-Jabbar Sallam, former Dean of the College, and presently Head of Press Department, College of Journalism, Sanaa University



Let me start with the broad issues. According to the constitution and Yemeni laws, it is the right of the Yemeni people to establish various kinds of media. The right to establish private radio and television stations is especially important in light of the preponderant and one-sided domination of the state radio and television stations by political parties. Moreover, in a society characterized by a high level of illiteracy, the reach of the press can only extend so far.

There are, however, several basic rules and guidelines that need to be in place. Another problem is the mechanisms that are needed to control the electronic media and to verify their contents.

Discussant # 2:
Dr. Mohammed Al-Hoothi, Head of the Radio and TV Department, Journalism College, Sanaa University.



There is need to empower the Yemeni people by allowing them to operate radio and television stations. But, I warn against the possible dangers of this since private radio stations can add fuel to an already flammable situation.

In principle, I support the right of private owners to invest in such projects. In practice, however, we really need very specific and stiff regulations so that this right is not abused. That is why I think we should first start by licensing independent non-political bodies to own/operate radio stations. We also have to enforce national fixed norms and values.

Discussant # 3:
Dr. Ahmed Ba-Sardah, former Dean of Sanaa

University's Journalism College, and Professor at the Science and Technology University.



The world is about to enter the 21st century, and we are as yet unable to allow people to exercise their rights. I do not like the word "control," because guidelines and regulations are intended to enable some people to control others. If some people make mistakes in exercising a certain right, then they should be held liable by law. But we should not use this as an excuse to block people from using their rights.

Actually, private stations will raise the level of service to the public. Competition between state and private stations will bring out the best in both. I say, let us go for it.

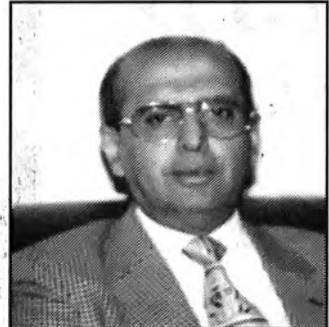
Discussant # 4:
By: Dr. Khaled Al-Hamdani, Dean, College of Journalism, Sanaa University.



The performance of any system really depends on the underlying values. The performance of the media will depend directly on the ethics and values of the people involved with it. Let us look at the values embedded in our society. That is the basis.

One important value I want to single out is tolerance. I believe this is the most important of all values in political exchange.

Discussant # 5:
Prof. Abubakar Al-Qirby, Member of the Political Bureau of the ruling PGC Party, and Member of the Consultative Council.



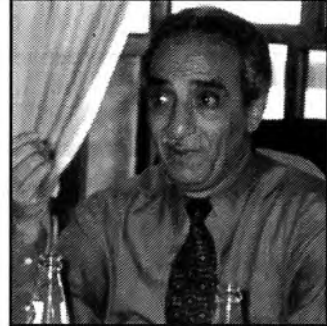
Let us not discuss whether the people have the right to start private radio and television stations or not. This is a given fact. But let us focus on how to go about



this. Specifically, let us address the pros and cons of embarking on it at this time.

The democratization process of our country requires that the momentum continues by opening up more. That is why we need to make more progress in this field. But how to go about it?

Discussant # 6:
Ahmed Al-Kibsi, Diplomat at the Foreign Ministry.



A few years ago, there was a similar debate when the nation was about to license private newspapers. People spoke about the damage such a step will do. Now, we see that things are fine. Similarly, the authorities should go ahead and license privately owned electronic media. I would put two conditions. First we start with radio stations only. Second, people should respect that national fixed norms (Thawabit Wataniyah).

Discussant # 7:
Abdullah Sa'ad, Chief Editor, Al-Wahdah.



I am surprised that some of our academic experts have made themselves into judges to decide whether to allow the people exercise their rights. They say they are worried people will make mistakes. So what? Besides, there are laws to regulate that. I think we have to consider the viability of private radio stations. What is the demand? Who will be tuning in? That is important

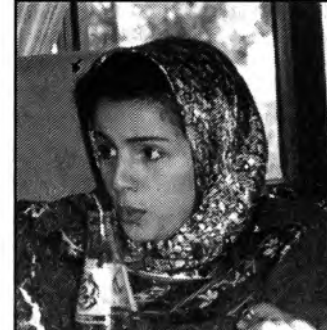
for the success of these projects.

Discussant # 8:
Abdulaziz Sultan, Chief Editor, Al-Wahdawi.



There is a troubling sense of patronage in some of the intervention, especially those representing the establishment. What is the meaning of fixed national norms and sensibilities? Those are not binding factors. The only binding factors are the constitution and laws. Norms should actually change with time.

Discussant # 9:
Rahmah Hujairah, Stringer for Okaz Newspaper.



I basically agree that our people should be able to exercise their right to establish private radio and television stations. But, somehow, I can't help but worry about possible manipulation.

Discussant # 10:
Mina Rad, French Journalist:



I believe that in the beginning, a private radio station should focus on music, sports, and culture. I mean, a deliberate effort must be made to avoid politics in order to pacify the authorities.

