

Violence continues against Yemeni protesters

By: Shatha Al-Harazi

SANA'A, Apr. 20th — All across Yemen this week, more violence broke out against pro-democracy protesters. Last Wednesday, five protesters were killed in Sana'a and two in Ta'iz when clashes erupted between demonstrators, security forces and pro-government thugs wielding AK-47s.

The Science and Technology Hospital on 60 Meter Road near Sana'a University's Change Square received at least 140 injuries that day. Four of those injured are in critical condition and remain in the hospital's intensive care unit.

Four volunteer female medical students were also arrested by Central Security Forces during the protesters' march up 60 Meter Road.

"We were holding an emergency operation, trying to save the two [protesters] who died last night, but they passed away during the operation," said Dr. Mohammed Al-Obahi, head of the pro-democracy demonstration's field hospital.

"We are experiencing an acute shortage of general supplies, drugs and oxygen. We often have to transfer some cases to the nearby Kuwait hospital for triage," he continued.

The Science and Technology Hospital received most of Wednesday's injuries due to its proximity to the fighting. The protesters began marching from Change Square at 4:00PM, passing Al-Zubeiry Street to 60 Meter Road, near the Ministry of Foreign Affairs.

According to protesters, security forces tried to stop the march in Al-Zubeiry Street, which is where the clashes began. The Yemen Times has also learned that the protesters managed to arrest Colonel Genera, the leader of the security forces who gave the final order to attack. Seven pro-government thugs were also arrested by the protesters' security committee.

security committee.

"We seized their weapons and the rocks that they intended to throw at us, and we will turn them over to the prosecutor's office," said Salem Alaw, a member of the National Organization for the Defense of Rights and Freedoms.

According to the revolutionary media committee, one soldier was injured in the clashes and four volunteer female medical students rushed to treat his injuries. However, when they found the injured man, more soldiers rushed towards the women and arrested them.

Regarding the four arrested women, Walid Al-Amari, the protester responsible for managing Change Square's main stage, said, "We gave an address on the Square's stage that was broadcast to all of the other squares in the country, demanding their [the women's] release. Otherwise, we will escalate."

At the same time, Ahmed Al-Sofi, President Saleh's information secretary, told the Yemen Times that not a single bullet was shot by the armed forces and that the Joint Meeting Parties (JMP) should be held responsible for the killed protesters.

"All the gunfire came from the roof of the Saba phone company and from Asr mosque," said Al-Sofi. "There are eyewitnesses who have confirmed that the armed forces didn't use any bullets."

Al-Sofi also said that national security was in the street simply to prevent any clashes between pro- and anti-government protesters, as a pro-government march was taking place at the same time.

He alleged that the JMP are responsible for killing the protesters. "They want to depict themselves as martyrs of the revolution," insisted Al-Sofi. "The armed forces did not shed a single drop of blood."

Meanwhile, according to a statement



Doctors reported that 4 people were killed in fighting on Wednesday in Sana'a as the Change Square field hospital was completely overwhelmed.

made by the Committee to Protect Journalists (CPJ), reporter Ahmed Al-Mohamedi was kidnapped by the Republican Guard last Saturday. Al-Mohamedi works for the Suhil opposition news channel, which has been actively covering events at Change Square.

According to the CPJ, Al-Mohamedi received a phone call on Saturday evening from the Office of the Republican Guard, summoning him to appear for questioning. Since then, he has disappeared.

According to Al-Mohamedi's brother, the journalist had already been contacted on Thursday by two officers of the Republican Guard who asked him to resign from his post at the news station and work as a government informant. Al-Mohamedi declined.

The CPJ called upon Yemeni authorities to reveal Al-Mohamedi's whereabouts.

Journalists have faced increasing levels of persecution over the course of the Yemeni crisis. On Saturday, security forces beat four freelance journalists who write for the independent weekly Al-Nidaa and the state-owned Al-Thawra.

According to the CPJ, Hamood Al-Hasimi, a journalist working for the independent daily Al-Oula, was beaten by a group of unidentified men while covering Friday's pro-democracy protests in Taiz. Shortly before the attack, he received an anonymous phone call ordering him to stop his coverage and to leave the scene immediately.

Also on Friday, security forces seized a shipment of independent daily newspapers that included Akhbar, Al-Yawm, Al-Oula and Al-Shari. According to the Yemeni Journalists Syndicate, the seizure took place at a checkpoint in the southern governorate of Hodeida. The driver transporting the newspapers was beaten.

"We call upon the Yemeni authorities to bring an immediate end to all forms of violence against the media, as well as to lift censorship," said the CPJ.

She also said that, "The members of the Security Council had a discussion that was worth it," without offering any further details.

Rice said that the Security Council has expressed support for the mediation initiative of the GCC and has charged the Gulf organization with finding a solution to the crisis in Yemen.

Peter Wittig, German Ambassador to the UN, said, "We expressed our concern about the deteriorating situation in Yemen and we called for restraint and dialogue."

However, Wittig did not specify whether this was the position of Germany or of the Security Council.

In addition to hearing the joint German-Lebanese proposal regarding Yemen, the Security Council was briefed by UN political chief Lynn Pascoe and senior UN official Jamal Benomar. Benomar recently visited Yemen as an envoy of UN Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon.

"A statement could be issued later this week, when instructions are received from governments," the diplomats said.

GCC talks with government delegation flop, UN Security Council fails to issue resolution

By: Mohammad bin Sallam

SANA'A, Apr. 20th — Dr. Ahmed bin Dagher, official spokesman of the Yemeni government's delegation to the Abu Dhabi talks on Yemen, told the Al-Arabia channel early Wednesday that the government is profoundly worried about political escalation. He asserted that although the meeting had not generated a prompt solution to Yemen's current crisis, all parties had agreed to reconvene soon.

The aforementioned meeting was held on Tuesday evening, between Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC) foreign ministers and a 13-member Yemeni

government delegation headed by Dr. Abdul Karim Al-Iriani, President Ali Abdullah Saleh's political advisor. It was intended to conclude talks on the initiative launched by the GCC to solve the current political crisis in Yemen. A similar meeting was held two days earlier, with representatives from the Yemeni opposition.

The GCC has announced that it would continue its mediation efforts to break the political stalemate in Sana'a, despite the Yemeni regime's lukewarm response.

While both government and opposition delegations continue to travel to the GCC states, Mr. Tariq Al-Shami, head

of the information division of the General People's Congress (GPC), said that the Yemeni government will continue to insist that power be transferred in a way that is "constitutionally legitimate". He told the BBC on Tuesday that, "Yemen has a constitution that governs it and that has been approved by the people."

He added that the government "...declines any coup against the constitution or for the minority to impose its view."

The same was said by Abdu Al-Janaidi, Deputy Minister of Information to some Arab satellite channels.

This position was interpreted by some observers as a demonstration of resolute persistence by the Saleh regime not to

budge even slightly before the president's term ends in September 2013.

Some experts in Yemeni affairs have suggested that Al-Iriani's delegation to Abu Dhabi issued a counterproposal that would guarantee President Saleh's status through 2013, and that the delegation demanded the official adoption of this new initiative by the GCC.

Against the same backdrop of growing political instability, the UN Security Council in New York City failed during its Tuesday meeting to draft a joint statement on the Yemeni crisis.

According to a report published by the French Press on Wednesday, diplomats simply expressed "worry" about the

bloody crackdowns conducted by the Saleh regime against pro-democracy protesters.

Diplomats were also quoted as having said that Germany and Lebanon, both non-permanent members of the Security Council, proposed the drafting of an official UN statement on the Yemeni crisis. However, the proposal was blocked by Russian and Chinese representatives, who justified their objection by saying that they had to consult with their governments before taking any major action.

"There were calls for restraint and we heard some disturbing reports on Yemen," said Susan Rice, the US Am-

bassador to the UN.

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Blocking of 70 Meters Road causes traffic chaos in Sana'a

By: Ali Saeed

SANA'A, Apr. 20 — Al-Sabeen or 70 Meters Road in the capital Sana'a is usually a vital passage for easing traffic congestion in the city. It's recent blocking has created a major impasse worsening traffic in most of the streets of Sana'a, according to locals and traffic officers.

In front of Al-Sabeen Public Garden, just a few meters out of Al-Sabeen Square, you see vehicles of all models and years accumulating in a massive traffic jam that allows no space even for pedestrians. Several times you see vehicles drive onto the pavement and around the central security forces that have tightened security around the protest camp in the square.

The square was blocked to traffic on March 21st, the day Major General Ali Mohsen Al-Ahmar announced his "support of the peaceful youth protests," demanding an end to President Saleh's 33-year rule.

Traffic from the Shumaila neighborhood and surrounding areas have been moved from using 70 Meter Road to using 45 Meter Road. Any traffic coming from areas south of Al-Sabeen should follow this new route.

The same thing applies to any traffic coming from areas north of 70 Meter Road. It should now go through Hadda St. or cross 45 Meter Road.

This shift of traffic onto 45 Meter Road has made the intersection outside Remas restaurant extremely overcrowded. The congestion has only been made worse by customers of the restaurant and families going to the KFC restaurant parking their cars in the intersection.