Discussant # 11:
Sami Ghalib, Secretary to Al-Wahdawi Newspaper.



I am shocked by the calls I hear from respectable academics to exclude the political parties from enjoying this right (of establishing radio and television stations). Whatever the excuse, it must be understood that it is political parties which are the main driving force behind Yemen's democratization process. Private radio/television stations are a milestone in our transformation.

Discussant # 12:
Nabeel Al-Soufi, Reporter with Al-Sahwa Newspaper, and Stringer for Al-Mustaqilla.



I believe the authorities are reluctant to let go of their monopoly over the radio and television stations. That explains the various excuses put forth to delay or even abrogate the right of our people to own/operate radio and television stations.

Other participants are Dr. Ahmed Aqabat of Sanaa University's Journalism College, Hafez Al-Bukari, Reporter with Okaz newspaper, Mansour Al-Jarady, of Al-Shoura newspaper, Ms. Ahlam Abdul-Raqeeb, Stringer with Saba News Agency, Kaied Yusuf of Al-Jumhuriyah paper, Mohammed Abdul-Rahman of Sanaa Television, Mohammed Al-Yazili, Al-Thawra newspaper, Ahmed Al-Haj, Stringer with AP, Abdul-Karim Ajlan, Reporter with 26th September, and, of course, the Yemen Times team.

Letters to the Editor

Privatization of Communication Sector:
I recently read that our government is discussing the possibility of privatizing the Public Telecommunications Authority. The price it asks for is 100

Million USD. I did not believe it. Until now I did not know if this was true. I am writing this letter to express my disgust. The infrastructure of the telecommunications in our

country will fetch a minimum of a few billion dollars, not millions. So if this news is true, then I think some people in power must be in line to buy it. Nothing else can explain this very cheap price.

In any country that privatization has taken place, it is the non-profitable state companies which are privatized, not the successful ones. Additionally, a part of the company is allocated for ordinary citizens to buy, so that those who rule the country do not carry the whole thing.

Masoud Qabili
masq@ue.eti.pg.gda.pl

Dear Editor,
I'm a Russian journalist who is very interested in your country and follow its events with much interest. I would be very grateful if you could put my name and address on your mailing list and send me a copy of your publication. It is indeed a pleasure for me to receive copies of your prestigious newspaper the Yemen Times which I will keep for future reference and contact. Thank you in advance.

Andy Martynyuk
Moscow, Russian

You got it, friend. You have been added to our complementary list. We are happy that you find the Yemen Times a useful reference.
The Editor

News from Governorates

Taiz:

Taiz Al-Thawra Hospital Robbed

The medical appliances of the department of parturition at the Al-Thawra hospital in Taiz was robbed on Saturday evening, May 1st. Since that date investigations could not reveal any positive result. A lot of question mark are raised regarding the robbery, for the door was not broken. The window, through which the appliances and apparatuses alleged to be stolen, is not broken except for the light iron-made cover that was torn out. This is not the first time for the laboratory was stolen one year back. What is more shocking is the reaction of the administration of the hospital whose reaction was

very negative. Dr. Mohammed Abdulfatah Al-Shami head of the robbed department, Dr. Abdulla Abdulfatah Al-Masani and Dr. Abdulkafi Ghalib Hassan - all working in the department told Yemen times furiously that their department, having around 22 doctors, is now not working due to lack of medical instruments. Yes, 25 days and the department of confinement in this vital hospital is not able to provide its philanthropic service to the public. What a pity? More cynically, "the manager of the hospital told me to seek alternative means in the department of investigation or Health office" Dr. Al-Shami told us.

The doctors of the mentioned department have written an

appeal to the Minister of Health to solve the problem.

Taiz University Curricula Workshop

Organized by Taiz University, a seminar on "Curricula: Reality & Ambition" was held during the 18-19 May. The participants discussed university curricula and ways and means to improve them in the future.

The event was attended by many university professors from different Yemeni universities, who presented 21 papers. Dr. Ali Al-Mikhalfi, Vice Rector for Academic Affairs, chaired the event.

Mohamed Hatem,
Taiz Editor,
Yemen Times

Sanaa:

Minister of Information Sued

Two leading opposition political parties have independently filed law-suits against the minister of information, Mr. Abdul-Rahman Al-Akwa'.

The first case is filed by the Yemeni Congregation for Reform (Islah) because the official state media failed to cover the official deliberations of the Shoura Council of the party during 28/4-1/5/1999, nor did the government media carry the statement issued on 4/5/1999 following the deliberations.

The second case is filed by the Nasserite Unionist Party because the official state media failed to cover the deliberations of the party general convention held during 18-22 May 1999. According to Article (5) of the Constitution, and Article (31) of the Political Parties Law number

66 of 1991, the state organs, notably the government media, are obliged to give equal access and coverage to all political parties and their activities.

The state media basically serves the interests of the ruling party, the PGC.

The West Sanaa Primary Court, where the cases are filed, has asked the minister to respond.

Afra' Zubair Ahmed,
Sanaa.