"The crowding of the traffic here is because of Al-Sabeen closing down,"



Remas Intersection opposite the camp of the central security forces became overloaded with the traffic due to the closure of the 70-meter road which has been a vital vital for the traffic in Sana'a city.

said Taha Al-Turki, a traffic officer who was standing with his co-workers at Remas intersection.

He added that the parking of cars close to the intersection for people who come to eat at the nearby restaurants, and people driving irregularly without regard to traffic instructions, have made the traffic at the intersection even worse.

The traffic is especially bad during the rush hours around noon and between 4pm and 10pm, according to the traffic officer.

A mini bus driver who refused to give his name said: "The closing down of 70 Meter Road has really affected my work, especially during rush hours. Sometimes I spend half an hour just to cross the Remas intersection."

And it is not only the closing of 70 Meter Road that is causing traffic chaos. Roads have been closed around Sana'a

University which has been occupied by pro-democracy protesters for more than two months, and roads around Al-Tahrir Square which has been occupied by pro-Saleh supporters for the same period of time.

With the shortage of cooking gas in Sana'a, locals in several neighborhoods have also recently resorted to blocking roads in protest against the sudden city-wide shortage.

A high ranking traffic officer in the Sana'a traffic department who requested anonymity, told the Yemen Times that "the traffic police around Sana'a try their best to reduce the impact of the road closures. But who can be asked to solve and end the problem? The anti-regime protesters or the Saleh supporters?"

"Everyone is taking matters into their own hands without any respect for the law," he said.

Yemeni tribesmen adopt the values of a peaceful revolution

By: Ali Saeed

SANA'A, Apr. 20 — As the popular nationwide uprising demanding an end to President Saleh's 33-year regime continues, a culture of peaceful struggle has been spreading across much of Yemen, including areas always considered as 'tribal'.

Al-Baida governorate, almost 300km to the south of the capital Sana'a, is a tribal area where most of the population is heavily armed. All kinds of arms and weapons are sold in public markets across the governorate.

However, the wave of peaceful protests spreading across the country has had a marked impact upon the population of around 700,000 in Al-Baida. The tribesmen, who make up the majority of the population, have left their Kalashnikovs aside. They have started protesting peacefully, and are demanding justice and a civil modern state without a call to arms.

"I saw tribesmen coming to the protest square in Al-Baida handing in their guns and Kalashnikovs to the popular security committees around the square, and entering the protest without their weapons," said Ahmed Arman, a lawyer and human rights activist at the National Organization for Defending Rights and Freedom (HOOD), who is from Al-Baida and regularly attends the protests in Al-Baida.

"It is often hard to find a tribesman who hands in his weapon to the state's soldiers. He may fight to prevent that, but now you see a change. They come and hand the weapons in themselves," he explained.

When pro-democracy protesters called for popular civil disobedience across the country on April 13th, Al-Baida was the first to respond. Shop owners as well as other offices closed down for three hours in the city, according to Arman.

According to Majed Karood, a local journalist in Al-Baida, the protesters have maintained their peaceful protest



Population of Al-Baida who are mostly armed tribesmen leave their weapons aside and join pro-democracy protests. Photo by Majed Karood

despite provocative actions taken by the regime in the governorate to induce protesters to use violence.

He explained that on March 3rd, around five protesters were wounded by live ammunition fired at them "by thugs loyal to the ruling party."

There are about 2,000 protesters permanently camped out in Al-Baida. They started setting up their tents on Feb. 27th, and have since swelled in numbers demanding the ouster of President Saleh and his regime, according to Karood.

On April 17th, 20,000 people marched on the streets of Al-Baida condemning Saleh's statement on women participating with pro-democracy protesters. They called for the president to step down.

The president gave a speech in front of his palace to thousands of supporters in Sana'a on April 15th stating that pro-democracy protesters at the University of Sana'a should not allow mixed sex protests. He further went on to say that such mixed protests were "illegal under

Islam."

Protesters in Al-Baida raised placards with phrases such as "Saleh do not speak about women, we will cut out your tongue."

Dr. Mohamed Al-Qadi, a political analyst, said that the regime had tried to play the tribal card and push them towards violence. However, the regime had failed. As this revolution began peacefully, the tribes have kept their peace.

"This is a huge shift in the life of the Yemeni tribesman — to leave his arms and demand his rights peacefully, even if hurt," he said. Al-Qadi said that this has occurred not only in Al-Baida, but across a majority of tribesman nationwide.

"Because they have suffered a lot from injustice, corruption and inflammatory wars among the tribes, they have resorted to peaceful means," he said.

Al-Qadi added that these represented a new set of values among the tribes in Yemen, and should be encouraged and

Cooking gas shortage leads to neighborhood blockade in Sana'a

By: Amira Ali Al-Arasi

SANA'A, Apr. 20 — The unstable political situation in Yemen has been exacerbated by a shortage of cooking gas, which has inspired some citizens to barricade their neighborhoods in protest using their empty gas cylinders.

Mohammed Abdullah, a resident of the Political Zone, said, "I didn't have any cooking gas at home, so my neighbors and I had no choice but to block the road as a means of pressing the government to provide us with more fuel. We succeeded in the end."

Hajj Ahmed Saleh Al-Shami, chief of Al-Mudirah in Mujahid Zone, said that he supervises the equal distribution of gas cylinders amongst households in his quarter. "A few days ago," he said, "a squabble occurred [on account of the gas shortage] and a man fired a few gunshots. Fortunately, no one was injured. The cause of the problem is the number of cylinders that is now being allocated for each quarter. My neighborhood requires 800 cylinders, but we only have 140. I believe that this is a problem that has been created by both the government and the people."

In another neighborhood, Hajj Abdul Wahab Saeed complained that, "I'm jobless and chronically ill. My eldest son is only 20 years old and I live in a rented house. The gas problem has only added to my long list of troubles. I buy all of my meals from restaurants and I borrow money here and there to feed my family. I really don't know what I will do should the situation remain the same."

Mohammed Ghailan, manager of the famous Al-Shaibani restaurant, said that his restaurant needs between 15 and 20 cylinders of gas per day.

"Because cooking gas is now scarce," explained Ghailan, "we've already used up our emergency stock of 10 cylinders."

Ghailan said that his restaurant is now using comparably less efficient kerosene burners to cook food. "This [the inefficiency] leads to delays in filling our cus-

tomers' orders," he lamented. "But this is the only option we have. We just hope that kerosene doesn't disappear from the market as well!"

Nuha Jamal of Aden said that people in her city are now standing in long queues from morning to night, in hope of receiving one cylinder at the regular price of YR 1,100. "However," said Jamal, "if you fail, then you can turn to the black market and buy a cylinder for YR 2,000 or 2,500."

Mohammed Al-Hilali, Director of Operations at the Ministry of Industry and Trade, told the Yemen Times that, "Our role [at the ministry] is to ensure that quantities of gas arrive by coordinating with the gas companies and local councils (the latter are the supervising authorities). We also follow up on violations, instances of commodity monopolies and price hikes. We receive reports from citizens directly [regarding the availability of consumer goods], and the District Attorney and I go to the market ourselves to check the veracity of these reports. As for the number of gas-related complaints I've received thus far, it would be about 130."

Tradition wood-fueled ovens are the best choice for cooking, according to Mohammed Al-Robou'a: "I asked my relatives in Amran to provide me with some wood so as to overcome the problem of the gas shortage. Now the problem is under control."

Mohammed Al-Baswani, the Director of Technical Affairs at the national gas company, informed the Yemen Times that before the current political crisis, a total of 78 trucks were responsible for distributing gas across the all of Yemen's governorates.

"Even at the best of times," said Al-Baswani, "Yemen has been unable to meet the cooking gas needs of all its citizens. In 2008, the government imported 20,000 tons of cooking gas. In 2009 it was 30,000 tons and in 2010 it was 40,000 tons. Now we're importing gas from Saudi Arabia's ARAMCO. The third batch [of 2011] has not yet arrived

because we don't even have the room to store it."

Al-Baswani said that the government is considering importing even larger quantities of cooking gas, should the current situation remain unchanged. "However," he continued, "this would be a dangerous adventure due to the pirates in our territory's waters. They could cost us billions of dollars."

Yet pirates are not the only problem that inhibits the effective distribution of cooking gas in Yemen. According to Al-Baswani, "Two tankers recently arrived in Aden, carrying 400,000 gas cylinders that were supposed to be delivered to all of the country's governorates. But a mistake was made when some of the trucks carrying the cylinders drove through Shabwa, where tribesmen intercepted them and shots were fired. The trucks are still being held by the locals."

As a possible alternative to the Shabwa route, Al-Baswani said that the government began driving the cylinders along the coastal route to Hadramout. But again, the trucks were stopped by local tribesmen and detained for ten days.

Sheikh Naji Al-Iradah of Marib governorate said that, "The tribes of Abieda, Jaza'an, Jihm and Murad have cooperated to prevent trucks from driving between refineries and the Yemen Economic Corporation. We have formed supervisory committees that monitor the trucks' movements and other committees that manage checkpoints along the Marib-Sana'a highway."

Sheikh Al-Iradah explained his tribe's actions in terms of nationalism: "We have done all this so as to prevent Ali Abdullah Saleh, his son and his men from trading the substance [cooking gas] outside of Yemen. We will keep doing this [preventing the movement of gas around the country] until the situation is settled in Sana'a and a new government is established. As for trucks that are owned by citizens, we will never hold these, and if such private merchants are cooperative with the tribes, there will be no problems."



Spontaneous protests often break out while people wait to buy their cooking gas.

According to Sheikh Al-Iradah, "It is the security checkpoints in Sana'a that prevent gas trucks from accessing gas stations. This has resulted in cylinder prices escalating to between YR 2,000 and 3,000, in spite of their ready availability."

Sheikh Al-Iradah also added that the Marib tribes regret that the current crisis caused by the security situation in Yemen has had such a dramatic impact on the economy.

"But this is temporary," he said, "and it will end as soon as the cause is eliminated. As for Shabwa and Hadramout, the situation is under control because three trucks are sent to both of them daily."

With respect to ways that the gas emergency might be alleviated, Sheikh Al-Iradah said that the Marib tribes are ready to guarantee the safe passage of trucks to Sana'a.

He also denied allegations that certain JMP elements are behind the gas problem: "Those who say this are liars," he said, adding that officials have orders from the area's commander, Mohammed Al-Maqdashi, to release the corporations' trucks, but that the locals have not yet allowed this to happen.

According to Salah Mahyoub, Director of Gas at the Marib refinery, "Under normal circumstances, about 84 trucks are filled with gas on a daily basis. But because of acts of banditry, production is down to almost nothing, except for the six trucks that are sent to Shabwa and Hadramout every day."

Mahyoub continued by saying that, "The act of blocking roads for one or two days has always been a problem. But this time, it's different. The problem has been going on for three weeks."

"Two tankers full of gas have been

imported," he said, "to ease problems for the people of Sana'a, Aden and Taiz. [At the same time] we're almost out of work. We're still inside the refineries, [but we cannot do anything] because the people wish to oust the regime."

Professor Salah Al-Maqtari, an economic analyst, thinks that the gas crisis is largely artificial: "It has been caused by the regime, which would like to monopolize the substance so that it can be sold for up to YR 3,000 or 5,000 in some areas. Citizens should begin looking for other solutions — including electric ovens — to solve the problem."

Al-Maqtari asserted that the Marib tribes are civilized and that the regime has been working hard to taint their national image. "These tribes care for the country and its people," said Al-Maqtari, "so they cannot be blamed for the problem."

Al-Hamdi present in Yemen's 2011 revolution

Story and photos by: Ali Saeed

Despite having been murdered in the late 1970s, former President Ibrahim Al-Hamdi is still remembered by all Yemenis as a symbol of good governance and the modern civil state.

At Change Square, opposite Sana'a University, where pro-democracy protesters have spent the past three months demonstrating against the regime of President Ali Abdullah Saleh, Al-Hamdi's photograph can be seen everywhere, as if he were a martyr who sacrificed his life for the prosperity of Yemen.

Mansour Othman, a 42-year old civil engineer who is originally from Taiz, has been camping in front of Sana'a University since the pro-democracy protests began. He told the Yemen Times that when he sees Al-Hamdi's photograph in Change Square, he feels a great deal of grief, "...because this photo reminds us of the prosperity and stability that Yemen experienced when the rule of law was implemented uniformly across all people."

"During Al-Hamdi's rule, we felt safe day and night, and we never experienced price hikes," he said.

Othman explained that all members of his family continue to speak highly of Al-Hamdi's modesty, which was perhaps best exemplified by his open office policy, in which any Yemeni man or woman who wished to speak with him was free to do so.

"He worked hard to bring justice to all citizens," said Othman.

As a gesture of loyalty, Al-Hamdi's photos are still hung on the walls of Othman's house.

Mohammed Qasim Al-Ja'shani is a 65-year old soldier and a member of the Al-Ja'shin tribe. This tribe was forcibly evicted from its ancestral land near Ibb by an influ-



A tent of the coming president at the change square in Sana'a. Protesters say that the coming president of Yemen should be a man who will realize justice and equality under the rule of law for all Yemenis



This is Al-Hamdi's tent at the change square in Sana'a which was built by some volunteering youth as an expression from the youth for their love and appreciation of the former president of Yemen

ential sheikh back in January 2010. As such, Al-Ja'shani has been protesting in Sana'a for more than 16 months. During this time, he has wondered at length about what Al-Hamdi would have done to remedy the current political situation.

"I remember Al-Hamdi well," said Al-Ja'shani. "He was Chief of Staff during the presidency of Abdurrahman Al-Eryani, and when the latter resigned, Al-Hamdi assumed power. At the time, I was fighting in Qataba during the war between the Arab Republic of Yemen in the north and the socialist front of the People's Democratic Republic of Yemen in the south."

"When Al-Hamdi assumed power, he immediately stopped the war and initiated dialogue with the leaders of the south," continued Al-Ja'shani. "So it was actually Al-Hamdi who established the unity of Yemen and

started contacting the leaders of the south."

According to Al-Ja'shani, during the time of Al-Hamdi, Yemen enjoyed its finest period of peace, security and stability.

"All of the problems in the country calmed down during this time, as if evil did not exist in the Universe," he said.

But with Al-Hamdi's murder, Yemen began to suffer from several complicated problems, including a lack of good governance and rising levels of impunity. Years later, these problems have led to a nationwide uprising against President Ali Abdullah Saleh, with pro-democracy protesters demanding his immediate departure and the re-establishment of the modern civil state that was nipped in the bud when Al-Hamdi was killed.

Al-Ja'shani hopes that the present

revolution will finally bring about change after 33 years of what he considers injustice and inequality amongst the Yemeni people.

"This revolution exists to put an end to injustice and corruption," he said.

The Al-Hamdi tent at Change Square

When touring Change Square at Sana'a University, one finds that Al-Hamdi is still strongly present in the memories of all segments of society.

In the middle of the square, one can find the so-called "Al-Hamdi tent", with the former president's photograph emblazoned on its side. It was built by young Al-Hamdi loyalists using their own meager funds.

Amar Zuhra, a computer programmer and one of the youth

who built the Al-Hamdi tent, said that they built the shrine on March 3rd, as "...a simple expression of the youth's love for and loyalty to Al-Hamdi, his good governance in Yemen and the many achievements that he made during the short period before his assassination. He was murdered by unjust hands and his death was the death of the collective Yemeni dream for a state of equality and the rule of law."

A draft of the revolution's demands was formulated inside the tent by the coordinating committee of the revolution, who met on March 15th under the watchful gaze of Al-Hamdi.

A group of young Yemeni programmers are also preparing designs for an interactive website intended to memorialize the "martyr" Al-Hamdi.

Amar Zuhra's uncle was Major

Ali Ganaf Zuhra, the military leader of Al-Hamdi's 7th Armored Division. He disappeared on the same day as Al-Hamdi's assassination and his family still doesn't know what happened to him.

The younger Zuhra urged the international community to "...stand with the Yemeni people, in the interest of regional and international security."

"It is totally wrong to support one person with the purpose of combating terrorism, when that person is the one who is helping terrorism grow and who uses terrorism as a political playing card," Zuhra added.

"Today, the Yemeni people are proving to the world that Yemen is a peaceful nation," he concluded. "They have left their weapons at home and are facing bullets with naked chests."

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Yemen – is this the end game?

By: Abubakr Al-Shamahi

‘Who would be a fool to offer guarantees to a regime that kills peaceful protesters? Our principal demand is that Saleh leaves first.’

That was the reaction of Yemen's opposition coalition to the Gulf Cooperation Council's plan to end the current unrest in Yemen.

The plan talks of passing the President's powers to his deputy, elections to be organised by the opposition but, fundamentally, immunity for the President Ali Abdullah Saleh. It is on this point

that the youth revolutionaries and the opposition coalition will not compromise.

For his part, Ali Saleh and his regime have been 'flip-flopping' in their reaction. On Friday morning Saleh welcomed the proposal. However, during his speech to his supporters before Friday prayers, he rejected the proposal and launched a bizarre attack on Qatar, accusing it of interfering in Yemeni affairs. That appears to have been a typically excited Saleh reaction after seeing the large crowds. Now, on Monday, he has apparently welcomed the proposals.

Is this the end game? Or will Yemen enter a third month of upheaval?

This will largely be down to the peo-

ple's reaction to the GCC proposal. So far, it appears to be largely negative. One of the main calls of the anti-Saleh masses is that he and his family must leave all their positions of power immediately, and that they must be held to account for the crimes they have committed against the Yemeni people, especially those committed since the start of this Yemeni revolution.

"These proposals leave Saleh a free man, how can we allow this after the murders he has committed. We need a complete overhaul of this corrupt system. We simply don't trust him, so we can't take any risks," said Baraa Abdullah, a university graduate.

Walking through Change Square in

Sana'a it is clear what the reaction here is. Placards everywhere declare that complete change is the only solution. "The people want the downfall of the regime" has turned into "the people want the trial of the regime."