Al-Maharah:

Elections Committees in Place

The committees and subcommittees in charge of election supervision in Al-Maharah are now in place. Starting from 16th May,

1999, 32 committees (16 male, 16 female committees) in constituency 164, and 28 committees (14 male, 14 female) in constituency 165 have already started their work, according to Mr. Mohammed Ali Yasser, member

of parliament. All political parties, including some independents, are represented in the committees.

Sa'ad Ali Mohsen,
Al-Ghaidha.

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Dr. Abdul-Karim Al-Iryani, Prime Minister and his Government
and the Yemeni people

On 22nd May - anniversary of Yemen's Unity Day.
Many Happy Returns to All



What the Emigrants Say:

During 15-17 May, 1999, the Yemeni Emigrants' First National Conference was held in Sanaa. A total of nearly 300 emigrants from roughly 30 countries participated in the deliberations.

The thrust of the talks were three-fold:

- a- To find solutions to the problems Yemeni emigrants and their families face at the hands of Yemeni bureaucracy when they return;
- b- To help emigrants overcome difficulties which arise from instability or change in their host societies; and
- c- To encourage Yemeni emigrants abroad invest in Yemen and contribute to its development.

At the end of the conference, and once the dust settled, Yemen Times went to some key participants and asked them about their impressions of what was achieved. Ahlam Al-Mutawakkel and Yasser Mohammed report.

1. **Abdullah Bin Hatem**, is a Yemeni originally from Hadrahmaut, now living in Indonesia. He is a businessman.

"The Yemeni exodus to Indonesia dates back to 600 years. The number of emigrants of Yemeni origin in Indonesia today is about to 5.4 million, many of whom had taken part in the liberation of Indonesia from European colonial powers."

Speaking about the conference, Bin Hatem says: "This meeting was a wonderful opportunity to get closely acquainted with Yemen. The stories we have been hearing (about political suppression and discrimination) are quite unreal."

Bin Hatem says he is exploring investment options in Yemen, and will invite and encourage acquaintances and friends in Indonesia, Malaysia and Singapore to invest in Yemen.

"The Yemeni community in Indonesia is split over the formation of a united Yemeni bloc," he laments implying it is one of the results of the political divisions in Yemen.

2. **Hizam Naji** is originally from Ibb governorate. He is the head of the Yemeni community in Buffalo NY, USA. He indicated some 5000



Yemeni emigrants live in Buffalo, NY, USA. "Most of these emigrants originally worked in the steel and auto-

motive industries. The present generation has steadily shifted to independent enterprises, e.g. shops, restaurants, real estate, travel agents, etc.

"Today the Yemeni community in Buffalo plays an important role in all political, social, culture and sport fields. It also keeps a good level of communication with the other Arab and Muslim communities."

He summarized their needs in the following:
a- A fully evolved Islamic School, so they look forward to assistance from the Yemeni government;

b- There is need for a qualified religious scholar or Imam. He asked the Ministry of Emigrants Affairs to carry out regular field visits to encourage emigrants' investment in their homeland, and to develop stronger attachment.

Abdullah A. Al-Baity is originally from Lahej Governorate. He is the Head of the Yemeni Community in Tanzania.

Mr. Al-Baity is very optimistic about the outcome of the conference. "The Tanzanian Government offers all kinds of investment incentives to us. We hope to have the same at home. Our wealth is for our children and our country," he said.

"We strongly protested the complications created over the issuance of IDs and passports. If simple documents like those are not available, then how can we implement investment projects that could help the country. We also require serious guarantees and security for our hard earned income. We don't want to end up in court-rooms and corridors of officials fighting cases," he added.

There are about 70,000 Yemeni emigrants in Tanzania.



Yousuf Ba-Ramazan, from Hadhramaut, now lives in India. He has plans to come and invest in Yemen, "I am thinking of setting up either an ultra-modern university and a hospital."

He says there are more than 200,000 Yemenis living in India. "They work in the government, businesses and various other jobs. The major obstacle we face is the identity documents. We don't have Yemeni ID cards and passports and the authorities have not tried to help us. Now after the Interior Minister promised to



provide ID cards, and solve the emigrants' problems, we can come back to our country and help in building a strong Yemen," he said.

Mohammed Saleh Al-Shibah, is originally from Redaa, Al-Baidha. He is the head of the Yemeni community in Liverpool, Britain.

He summarized the problems they face as follows:

1. We don't have professional teachers for Arabic, and religion.
2. Our children are influenced by Western life style and culture. Some of this is good, but some of it creates a huge gap in the parent-child relationship.
3. The community in general feels that it is neglected by the Yemeni authorities and complicates their lives. For example, emigrants and their families have a hard time getting passports and ID cards, they suffer from unfriendly attitude by the embassy staff, and they lack adequate communication means with the homeland.



Ahmed Bader, is originally from Taiz. He now lives in the United Arab Emirates.

"Yemenis who live in the Emirates enjoy many facilities, that they may not be able to enjoy back home. The UAE gives Yemenis many scholarships in the military colleges and universities. There are complications and favoritism is applying for these scholarships," said Mr. Bader.

"We need a school for our children, and we are ready to build one. We want the Yemeni government to approach the UAE government to sign a protocol so that we can build the school. We also hope that Yemeni regulations will ease our entry to Yemen with our vehicles to visit our relatives and spend the holidays."