To explain their reaction it is important to remember the events of the last week. A lull in the violence followed the 'Sana'a Massacre' of March 18, when 52 anti-regime demonstrators were killed by snipers. However, over the last week there has been a notable upsurge in the attacks on the demonstrators. At least 12 protesters were killed in Taiz on the 4th April, after they were met by security forces whilst trying to march on the governor's building. Protests in soli-

arity with the people of Taiz were held all over the country, and one of those, in Sana'a, was again met with violence from the regime, with at least one person killed and 500 injured in the dead of the night on the 9th April.

Fadi Alwadan, one of the protesters, presented his clear reaction, "Saleh must return the money, remove his family members from their posts, and must go to court. The opposition parties should not take charge of Yemen, everyone should."

The rigid reaction of the protesters is not universal in Yemen. It is safe to say that the majority of Yemenis undoubtedly want Saleh to leave immediately. Nevertheless, many will settle for his re-

moval whilst being immune to prosecution, so the country can move on from this turbulent phase in its history.

There is growing suspicion that the country is bankrupt, with the already weak economy coming to a standstill, and the efforts of Saleh's regime to stay in power taking its toll. Many roads in Sana'a are blocked, including some of the main routes. Enmity is increasing between those who are pro and anti Saleh.

Many want a return to normal life. The hundreds of thousands in the 'freedom' and 'change' squares around the country want to make sure that this normal life is without Saleh, his family, or any remnants of his regime. The tide of momentum seems to be in their favour.

Yemen: growing risk of violence and hijacking of democracy agenda

From Democracy Digest

“The bugs in your own shirt are the ones that bite you,” says the Yemeni proverb.

President Ali Abdullah Saleh should know.

Following the defection of formerly loyal senior army officers and civil servants, the beleaguered autocrat today sacked his cabinet and announced presidential and parliamentary elections by the end of the year. The schedule is for a newly-elected parliament to organize a presidential poll which the incumbent insists he will not contest.

But the move is unlikely to appease protesters who have demanded his resignation during several weeks of demonstrations, especially as Saleh also instructed the parliament to pass new emergency laws that suspend the constitution and enable security forces to detain his critics, a move opposition forces fear will increase the likelihood of civil war.

“This regime is gasping its last breath and the law will not save Saleh from falling. He will fall like the other dictators in the Arab world,” said Hassan Zaid, secretary general of the opposition Haq Party, a member of the opposition coalition.

The prospect of violence was raised a notch higher today when a leading opposition figure called for a march on the presidential palace which is ringed by special forces loyal to the president and commanded by his son.

“We will arrive where you are and we will remove you,” said Mohammad Qahtan, a prominent Islamist leader of the Joint Meeting Parties opposition

coalition, which also includes socialist and nationalist parties.

Saleh pounced on the announcement to condemn the opposition for destabilizing the country and provoking further violence.

“They [the JMP] do not realise their national responsibilities and the potentially devastating repercussions of their practices against the country,” said Saleh, addressing a meeting of loyal officers from central security.

The call to march is also dividing the protest movement, according to a Sanaa-based democracy advocate.

“Some are willing to heed the JMP's call to march in protest against the State of Emergency and its contravention of the right to peacefully demonstrate; however, others think the march inadvisable given the recent gains of the movement and potential to unnecessarily provoke violence,” the activist said.

Many observers believe the defection of senior military figures was the last straw for a president who is now playing for time and quietly negotiating for immunity and protection of his family and assets.

“I think he is just maneuvering for favorable exit terms,” said political analyst Abdul-Ghani al-Iryani. “Still, with tanks facing off in the streets of Sanaa, he is holding the city hostage.”

Several prominent military figures this week defected from the ruling coalition, including Maj. Gen. Ali Mohsen al-Ahmar, reportedly moved to do so by the March 18 massacre of 52 protesters by pro-Saleh forces. But Mohsen has not been warmly welcomed by pro-democracy groups.

“We see Ali Mohsen's joining us as a corruption of the revolution. The revolution is not against an individual but against a system,” said protester Abdul-

lah Hussein al-Dailami.

His comments reflect a concern that the pro-democracy movement will be hijacked by Saudi Arabia, Saleh's patron, should Riyadh simply replace the incumbent with another autocratic ruler.

“Yemen's pro-democracy activists are alert to the risk that their popular revolution will be treated like a game of musical chairs where the key players within the existing regime simply swap positions,” writes one analyst. “Demonstrators are promising to hold out for a peaceful transfer of power to a civilian authority, a new constitution that boosts the role of parliament and a federal system of government.”

Saleh has previously offered a government of national unity and told Les Campbell of the National Democratic Institute that an end to the protests would create a more conducive atmosphere for national dialogue and for free and fair parliamentary elections. He also insisted that security forces would not open fire on protesters – but that was before dozens were killed during last Friday's demonstrations.

“The perceived momentum building on the side of the protesters has prompted considerable discussion this week regarding the legal mechanisms in place for a transfer of power,” notes a locally-based democracy advocate:

The Constitution does not specifically address the formation of a provisional, interim or caretaker government, but does articulate power transfer. Should the President leave office, authority transfers to Vice President Abdo Rabu Mansour Al Hadi, a southerner who has a longstanding reputation of being a GPC hardliner. It is not likely that the anti-government movement will accept him taking the reins of government.

Embrace opposition to prepare for post-Saleh Yemen

From Democracy Digest

The crisis in Yemen is presenting the Obama administration with a strategic dilemma.

The U.S. has been notably reserved in its support for the protesters demanding the resignation of President Ali Abdullah Saleh (left) who has been a steadfast ally in confronting a Yemeni offshoot of al Qaeda, allowing U.S. forces to conduct covert operations, including aerial drone strikes. There are fears that his ouster may lead to civil war, secession or the rise of leaders less amenable to the U.S.

“The prospect of two ungoverned states – Yemen and Somalia – at the bottom end of the Red Sea leading to the oil supertankers' highway of the Suez Canal, alarms Washington almost as much as the fear of an ally in the 'war on terror' falling by the wayside,” according to Victoria Clark, author of Yemen: Dancing on the Heads of Snakes.

Consequently, the U.S. has been quiet about supporting demands for change, raising concerns that its ambivalence will only make it more likely that a post-Saleh government will be less accommodating to U.S. interests.

“The stance it has taken is really going to put them in a difficult position with any post-Saleh government,” said Gregory Johnsen, a Yemen analyst at Princeton University.

“Every time Washington has attempted to game out what would come after Saleh, it came up empty,” he said.

In Cairo this week, U.S. Defense Secretary Robert Gates conceded that

Washington had not prepared for a Yemen without Saleh.

“I think things are obviously, or evidently, very unsettled in Yemen. I think it's too soon to call an outcome,” he said. “But clearly there's a lot of unhappiness inside Yemen. And I think we will basically just continue to watch the situation. We haven't done any post-Saleh planning,” he said.

But the Obama administration still has a chance to atone if “serious, concerted American and Western diplomatic pressure could be brought to bear,” writes Sheila Carapico, author of Civil Society in Yemen and the forthcoming Political Aid: Democracy Promotion and the Paradoxes of Empowerment in the Arab World.

“It is time for Yemen's president to know the US wants him to relinquish power to a civilian transitional government,” she contends.

Unlike Libya, where Col. Muammar Gaddafi suffocated all political space, Yemen has an assertive and politically pluralist civil society.

Some elements of the opposition, including the senior military defector Maj. Gen. Ali Mohsen al-Ahmar, have previously shown a disturbing reluctance to confront al-Qaeda, writes Daniel Green, a Sorel fellow at The Washington Institute for Near East Policy, focusing on Yemen, al-Qaeda, counterinsurgency, and stability operations. But that may have changed:

With the merging of al-Qaeda elements from Saudi Arabia and Yemen in early 2009, the new AQAP organization has been quite willing to attack the Yemeni state. This change in al-Qaeda strategy may have prompted some members of the regime, includ-

ing al-Ahmar, to shift from tolerating the group to actively fighting it.

The administration should actively engage the political opposition, he argues.

“The United States should increasingly reach out to key opposition groups, including tribal leaders and political parties, in order to develop a greater understanding of their concerns and demands in a post-Saleh Yemen,” he writes. “This includes reaching beyond the capital and meeting with leaders in the governorates, including areas that have an AQAP presence.”

“Chaos is possible. But it is not inevitable,” writes George Mason University professor Mark N. Katz.

Saleh's departure might substantially generate fresh momentum to resolve the grievances of the Houthi rebels and southern secessionists, and lead to a more effective approach to confronting al-Qaeda in the Arabian Peninsula.

“This is not a group with a strong following in Yemen. It is a group that takes advantage of the weakness of the Yemeni government,” Katz argues. “A democratic Yemeni government may actually be in a better position to crack down on it than Saleh, who has been increasingly preoccupied by the rise of other internal opponents.”

Whoever is left in charge of one of the world's most fragile failing states, will inherit a tough agenda and serious security threats.

“Yet this Middle Eastern spring of revolt has made the chances of AQAP being capable of filling a power vacuum seem remote,” writes Clark. “There is a more popular movement that has the momentum now. The west can but embrace it.”

Yemen and the war on terror

By: Louisa Loveluck

After another bloody day in Yemen, questions need to be asked about the relationships that facilitate and constrain the government's actions. I'm reading a number of reports that suggest the weapons used against protesters in Sana'a came from US-military shipments, and this comes as no surprise. To my mind, the most damaging thing to happen to Yemen over the past decade has not simply been the rule of President Ali Abdullah Saleh. Instead, it has been the country's incorporation into the US 'War on Terror', and all the damage it has entailed. This is not meant to im-

ply that America represents some sort of imperialist ogre. In many ways, the alliance has been mutually convenient: clinging to the notion that Saleh is all that stands between stability and chaos in Yemen, the US have often turned a blind eye to his repressive actions as he manipulates the rhetoric of counterterrorism to suit his own ends.

Saleh's position as a fully-fledged actor in the War on Terror has therefore brought many advantages: until recently, he has had a relatively free hand to persecute domestic opposition under the guise of counterterrorism, using a security apparatus that has been trained and funded by the United States. These forces have been repeatedly deployed to crush uprisings in the north and south

of the country, and now we are seeing their lethal capacity unleashed on anti-regime demonstrators. He has balanced this with a notional commitment to reform, absorbing money from the US and other international donors and channelling it into patronage networks that cement his position at the top.

Nevertheless, it would be a mistake to overstate Saleh's agency in what remains a military partnership. That the regime feels obliged to use the western lexicon of counterterrorism, despite domestic hostility, reflects the regime's achilles heel: in relying on external aid to fulfill patronage duties and secure limited domestic autonomy, it is fatally weakened. Saleh's participation in the War on Terror has forced him into a deli-

cate and precarious balancing act. Dependent on his ability to appease plural social forces, he must pursue a dual strategy towards his domestic constituency and the international community. On the one hand, he must demonstrate an ability to act regardless of US concerns, and on the other, he must prove his credentials as a strongman in the War on Terror. The latter pressure has been as much a constraining factor as a structure of opportunity and an added justification for furthering an internal political reordering.

As the cracks in Saleh's regime are beginning to show, the full impact of the US-Yemeni alliance becomes increasingly apparent. For the US, this has involved a rediscovery of the fact

that nailing their colours to the mast of a dictator will only pay-off in the short-term. Not only are finding it difficult to take a strong stance against a monster of their own making, but their weapons are publicly being used to further his repressive agenda. On the Yemeni side, a decade of US support has failed to secure the regime's political future. Saleh's ad hoc strategy of buying off pockets of resistance using American funds and unleashing violence upon those who do not cooperate has culminated in a backlash which he is unable to appease. The reliance on patronage networks and repression has resulted in an environment where political openings rarely appear unless there is international pressure to do so. When

they materialise, reforms are cosmetic and the system underpinning them remains deeply corrupt. In this respect, the US-Yemeni alliance has only delayed Saleh's moment of reckoning: after a decade of prioritising external relations over the country's political future, resentment has now spilled onto the streets.

For Saleh, his part in the War on Terror now represents more of a trap than an opportunity. As he gambles that violent crackdowns will remain unpunished by an American ally fearful of alternatives to his rule, he moves closer towards the point of no return. Yemenis will forget neither his brutal response nor his dance with the American devil that made it possible.

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Israelis and Palestinians, particularly the youth, grow apathetic

By: Arich O'Sullivan
For the Media Line

A generation ago one of the most popular Israeli songs was You and Me Can Change the World. Today's youth are more likely to be anxious over who's going to win the Big Brother reality television show.

A recent poll of Israeli youth, both Jews and Arabs, has shown that they are becoming more ambivalent and alienated and, when they do express themselves, tend to be more intolerant than their elders, if not holding downright undemocratic views.

A study by Germany's Friedrich Ebert Foundation found that six out of 10 Israeli teenagers prefer strong leadership over democracy, and 46% support revoking some basic political rights, such as the right of an Arabs to be elected to parliament.

According to the Youth Survey, the

third after polls taken in 1998 and 2004, promoting Jewish identity is now held by young people as the most important objective of the state, pushing aside democracy, which fell to third place. Peace with Israel's Arab neighbors should be the country's second most important objective, the respondents said.

"The main finding is that the young are moving more to the right," said Roby Nathanson, director-general of the Macro Center for Political Economics, who cooperated with the Friedrich Ebert Foundation in conducting the poll.

"For youth today, living in a Jewish state has overtaken the need to forge a peace deal with its Arab neighbors and Palestinians as their top priority," Nathanson told The Media Line.

But he stressed that the results of the survey showed what appeared to be contrary trends.

"They are very much in favor of the peace process still, but they aren't ready

to make compromises. They would like social justice and equality, but are very much in favor of minimizing intervention of the government in the market or the economy," Nathanson said.

The polls comes as the latest effort to restart Israeli-Palestinian peace talks has stalled. But the freeze hasn't caused a major political fallout, with the Israeli and Palestinian economies thriving and violence at relatively low levels. Across the Middle East, mass protests have brought down leaders and paralyzed countries, but in the Palestinian-ruled areas, protests have been small and focus on restoring national unity between the rival Palestinians movements, Hamas and Fatah.

The survey was carried out in 2010 among a representative sample of Israeli Jewish and Arab youth between the ages of 15-18 and 21-24.

"The generation of 2011 is different. This is already the generation that has grown up with the Internet and social networking, so this is having an enor-

mous impact," Nathanson said. "They get a large amount of information, but are ambiguous and don't necessarily have a clear cut position on things. ... It doesn't interest them so much."

Amid growing prosperity and dulled existential threats, with the violence of the Palestinian-Israeli conflict and the 1995 assassination of Prime Minister Yitzhak Rabin beyond the reach of their memories, youth are largely disengaged from the big political questions of the day.

In 1998, the same poll found that a plurality of Israelis (44%) saw the divisions between secular and religious Jews as the biggest rift in society. According to the 2010 poll, the biggest schism is between Israelis Jews and Israeli Arabs, who constitute about a fifth of the population. Researchers said this shows a greater move to the right. In 1998, it found that 32% of teens defined themselves as left-wing. By 2010, the proportion dropped to only 12%.

Israeli Arabs expressed more support for the equal rights of the minority. But the majority of them didn't accept the principle of Israel as a Jewish state, Nathanson said.

Meanwhile, a separate poll released this week showed a greater desire by Palestinians to stage non-violent demonstrations similar to the ones sweeping across the Arab world. But the survey showed that the vast majority of both Palestinians (66%) and Israelis (73%) believed that peaceful protest wouldn't end Israel's occupation of the West Bank or lead to the dismantling of communities there.

Released jointly by the Palestinian Center for Policy and Survey Research (PCPSR) and the Truman Research Institute for the Advancement of Peace at The Hebrew University, the poll said 67% of Gazans and 52% of West Bank Palestinians felt a need to organize demonstrations in Hamas-controlled Gaza Strip. But Palestinians in the West Bank were virtually split when

it came to feeling a need to organize demonstrations against occupation (50% against versus 47% in favor).

While Palestinians in the West Bank and Gaza have stood aloof of the wave of protests across the Middle East, several Facebook pages have been launched to organize mass demonstrations by millions of Palestinian on May 15, when Palestinians mark the anniversary of the Nakba, the term they use for the founding of Israel. The PCPSR/Truman poll shouldn't give organizers much encouragement.

And, when it came to demonstrating against the ruling Palestinian Authority, support for peaceful protest dropped to just 36%.

"The Palestinians are less optimistic than other Arabs about the possibility that occupation could be ended through demonstrations," Walid Ladadweh of PCPSR told The Media Line. "They believe it is harder to remove the [Israeli] occupation than it is to remove Arab dictators."

Uganda threatens to block Facebook, Twitter over protests

The Huffington Post

Uganda will order social media sites Twitter and Facebook blocked locally if further protests over high food and fuel prices take place because they are being used to fan unrest, a senior official said Tuesday.

Monday, soldiers and police fired teargas to disperse thousands demonstrating for a third time against rising prices and over the arrest of opposition leader Kizza Besigye and others who were charged with inciting violence in the protests.

The opposition says the demonstrations, dubbed "walk to work," are to force the government to do something to curb soaring consumer prices.

"If someone is telling people to go and cause mass violence and kill people and uses these media to spread such messages, I can assure you we'll not hesitate to intervene and shut down these platforms," Godfrey Mutabazi, executive director of the Uganda Communications Commission (UCC), told Reuters.

"We're very alert and monitoring these mediums and if people start promoting dangerous ideas, we'll act like every country would do," he said in an

interview.

The regulator relies on internet service providers following its orders and is unable to block sites itself.

UCC wrote to all internet service providers to block access to the two websites for 48 hours last week, when there were demonstrations in Kampala and at least six other towns.

Security agencies have accused the websites of spreading inflammatory messages.

Separately, the government has rejected accusations of human rights abuses during its crackdown on the protests.

Internal Affairs Minister Kirunda Kivejinja said the army and police had

used appropriate methods to quell the unrest.