Hazzaa Mohammed Baggash, originally from Taiz, now lives in France.

He says, "The Yemeni community here is quite small. We are about 113 families living in different parts of France. Compared with our brethren in Africa or southeast Asia, we really don't have many problems. Our main problem is that we can't travel to the motherland quite often, because of the high expenditures involved, i.e., cost of tickets, specially for big families."



Yemen Times reveals an incredibly inhuman torture story:

"What in the world has gone wrong with our country"?

I felt disgusted and sickened as I sat there listening to the grueling details. In the small courtroom in Al-Mahweet Primary Court, the 4th sitting took place on Thursday, May 20th. The case on trial is of first degree police brutality leading to murder.

Mohammed Al-Kokabani, 19, had been arrested on charges of theft.

Unfortunately for him, the interrogation took a violent twist. All kind of hellish torture was applied to extract a confession to a crime, it turns out, he never committed.

He was beat up ferociously with a cudgel, stripped almost naked and then repeatedly dipped in freezing water late at night, put in solitary confinement in a small, old and dirty room. He was kicked by heavy military boots and forced to suck his own blood. Following one of these late night brutal events, he was left alone to bleed to death. No single evidence was ever found against him.

The above facts were the exact words of a principal witness, Aziz Al-Karn, the head of the Criminal Investigation Office in Al-Taweelah town. A report sub-

mitted by the forensic doctor to the Attorney General states that 146 wounds and other signs of torture were found on the murdered man's body.

The perpetrators of this repulsive crime are ironically the people who are supposed to protect and defend our lives. We have long been taught that police officers are the guardians of law, the servants of the public interest, and offer safe refuge to the oppressed.

They are empowered by the country's laws and constitution to serve society. What's taking place today is just the opposite. There are too many cases of police and military people in Yemen today using the power of the law - and the arms they carry, to blackmail, intimidate, beat up

and even kill civilians. The life, dignity and property of citizens are compromised at the hands of a bunch of monsters.

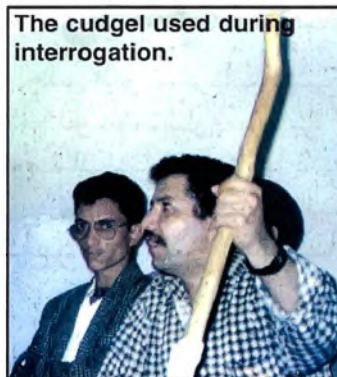
A Common Practice:

Sadly, the case of Mohammed Al-Kokabani is not the only one. Over the last few weeks alone, there are reports of half a dozen civilians murdered at the hands of the police. There is no concern nor accountability.

The problem is growing, and public indignation is growing leading to possible violence, unless police brutality is checked.

Police brutality over petty crimes is a relatively new phenomenon in Yemen's social culture. A few years ago, such a crime would have provoked an uproar from many sectors in society, because our society enjoys a reasonable degree of ethical and religious values. This kind of police brutality is new to us.

Recently, however, many cases of police brutality are being reported while many more go unreported. In fact, there is now fear that this phenomenon might



have become an institutionalized practice.

Police cops and investigation officers take it for granted that torturing suspects to force them confess crimes is okay. Ordinary people are also duped to agree that the police have to be tough to control crimes. That's why there is a fear this phenomenon might have acquired an institutionalized recognition.

To add insult to injury, many of the police and other armed groups in the military institution engage in all kinds of crimes. Part of the reason is that, except for certain "big boys" in the Security Apparatus, many police officers are miserably underpaid. To circumvent this problem, they

are implicated in various crimes. Therefore, reported suspects of robbery are victims of torture inflicted on them by police cops and/or investigation officers to force them confess as to the whereabouts of the stolen goods. Once found, a considerable share of these valuables are looted by the cops themselves.

What Happened?

Major Ali Abdulkarim Shouaibi, Chief of At-Taweelah Security Department and two young soldiers acted under his command, arrested the young Kokabani. On 13th of March, 1999, the officer and his men arrested the young Kokabani. For one week, they worked on him. On Saturday March 20th, he died while in detention. Major Shouaibi took the body to hospital claiming that the boy, who suffering from seizure, fell off and bumped his head against the floor and died. For a few days, the police department did not notify anybody of the death of the young man.

It was first reported by Yemen Times following an appeal to the Human Rights Committee in the Consultative Council by the family of the victim.

Inside the Court:

Through 2 hours of grueling details, Major Ali Shouaibi shockingly exasperated the courtroom with his shameless contempt and indifference to the court proceedings. Though the eyes of the people were focused on him, he showed not even the slightest sign of remorse. It is as if he felt pretty sure that he would get away with the crime he had already confessed to.

Mr. Mohammed Nagi Allaw and Mr. Muqbil Haiderah - both well-known lawyers involved in human rights - volunteered to fight for the victim. They led the effort to hold the officers accountable for the crime.

Three newspapers were present - Yemen Times, Al-Thawri, and Al-Wahdawi. These newspapers, often in trouble with the authorities, now push the campaign to help the victims.