"This is not a question of human rights but of demonstrations that were handled according to the law. We shall use the force according to the challenge we have," he told a news conference in Kampala.

"Who started the quarrel? It's the abominable acts of some opposition leaders."

Last week, the International Commission of Jurists condemned the security forces for heavy-handedness in dispersing protesters and questioned the legality of charges leveled against opposition leaders.



Lobbyists jump ship in wake of Mideast unrest

By: Marcus Baram
for the Huffington Post

One of Washington's best-known lobbying and public relations firms has been upended in the wake of the turmoil in the Middle East due in part to its representation of some of the region's autocratic governments.

In the last two months, more than a third of the partners at Qorvis have left the firm to start their own lobby shops, partly because of the firm's work on behalf of such clients as Yemen, Bahrain, Saudi Arabia and the Central African nation of Equatorial Guinea, say former employees.

"I just have trouble working with despotic dictators killing their own people," a former Qorvis insider tells The Huffington Post. "People don't want to be seen representing all these countries — you take a look at the State Department's list of human rights violators and some of our clients were on there."

The governments of Bahrain and Yemen, which have been condemned by the United Nations for their brutal crackdowns that resulted in dozens of protesters killed and hundreds injured, are both represented by Qorvis through a subcontract to British public relations giant Bell Pottinger. Saudi Arabia, which last week sent troops to assist in riot control in Bahrain and has long been cited for its poor human rights record, is a longtime client of the firm. And Equatorial Guinea, an oil-rich dictatorship considered one of the most corrupt and undemocratic regimes in the world, likewise pays Qorvis to burnish its reputation.

Several former Qorvis staffers blamed the firm's current management for cultivating such "black hat" clients, noting that much of that business came about through the firm's partnership with Bell Pottinger, the United Kingdom's largest public relations firm, which took heat for representing Sri Lanka during that South Asian country's brutal crackdown on rebel groups during the last two years. "They have zero conscience in what they do," says the first former insider, referring to Bell Pottinger. A spokesperson for Bell Pottinger did not return calls for comment.

Such "black hat" countries pay well — Equatorial Guinea pays Qorvis \$55,000 per month and Saudi Arabia initially paid Qorvis \$14 million per year back in 2002 to polish its reputation in the wake of the Sept. 11, 2001, attacks, though in recent years the latter contract has been much less lucrative. "These scumbags will pay whatever you want," says the

former insider. "You can charge retainers that are huge."

The firm's founder and CEO, Michael Petruzzello, says that such complaints are "ridiculous" and disingenuous, asserting that the firm's work with international clients preceded the tenure of departing partners and that no one complained about it. "If they had a problem with it, it would have been discussed," he said. He adds that most of those former partners worked at Qorvis for six to seven years and that they left primarily to start their own businesses, which is very common in the hothouse world of D.C.-based lobbying and public relations outfits. The principals who departed include Kelley McCormick (who left in early March for Gibraltar Associates), Don Goldberg, Michael Quint and Jason Siegel (who resigned in February to start a new firm, Bluetext), and Maura Corbett, who left in November to launch the Glen Echo Group.

Petruzzello defends the firm's work on behalf of countries with troubled reputations, explaining that the firm's international clients represent only 20 percent of its business (which primarily consists of large corporate clients such as Cisco and Sprint). "The reason they hire Qorvis and others is that they have a narrative they feel is not being heard — and they want a chance to be heard in the court of public opinion." He adds that he's proud of the work the firm has done for Bahrain, for example, explaining that every Secretary of the Navy has said that there is no stronger ally of the United States than the island nation, which hosts the U.S. Navy's 5th Fleet.

And Petruzzello, who quickly named four new principals in recent weeks, insists that the firm "has the strongest leadership team in [its] 10-year history." Among them are former State Department staffer Greg Lagana and former Washington Times editor Sam Dealey, who are handling a new \$92,000 litigation communications contract with Cairo-based EZZ Industries. That company's owner, Egyptian business tycoon Ahmed Ezz, a friend of the Mubarak family, was arrested amid the unrest in that country. Qorvis's role is to promote "a transparent judicial system in Egypt," reports O'Dwyer's.

It's not the first time that Qorvis has witnessed a mass exodus due in some part to its unsavory clients. After Qorvis was retained by Saudi Arabia several months after 9/11, the contract attracted controversy and a Justice Department probe of the firm for its involvement in a radio ad campaign that burnished the image of the country, leading three top principals (Bernie Merrit, Jim Weber and Judy Smith) to leave the firm. We-

ber and Merritt, who run their own firm, did not return calls for comment.

One of the methods used by Qorvis and other firms is online reputation management — through its Geo-Political Solutions (GPS) division, the firm uses "black arts" by creating fake blogs and websites that link back to positive content, "to make sure that no one online comes across the bad stuff," says the former insider. Other techniques include the use of social media, including Facebook, YouTube and Twitter.

Recently, Qorvis helped frame the kingdom's crackdown on protests by highlighting statements made by Secretary of State Hillary Clinton, in which she emphasized America's commitment to Bahrain and affirmed its "sovereign right" to invite security forces from other countries. Clinton's comment that the government is "on the wrong track," however, was omitted, notes the Sunlight Foundation's Paul Blumenthal.

The firm's work for Equatorial Guinea, whose strongman Teodoro Obiang has been accused by the UN Commission on Human Rights of directly overseeing the torture of his opponents, includes sending out news releases about the country's support for animal conservation and a native daughter being named Michigan "Teacher of the Year." In a lengthy Harper's profile of Obiang and his son, Qorvis principal Matthew J. Lauer defended the country, saying, "No one is saying there are no problems, but it's not North Korea," but declined to respond to questions about claims of corruption and money laundering by U.S. investigators.


Other high-powered firms operate in the Mideast — Patton Boggs, which owns a percentage of Qorvis and which recently made headlines when President Obama sent one of the firm's lawyers, Frank Wisner, to negotiate with Egypt's recently-ousted former president Hosni Mubarak, has long worked with Egypt and Saudi Arabia. Qorvis and Patton Boggs were both subpoenaed in 2002 by the House Committee on Government Reform, which was investigating reports of American children kidnapped and held in Saudi Arabia. The Livingstons Group, founded by former Louisiana Rep. Robert L. Livingston, was paid \$2.4 million to represent Libya in 2008 and 2009. And the Washington Media Group ended its \$420,000 contract to enhance the image of Tunisia in January after images of the country's brutal crackdown on protesters made headlines around the world. The United Arab Emirates was the second-biggest foreign lobbying client, paying \$5.3 million to DLA Piper and other firms in 2009 to help get more access to U.S. nuclear

technology, among other issues.

And former Wall Street Journal reporter Christopher Cooper was recently hired for \$20,000 a month by Bahrain's envoy to the U.S. government to help get the administration and members of Congress behind the Crown Prince's idea of a national dialogue, says Cooper. Envoy Abdul Latif Zayani, Bahrain's former chief of police, is a familiar presence in military and diplomatic circles and was once a classmate of Joint Chiefs Chairman Mike Mullen.

The region is attractive to lobbying firms due to the lucrative contracts but it can also present challenges. "If you get associated with somebody who turns out to be a Gaddafi kind of person, you're not in the company of one of the nice people of the world and that could harm your reputation," says Howard Marlowe, president of the American League of Lobbyists. "And in the lobbying world, your reputation is everything."

"Most of us are not guns for hire — we would like to be able to wake up in the morning and look in the mirror and feel that we are not associated with child molesters, wife beaters. And to do work that meets our own test of ethics and conscience," he added. Making sure to emphasize that he was not referring to the Qorvis situation, he called on lobbyists to follow their conscience. "It's a commendable thing for a lobbyist to have their own set of ethics — if I'm doing something that I'm uncomfortable with, then I need to get out of it."



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أحمد عبده رماده

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الأسيتيون:

أولاد محمد عبده رماده

وجميع الأهل

On the stage, the spirit of the revolution

By: Shatha Al-Harazi

A very different culture has evolved in 'Change Square', the area around Sana'a University that has become the central location for anti-government demonstrators in the capital. The announcements that are made from the stage in the square affects strongly the mentality of the protesters, and the stereotypes about them that have been drawn by observers.

Back on Feb. 20, when the protests were still just starting, the stage was smaller and used mostly to repeat the slogans of the revolution, such as "the people want the withdrawal of the regime." However, the revolution has grown, and has now continued for over 12 weeks. The stage has increased in size and its role has evolved with the protests.

On the first Friday of the protests, there were only four speakers to broadcast the message of those who took to the stage to address the protesters. Each Friday the number of speakers grew, until now there are at least 80 speakers that broadcast the message over the entire sprawling protest area.

"Friday's are special, as more people join whether for the prayers and the speeches, or just to join the sit-in. We need everybody to be updated on the revolution's latest news and discussions, so it's important to make sure the sound reaches everyone from the stage," said Walid Al-Amari, who is among those who first setup the stage.

Some describe the stage as "the spirit of the revolution" given the influence and impact it has upon those at the protest. It has, however, also been the cause of conflict between the different youth movements, and some of those belonging to the Islah Party, the largest political block that makes up the opposition Joint Meeting Parties (JMP).

The JMP decided to join demonstrations at the square on Feb. 21. The Islah party took upon itself the responsibility of organizing the demonstration area. They started by organizing the stage, then went onto putting their mark upon the financial and donations committee, the protest security committee, and the field hospital. They seemed to want a role in even the smallest details of the protest camp. In March, conflicts started between Islah's members and independents in the revolution, beginning with the stage.

"Controlling the stage means controlling the message that one delivers to the people, who have full trust in what is



Protesters gather in front of the stage in Change Square to listen to guest speakers and music

said on the stage, which is dangerous," said one of the independent protesters.

According to Al-Amari, the conflict over the stage has now been solved. There are two committees that share responsibility for the stage. One includes ten of the founders of the stage, and the second arranges the program schedule and receives participants from the audience that want to share their point of view.

Various shows and discussions are held on the stage. Arrangements are announced, and sometimes humor takes over the stage. The program usually starts at 9:30 am, though it also depends upon events the day before. If there were clashes during the day before, the program starts later than usual as people are still tired.

The program has two shifts, one from 9:30 am to 4 pm, and a second from 4:30 to 11:30 pm. The program includes a news hour that summarizes the events of the revolution in the capital and in other governorates.

During clashes with pro-government supporters or security forces, the stage plays a pivotal organizational role. It is the central point for propagating plans of resistance. Announcements are given detailing which areas are being attacked, and rallying calls are made for supporters to join their brothers at

flash points. It also provides a central role in coordinating the medical tents, and the movement of medical supplies in the camp. During times of conflict, religious messages are broadcast from the stage to keep the protesters' motivation high.

"The role of the stage is to mobilize the protesters. It's also to lift up the spirits [of protesters]. Those people who have left their houses and have stayed on the streets since February need this spirit the most, to continue what they have started. Through the stage we manage to send out the important message of patience," explained Al-Amari. "It has the role of directing protesters and determines the location of marches. It is also used to respond to rumors."

Political and academic discussions are held on the stage to raise public awareness and to share different points of views. "The stage is an institution for acceptance and coexistence between the different groups in the square. There are different religious sects, different political points of views, so a better understanding is built and past conflicts are reduced," said Al-Amari.

The stage does not exist solely for leaders and organizers, but is also open to the people on the street who make-up the backbone of the protests. They are also given space to have their say and

share their views and feelings in front of the crowds. Wedding parties have been held on stage where the groom (but not the bride) dances and gives speeches. It has been the place where engagements have been announced by the groom-to-be and the father of the bride-to-be.

A unique role played by the stage is to hold auctions. Once the motorbike of a martyr from the "Friday of Dignity" was auctioned. At another time a huge cake with the word "Irrhal" (leave) written on it was auctioned off. The protesters have formed a special finance committee to handle the protests donations and distribute funds earned from auctions.

The program is sometimes host to musical or other artistic events, from the singing of traditional Yemeni songs, to hip hop, to shooting video clips of revolutionary songs.

The protests at 'Change Square' in Sana'a, as in other 'Change Squares' in many other governorates of Yemen, have brought together a multitude of different Yemenis across the economic, religious and political spectrum like nothing else has before. The protest areas have become the body politic of a new Yemen that projects tolerance, patience, resistance and cooperation. And the stage acts as the beating heart of this vibrant new body.

HEALTH WATCH

By: Dr. Siva



This weekly column disseminates health information to readers in Yemen and beyond. Dr. Siva currently works at Aden Refinery Company Hospital. Lifestyle, diseases and cancer prevention are his special interests. Complementary medicine and naturopathy are his passions.

Everything about Stroke

Radha's mother suddenly felt dizzy after magarab prayers. She recovered after a cup of tea. Later, she had her supper and her medicine for high blood pressure. She sat down to watch her favorite serial in the television and it happened. Her mouth deviated to one side, she could not talk or walk or even move her left hand or leg. She tried to call out for her daughter but she could only splutter. She was rushed to the hospital where the doctors examined her and ordered investigations. Radha was told that her mother has developed a stroke.

What is a stroke?

Stroke is a medical emergency and the third leading cause of death after heart attack in our country. It occurs when a blood vessel in the brain bursts or, more commonly, when a blockage develops. Without treatment, cells in the brain quickly begin to die. The result can be serious disability or death. Every second counts and emergency medical attention should be sought without delay. This is because when deprived of oxygen, brain cells begin dying within minutes. Once brain tissue has died, the body parts controlled by that area won't work properly. This is why stroke is a top cause of long-term disability.

Risk factors for stroke

High blood pressure, obesity, high cholesterol, diabetes and some congenital conditions of blood vessels can cause stroke. Life style factors like smoking, sedentary life, lack of physical exercise and alcohol can also contribute to the formation of stroke. Eating too much fat and cholesterol can lead to arteries that are narrowed by plaque. Too much salt may contribute to high blood pressure. And too many calories can lead to obesity.

Some risk factors are beyond one's control, such as getting older or having a family history of strokes. Gender plays a role, too, with men being more likely to have a stroke. However, more stroke deaths occur in women.

Mini-stroke (TIA)

A transient ischemic attack, often called a "mini-stroke," is more like a close call.

Blood flow is temporarily impaired to part of the brain, causing symptoms similar to an actual stroke. When the blood flows again, the symptoms disappear. A TIA is a warning sign that a stroke may happen soon. It's critical to see your doctor if you think you've had a TIA.

What causes a stroke

A common cause of stroke is atherosclerosis (hardening of the arteries). Plaque made of fat, cholesterol, calcium, and other substances builds up in the arteries, leaving less space for blood to flow. A blood clot may lodge in this narrow space and cause an 'ischemic stroke'. Sometimes, uncontrolled high blood pressure that causes a weakened artery to burst (Hemorrhagic stroke).

How will you recognize a stroke?

Your or your loved one may develop sudden numbness or weakness of the body, especially on one side; sudden vision changes in one or both eyes, unbearable headache, dizziness, difficulty in walking or balancing. There can be a sudden confusion, difficulty speaking or understanding others.

The F.A.S.T. test

This helps spot symptoms. It stands for:

Face. Ask for a smile. Does the mouth deviate to one side?

Arms. When raised, does one side drift down?

Speech. Can the person repeat a simple sentence? Does he or she have trouble or slur words?

Time. If the person exhibits any of these it's time for help

Diagnosing a stroke

A CT scan can help doctors determine whether the symptoms are coming from a blocked blood vessel or a bleeding one. Additional tests may also be used to find the location of a blood clot or bleeding within the brain.

Treatment

For an ischemic stroke, emergency treatment focuses on clot busting medication to restore blood flow. It must be given within three hours of the onset of symptoms. Hemorrhagic strokes are more difficult to manage. Treatment usually involves attempting to control high blood pressure, bleeding, and brain swelling.

Whether a stroke causes long-term damage depends on its severity and how quickly treatment stabilizes the brain. The type of damage depends on where in the brain the stroke occurs. Common problems after a stroke include numbness in the arms or legs, difficulty walking, vision problems, trouble swallowing, and problems with speech and comprehension. These problems can be permanent, but many people regain most of their abilities.

Rehabilitation

Rehabilitation is the centerpiece of the stroke recovery process. It helps patients regain lost skills and learn to compensate for damage that can't be undone. The goal is to help restore as much independence as possible. For people who have trouble speaking, speech and language therapy is essential. A speech therapist can also help patients who have trouble swallowing.

Physical therapy

Muscle weaknesses, as well as balance problems, are very common after a stroke. This can interfere with walking and other daily activities. Physical therapy is an effective way to regain strength, balance, and coordination. For fine motor skills, such as writing, and buttoning a shirt, occupational therapy can help.

Talk therapy

It's common for stroke survivors and their loved ones to experience a wide range of intense emotions, such as fear, anger, worry, and grief. A psychologist or mental health counselor can provide strategies for coping with these emotions. A therapist can also watch for signs of depression, which frequently strikes people who are recovering from a stroke.

Stroke prevention

People who have had a stroke or TIA can take steps to prevent a recurrence. Control of hypertension, diabetes and high cholesterol, not smoking and chewing qat, eating healthier diet and physical exercise are important. A diet high in fruits, vegetables, whole grains, and fish may help lower stroke risk.

For people with a high risk of stroke, doctors often recommend medications to lower this risk. Anti-platelet medicines, including aspirin and anti-clotting drugs, such as warfarin, may be needed to help ward off stroke in some patients.

Balloon and stent

Doctors can treat a clogged carotid artery by a procedure called angioplasty which involves temporarily inserting a catheter into the artery and inflating a tiny balloon to widen the area that is narrowed by plaque. A metal tube, called a stent, can be inserted and left in place to keep the artery open.

Life after a stroke

More than half of people who have a stroke regain the ability to take care of themselves. Those who get clot-busting drugs soon enough may recover completely. And those who experience disability can often learn to function independently through therapy. While the risk of a second stroke is higher at first, this risk drops off over time.