Many so called religious scholars or clerics in the area remain tight-lipped on the issue. Partly, that is because the victim was not a member of any political party. Second, he does not hail from a strong tribe. And third, a lot of people may be afraid to get in trouble with the regime, in general, and the security, in particular. The court scene was quite tense. The next sitting is scheduled for Thursday, 27th May.

A Problem of the System:

The problem grows due to lack of proper technical training, as well as ethical professionalism. Many of the police and investigation departments are poorly equipped with no up to date investigating techniques. No standards are observed or relevant qualification and experience demanded when appointing police officers to head investigation or security departments. In Yemen, nepotism and favoritism are the principal factors. Thus, it is hard to come across clean and honest security or investigation officials. Good and clean cops are often marginalized. Corrupt or morally destitute cops are more visible.

By: Mohammed Abbas, Yemen Times



Introducing Yemeni Women to the World Through the Internet

I want to address an issue that many Yemeni men won't speak about. It is something every new Yemeni bride must contemplate. The adult male Yemeni has huge financial burdens placed upon him to support his family and new bride. So after a long and costly process, he departs Yemen for a place to work. Now more than ever, that place is America. The wife usually is destined to stay in Yemen. And it is a well-known fact that she now acts as a free live in housekeeper and attendant for her new mother-in-law. If by any chance she gets to reside abroad with her new husband, she is destined to a life as a shut in. By the pressures of Yemeni customs she may be bound to stay in Yemen. I am on the other end of that spectrum. I am an American wife of a Yemeni born national. I have lived in Yemen and loved it. But I saw the suffering of a few friends whose husbands were in America. These women aren't stupid, they know the things available for men to do here. I personally have heard from my husband of how his friends drink, go to casinos, go to adult bars, pick up women and so on. They do many things that a Muslim shouldn't even consider. But a man can be weak when pleasurable excess is shoved in his face as it is done in the USA. These men feel that their wives are protected if they stay in Yemen. They feel that America is not safe for a woman or whatever reason they can come up with. I just want to know if Yemen Times has ever done a story on Yemeni women whose husbands were abroad and how or if they have changed in any way? Also I want to hear from foreign wives- especially Americans, of Yemeni men who are residing in Yemen. I do not wish to reside for longer than a year in Yemen at any one time. I like it there, but my main problem is the lack of sanitation control in the streets and the governments seeming lack of interest in the childrens' education. I do not wish to force what people call "western ways of life" onto Yemeni society. Frankly, I do not understand why people think that because I am an American I will try to inject some kind of liberalism or feminism into Yemeni women's minds. I am a Muslim and I am aware of Islamic regulations and Yemeni traditions. Anyway, I wanted to do a photo documentary on the comparisons between urban and rural life for Yemeni women and their family. But many have told me that because of the conservative traditions in Yemeni women lives, what I am wanting to do is almost impossible. Yemen is an interesting country for me and I feel that it will stay in my heart forever. With the use of a photograph-editing program I can and will fuzzle the faces from the women's pictures so that they can remain unknown. I am determined to achieve my goal of doing this and publishing the pictures and information on my personal Internet website. I am not looking for profit or to exploit Yemeni women, but rather to show people that Yemen is a great place with many wonderful customs and traditions exist. There is almost NOTHING published on the Internet about women's life in the Middle East - let alone Yemen. This unfortunately reinforces the western stereotype that Arab women are oppressed and miserable. Some may be and some may not. I think that time has come for me to portray this! This is the first time I have openly discussed this idea with someone other than my mother. I do plan on doing this no matter what kind of resistance I get. I just want to show an aspect of life in the Middle East that is always overlooked. I need to introduce to the world how Yemeni women live and cope. As a western woman married to a Yemeni I can contribute a lot in comparing my experi-

ence to show how Yemeni women, rich and poor, old and young, cope on a daily basis. I may not be a good writer or speller. My love is photography. My tool - trying to use digital cameras in Yemen and along side them still use a regular camera. If I can

receive permission- I want to use the new digital cameras that allow you to capture actual live clips. This way I can add video snippets to the page to show things that pictures just can't show. I am sorry if I rambled on and on. I just wanted to get that out. So as far as the western women in Yemen are concerned, I would like more information on how they live and cope in their life struggle. By the way- has the Yemen times tried the technology of adding video or audio clips to their site?

Windows Net Show, Real Networks Audio and Video Player and other similar tools let you watch live or recorded movies, shows, commercials, videos, etc. on the net. Everyday we watch Middle East TV channels via the net- live as they are happening, since some satellite dishes cannot get them. Thank you for your time. I will feel no pain if this letter isn't even read. I just needed to voice myself.
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Yemen Press in a Week

Compiled by: Mohammed A. Abbas



Al-Ayyam
Aden 3-Weekly, Independent,
17/5/1999.

A- Front-Page Headlines:

- 1- Attorney General demands closure of Al-Ayyam and punishment of 2 of its editors.
- 2- Dr. Al-Baidhani sends an open letter to President Saleh complaining of slander in the weekly official 26 September newspaper.
- 3- A presidential candidate asks the ruling party, the PGC, to help him secure 10% of the parliamentary vote.
- 5- Citizens in Shabwah Governorate refuse to cooperate with election committees.
- 6- Bandits seize a car from the tax office in Hawrah, Hadhramaut.
- 7- The Yemeni government finally grants Yemeni emigrants the right to vote.

B- The Issue's Editorial

Though we inherently support democracy as an inevitable system for us, the manifestations of this human ideal comes in people's behavior through a number of practices. First among these is equality among citizens. Absence of such equality disturbs the peace of every one in this country. As John Locke, a great English 16th century philosopher, says "When the law is not in force, despotism reigns." In fact, there is fear that in our case, despotism has become a chronic disease as the law has no force. Anyone who keeps track of the alarming events occurring in our country will find that the law-breakers are powerful groups both in and out of the government.

While we are unfamiliar with the real aims of such groups, we are unable to stand in their way, for fear of the power which they derive from their connection with the government.

Internecine fighting, tribal confrontations, and other forms of violence regularly take place in many parts of Yemen. The inability of the state to put an end to all this is the hardest for our citizen to comprehend. Therefore, we believe that these burning issues will be among the top priorities in the campaign agenda of President Saleh. As the most important candidate in the race, President Saleh is the most qualified to win the race for social and political considerations.

The 20 years of experience of President Saleh in leading one of the most unruly countries in the region, and his greatest achievement in re-unifying the country, make us hope that the new presidential term of president Ali Abdullah Saleh will begin with addressing the problems of law-breaking committed by certain powerful groups which we

believe are the source of all evil in Yemen.



Al-Shoura
Sanaa Weekly, Mouthpiece of
Federation of People's Forces.
16/5/1999.

A- Front-Page Headlines

- 1- The FPF Secretary General receives a cable of thanks from US President Bill Clinton for the FPF's support of NATO's strikes on Serbia.
- 2- Mr. Abdulbari Tahir, chairman of the former Journalists Syndicate, attacks the official authorities for "semi-daily harassment against freedom of the press".
- 3- Reports of financial abuse in the Ministry of Health.
- 4- Yemeni emigrants urge the government to discuss issues of security and protection of their properties.
- 5- The government has given consent to birth control proposals submitted by the UN Population Fund.
- 6- International Guarantees are necessary for insurance of emigrants' investments in Yemen.

B- Issue's Editorial

The effort of the Ministry of Emigrants Affairs in organizing the First Emigrants Conference is a positive step in the right direction, even though it reflects the slow growth of the Yemeni government's awareness of the Yemeni Diaspora. Also, the timing of the conference is very smart for two significant considerations: First, it comes concomitantly with the country's celebration of the 9th anniversary of Yemen's Re-unification. Surely, this everlasting anniversary inspires every Yemeni, inside or outside Yemen of the necessity to enhance his/her ties with the Homeland. Second, the event comes in the year 1999, which is an unusual year, as Yemen will experience the first presidential elections. Therefore, President's Saleh can use this event as a great achievement to be added to his candidature assets.

However, the objectives of the conference should not be restricted to the above considerations. Efforts should be focused to encourage the Yemeni emigrants to invest in their country. Before that, the government should strive to create a safe environment for the possible investors as we are familiar with the wobbly economic, political and security situations that dishearten capitalists to take the risks in investing in Yemen. Till that happens, we suggest that the Yemeni government should seek the assistance of the International Monetary Institutions to provide the Yemeni emigrants with guarantees that would reduce possible risks and end their apprehen-

sion. Given the good relations between Yemen and the World Monetary Institutions, it would be judicious to build mutual confidence between the immigrants and their country instead of waiting for the improvement of internal conditions.



Al-Mithaq,
Sanaa Weekly, Mouthpiece of
the People's General
Congress, (PGC),
17/5/1999.

A- Front-Page Headlines

- 1- In his address to representatives of the Yemeni emigrants, the President of the Republic says that "The homeland is the emigrant's safe haven against ups and downs".
- 2- The General Committee of the PGC endorses the organizational documents related to the fourth phase actions.
- 3- The PGC Assistant Secretary General, Mr. Yahya Al-Mutawakil stated that the PGC finished building its organizational institutions on sound democratic foundations.
- 4- The Arab League welcomes the normalization of the Yemeni-Kuwaiti relationships.

B- Issue's Editorial

The remarkable organizational successes the PGC has been able to achieve during the three phases have opened the eyes of many observers inside and outside the PGC to the dynamic democratic processes in the PGC. This new achievement is another clear evidence of the PGC's momentous political presence and its competence in achieving practical steps that can effectively deal with the present and intelligently absorb any possible changes in the future. All this has been done through a genuine commitment to democracy and through devout organizational discipline which is embedded in the PGC. It is for this aspiring spirit that the PGC shall secure its leading place among the political parties. It is also through perpetual self-criticism and assessment that the PGC shall carry on the march towards a better Yemen.



Al-Balagh,
Sanaa Weekly, Independent,
18/5/1999.

A- Front-Page Headlines

- 1- Many people are dismayed by the story that Prince Naseem's recent visit to Yemen has cost the public treasury YR 4.5 Million.
- 2- Abul-Hassan Al-Mehthar puts off retaliation, calls on his sympathizers for restraint.
- 3- The President of the Republic invites lawmakers to enact legislation granting Yemeni emigrants voting

rights.

4- A gang of drug dealers is arrested in the Capital Secretariat.

5- An International Conference for the marketing of the Yemeni oil will be held in London next September.

B- Issue's Editorial

1- Many people in Yemen are often overcome with a feeling of hopelessness and frustration brought about by the state of sluggishness, if not decline, which is common in the government apparatus. This state of sluggishness is a natural outcome of the absence of information and planning or perhaps of the unawareness of the operation of the government offices. The government employees are often unaware of the purpose of their jobs and in many cases they go to their offices only to sign in their names or to take bribes from those who are in need of their services. This problem is even common at high levels. In short, government directors, deputy ministers and perhaps the ministers themselves are moving on the same direction.

So far, we haven't heard that a certain minister has met with the leadership in his ministry in order to design policies or programs. It is hardly possible for anyone to be impeached by the minister for carelessness or job delinquency. The most important issue that's usually attended to with alacrity and hard work is the annual budget in this or that ministry, not for the good of the public, but only to see if they can lay hands on public funds. This is the naked reality of our government apparatus. To admit this fact is the first step to be taken in beginning a serious reform process. Anything short of this step is sure to end with certain failure. Is our respected government listening?

الطريق

Attariq,
Aden Weekly, Independent,
18/5/1999.

Front-Page Headlines

- 1- Three citizens were killed and one other was injured in Al-Haswah, Aden, in a land mine explosion.
- 2- Yemen Socialist Party (YSP) central Committee holds a stormy discussion amid division over presidential elections.
- 3- The President of the Republic gives instructions to reinstate the YSP's buildings and compounds which are not owned by citizens.
- 4- Lawyers volunteer to defend Mr. Ba-Shrahil and Mr. Al-Gharib, editors with the Al-Ayyam newspaper.
- 5- Difficulties in correcting the voters' lists in Ibb governorate.
- 6- Chief Editor of Attariq sends an open letter to the Chairman of the Journalists Syndicate complaining of threats against his paper by the Sanaa Weekly 26 September newspaper, the mouthpiece of the armed forces.
- 7- In Shabwah Governorate, membership in the election committees are sold out in a

number of the governorate constituencies.

8- Citizens in Shabwah announce that they will boycott elections as a protest against the government's broken promises.



Al-Wahdawy,
Sanaa Weekly, Mouthpiece of
The Nasserite Unionist Party,
18/5/1999.

A- Front-Page Headlines.

- 1- Amid gloomy economic situation, the YR rate continues decline, and prices of commodities rise.
- 2- Contrary to the announced policy of the state, the Foreign Minister declares that, when necessary, Yemen shall not reject the presence of US military bases in its territories.
- 3- A number of journalists are suing the new journalists syndicate on the grounds of illegitimacy.
- 4- Emigrants Conference Participants harshly criticize the government's policies.
- 5- Members in Sanaa office of the Attorney General go on strike protesting an assault against their associate.
- 6- In Al-Kawkabani case, Mahweet's Security Director locks up the head of Attawelah investigation Department for cooperating with the Attorney General.

B- Issue's Editorial

This year, the Yemeni people

commemorate the 9th anniversary of the country's re-unification with less content, yet with more pride. However, the great expectations that came along with this extraordinary event have evaporated in our country's complicated reality.

With more pride, because this exceptional dream would not have come true without the costly sacrifices which for long decades had been offered by the leading unionist forces of the people. In that glorious day of May 22nd 1990, the people of Yemen proved that the dream they had been waiting for was more than an illusion or a wild dream. It was right, as seen by the facts of geography and history.

The historically unjustified geographical obstruction that fragmented Yemen before May 1990 had seriously distorted the balance of the National Character and it was only through Unity that this character recovered self-command and confidence. On that memorable day, the whole World witnessed a completely different Yemen coming out from humiliation to embark on shouldering its way with hope towards a promising future. However, if the two political leaderships who signed on the Treaty of Re-unification were unable to live up to the level of this greatest event, and only approached it with the lust of the looters, the ordinary Yemeni who is indeed the real beneficiary of Re-unification has remained firmly devoted to this dream which has restored to him his pride in his country.

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Press Conference with Prince Naseem Hamed

On Monday evening, May 17, Yemen Times organized a press conference for the world champion feather weight boxer Naseem Hamed at the Sheraton Hotel in Sanaa. Prince Naseem was concluding a visit to his country of origin to participate in the first conference held for Yemeni emigrants. The press conference was attended by many journalists from various official and opposition newspapers. Despite the exhaustion that was clearly visible in Naseem's face, he answered all the questions asked by the journalists. They covered various aspects of his future plans and ambitions. Naseem left



Sanaa later the same day. Yemen Times Sports Editor Jamal Al-Awadhi filed the following summary of the press conference.

Q: How well were you received by the Yemeni people?

A: The people received me with extreme happiness when I was going, from the airport to the hotel. I saw the people greeting me and I wished that could stop the car and hug every Yemeni citizen I saw. I was also yearning to

visit my family and loved ones in Yemen.

Q: It has been claimed that your visit to Yemen was conditional. Is this claim true?

A: This is a lie. How could I even think of putting conditions on coming to visit my own family and friends? The way we were invited to participate in the emigrants conference was just like any other invitation sent to any other emigrant family abroad. Contrary to what these people claim, I paid over seven thousand dollars for the tickets and paid one and a half million rials to the participants in the Naseem's Cup match. Where are the conditions that they talk about? I love my country Yemen and my companions in it. I even had to cut short my preparation for my next match to come and participate in the conference here.

Q: What are your plans?

A: Currently I am preparing for my next match, which will be against the Filipino boxer who holds an international title. The match will be held in September, and I will present my next victory to the Yemeni people. I am also planning to create an Arab union for boxing to guide the professional Arab boxers, as well as the talented amateurs, and take care of them so that they can become international champions in the future.

Q: Why did you leave your previous coach and manager?

A: My previous manager and I were not seeing eye to eye on my

share of the revenues from matches, and I was not benefiting very much from each match, but I am benefiting much more since leaving him.

Regarding my previous coach, he wrote a novel in which he wrote about my life without my permission, but we still are good friends. Circumstances caused us to end our partnership.

Q: Has your marriage affected

your performance?
A: No, but it has increased my strength and concentration. As a matter of fact, my marriage is a positive element and my wife is a great woman, and she has presented me the loveliest child (Sami). None of this stops me from working to improve my performance in boxing, in order to prove to every one that I will continue to be the champion for a very long time



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Eritrea	209422
Ethiopia	208833
France	268888
Germany	413180/413174
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Indonesia	414633
Iran	41352/4
Iraq	269571
Italy	269165
Japan	207356/208753
Jordan	413275/6/7
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Kuwait	268879
Lebanon	203959/733
Libya	267636/4
Mauritania	264172
Morocco	247964
Netherlands	264080/78
Oman	208857/4
Pakistan	248813/4
Palestine	264236/66
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Qatar	269654/7
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Somalia	208864
Sudan	247885

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Tunisia	240458/9
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3. International Organization

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BANKS

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National Bank of Yemen	275373
YBRD	271623/4

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Cairo Castle in Taiz: History Falling into Ruin

The greatness and loftiness history grants to any civilization or nation is based on how much heritage and culture it has contributed to the human treasures of culture. That is, the ancient civilization or heritage any society has now is an indication of its deep roots in human history. Yemen is one of these countries which history has gifted a great and rich cultural heritage. Yemenis are blessed by history which has been so generous with them in the sense that they have a lot of lofty heritage and historical monuments towering all over the country which date back thousands of years. But now, they are prone to destruction and disregard due to neglect on the part of the people in authority. One of these is the Cairo Castle in Taiz.

Historically speaking, the Cairo castle is one of the famous historical castles of Yemen. It is said that it was built during the Rasulid state in 1045. It is also said that Abu Al-Futuh Bin Ali, the brother of Al-Mufadal, the ruler of the Rasulid state, lived in the castle. As a matter of fact, there is a suggestion that the castle might have been built in the pre-Islamic era. However, this has to be proved scientifically by doing some excavations.

The castle played a very important role during the Rasulid state as it was used as a shelter during the political disturbances among the ruling family members. Omar

Bin Ali Bin Rasul kept his family in the castle while he stayed at Al-Ganad, the capital of his state. During that time the given name to the castle was Dar Al-Adab or the "House of Art."

History is Falling Down

Mr. Al-Izi Mohammed Mosleh, the director of Heritage Authority, Taiz branch, told Yemen Times: "The nature of the castle's earth is such that it is chalky, which makes the soil solid during the hot season and loose in the rainy one. This brings a lot of salt to the base of the castle, which causes it to gradually erode."

"The highly damaged parts of the castle are estimated at 5300 sq. m. The partially damaged parts amount to roughly 3500 sq. m, and there are many fissure and cracks in it as well. We need around US\$ 1 million to overhaul it." Mr. Al-Izi noted. The state of the castle is inconceivable. Seeing the walls of the castle collapsing stone by stone, one gets very upset and furious to see this historical monument withering



away. What is more saddening is that the people living below the castle have started using the falling stones in building their houses. The falling stones, moreover, endanger the dwellers beneath the castle.

The castle was probably last repaired and revamped during the epoch of the Imam. But, after the 26th September Revolution, the people in charge neglected it completely. Not only that, but it has been used up to now as a military barracks or base. Even now, the soldiers in the castle do not allow anybody to visit it. Most cynically, they refused once to give some students from Aden University, Department of History, access to the castle. The use of the castle for military purpose is entirely pointless. The castle should immediately given to the Heritage Authority of Taiz to take care of: Therefore, we send an SOS call to the bodies concerned to save the castle, for it is heartbreaking to see our history eroding away and we are kept mute, turning a blind eye to it. This is a call waiting for some concrete action!

By: Mohammed Hatem Al-Qadhi
Taiz Office Editor
Yemen Times



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