Advertorial

Royal Jordanian rewards top travel agents

Top local travel agents were rewarded for their hard work and success at an awards ceremony held by Royal Jordanian Airways in Sana'a on Tuesday.

Nedal al-Masri, Royal Jordanian's Yemen area manager, awarded certificates and cash prizes to nine local travel agencies. He said that he was "taking the opportunity to award some of the travel agents who sold the most tickets in the Sana'a region in the year 2010."

He then encouraged those who did not win this year to work with the airline in the coming year to achieve better results.

Royal Jordanian now operates seven flights a week between Yemen and the Hashemite Kingdom of Jordan, and al-Masri announced that they endeavoured "to increase the numbers of flights in the future."

Flights to Jordan have increased in the past few years, mainly due to an increased demand for Jordanian healthcare, and also an increase in the number of Yemeni tourists travelling to Jordan.

Al-Masri also talked about Royal Jordanian's recent ascension to the 'One World' Alliance. The airline is the first Arab carrier to join the prestigious alliance, which includes British Airways, US Airways, Iberia, Cathay Pacific and JAL. The alliance would "provide benefits for travellers and travel agents alike."

It is to be remembered that Royal Jordanian Airlines, one of the first airlines to fly to Yemen, was awarded the regional Airline of the Year award 2010 by the Arabian Business magazine. The airline is currently upgrading its fleet, with 11 Dreamliner B787's on their way for 2013.



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للتواصل: ٧٣٥٢٨٧.٠٩-٧٣٤٥٦٥١٥٩

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للتواصل: ٧٧٧٠٠٤٤٢٠٧

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للتواصل: ٧٣٣٥٧٨٥٢

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للتواصل: ٧٧١٩١٣٠٩٩

توفيق - بكالوريوس محاسبه - محاسبه وتكاليف - مبيعات تسويق في الشركة الوطنيه لصناعة الاسفنج والبلاستيك - دورات النظام المحاسبي - دوره في التنمية البشريه - دوره فوتوشوب - دوره في مجال التسويق الإداره - دوره في التخطيط.

للتواصل: تعز- ٧٧٠٥٩٩٦٥٩

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للتواصل: ٧٧٧٧٦٥٣٠٩

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٧١٢٥٠٠١٢

خبرة عشرون سنة سابق في شركة أرمكو والسفارة الأمريكية في السعودية، وفي اليمن في مشاريع مياه الريف الممولة من البنك الدولي جديد الإنجليزية.

للتواصل: ٧٧١٩٦٥٦٨٩-٧٧١٩٦٥٦٨٩/٤

عالمه الصوفي - خريجة شريعة وقانون جامعة صنعاء ٢٠٠٧ م دبلوم محاسبة - كمبيوتر - طالبة وظيفة سكرتيرة أو أي عمل إداري.

للتواصل: ٧٠٠٣٤١٥٨٧

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رقم الهاتف: ٧٣٥٥١٩٤٥٤

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للتواصل: ٧٧٧٥٨٤٦٤٤

٧٣٣٤٩٦٥٨٧

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للتواصل: ٧١٤٦٦٣٤٠٢

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للتواصل: ٧٧٧٠٠١١١٩

معاذ عبدالحبار القباطي، تخصص كيف وتبريد- تقني يرغب يعمل في مجال تخصصه

للتواصل: ٧١٣١٦٥٣٣٥

بكالوريوس علوم وهندسة الحاسوب خبرة في تقنية المعلومات وصيانة الأجهزة والشبكات لمدة طويلة يرغب في العمل في مجال التخصص

للتواصل: ٧٧١٨١٨٤٢٠

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للتواصل: ٧٧٧٩٩١٢٤٨

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شقة مفروشه جديدة كائنة في ش الخمسين/حدة مكونة من ثلاث غرف وحمامين ومطبخ وصاله

للتواصل: ٧٧٧٤٤٨٦١٧

للإيجار شقة في حي حدة / قرب مكتب البريد مكونة من ثلاث غرف وصالة وحمامين ومطبخ - غير مفروشه

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البيع غرفة نوم مستخدمة نظيفة

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بيع سياره سوناتا موديل ٢٠٠٦. للتواصل: ٧٠٠١٩٨٨٧٤ - ٧٧٧٩٥٥٠٨

بيع أرضية في السواد، ١٠ لبن كاملة الأوراق.

للبيع سيارة هيلوكس موديل ٩٧م غمارتين رقم/..... ٠٢/ بسعر ٢,٣٥٠,٠٠٠ ريال قابلة للتفاوض

للتواصل: ٧٧١٥٣٣١٨٧

البيع سيارة دوج لون أبيض موديل ٢٠٠٩ مللتواصل: ٧٧٠٣٠٣١٧٦ - ٧٧١٦٦٦٦٢

البيع سيارة الأسطورة سوزوكي فينارا لون أبيض موديل ٢٠٠٩

للتواصل: ٧١٤٦٦٣٤٠٢

طلب شراء قطعة أرض (حُر) من ٦-٨ لبن بأن تكون موقعا في سعوان بسعر متوسط.

للتواصل: ٧٧١٥٣٣١٨٧

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Yemeni political cartoonist Kamal Sharaf to the Yemen Times

“Cartoonists should draw political cartoons, otherwise they draw for children”

By: Sadeq Al-Wesabi

Yemeni well-known cartoonist Kamal Sharaf believes that cartoonists should be fierce critic of the government and corruption.

Sharaf has been detained for more than 50 days because of his cartoons against president and corruption in the government. He was released after committing not to draw such cartoons any more.

However, Sharaf has resumed drawing critical cartoons against president after uprising erupted in Yemen three months ago.

Sharaf spoke to the Yemen Times about his artistic activities and his contribution during the revolution.

“The revolution inspired me to do my best and encouraged me to participate effectively by making artistic exhibition in change squares in Sana'a, Ibb and Taiz governorates,” Sharaf said proudly.

“My duty is to take part in this revolu-



Kamal Sharaf

tion. Although I committed the government not to draw cartoons against president and corruption but at this time I'm drawing more strong cartoons than ever because the current situation requires my contribution,” he said.

“I should express the revolution aims

through my cartoons. Of course I present these cartoons as a contribution to this successful and peaceful revolution. I don't seek money from my cartoons at this time,” he said.

Sharaf indicated that Yemen had no artistic momentum before the revolution. “Yemen after revolution witnessed strong political, artistic and cultural momentum. This revolution will regain Yemeni artistic and cultural status.”

According to Sharaf, many Yemeni cartoonists are reluctant to participate in the revolution. “Unfortunately, they are already afraid of drawing political cartoons.”

“Cartoonists should draw political and critical cartoons, otherwise they draw for children. Such cartoons marginalize themselves,” said Sharaf.

Sharaf stressed the importance of Yemeni cartoonists' participation in the revolution that will “add artistic, cultural and political dimension to the revolution.”

“Cartoons give Yemenis clear and precise idea about the situation. They're

suitable for intellectual, illiterate and all kind of people,” he said.

Sharaf said that he wants to raise awareness among Yemenis about politics through his cartoons.

“Many of my cartoons are sold by vendors. Many people distribute them in streets. I feel comfortable when I see people are interested in my cartoons,” he said.

“Unfortunately, the regime had frightened Yemeni cartoonists and didn't allow them to draw political and creative cartoons. Yemeni cartoonists became interested in utterly meaningless issues and they focus on trivial problems,” he said.

“We have highly talented cartoonists but they didn't find a good environment, moreover, editors in chief of Yemeni newspapers are not interested in this important art,” he explained.

Sharaf sharply criticized the small financial return of Yemeni cartoonists, considering it affront to those imaginative cartoonists.

“Unlike many cartoonists, I don't

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seek financial return from my cartoons. I like drawing cartoons to convey messages through them,” Sharaf said.

Being daring cartoonist, Sharaf receives many offensive comments, strong opinion and repeated threats because of his cartoons.

Cartoons against religious people

Sharaf severely criticizes religious sheikhs through his cartoons. “Those sheikhs legitimize corruption and murder for the leader,” he said.

“Some people threatened me to cut off my hand because of my cartoons against those sheikhs,” he said. “I'm totally against using religion in the political life. We need free generation in the next days. We don't want narrow-

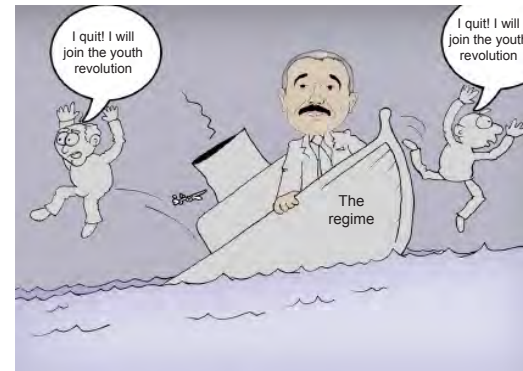
minded people.”
“We will endeavor, after the revolution, to guarantee freedom of others and impose the law. Actually, we need a long time after the revolution to make a new Yemen,” he said.

“Cartoonists must go to streets to observe the situation and people suffering closely,” he said.

“They shouldn't be interested only in joking and insignificant issues.”

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If you are willing to see different cartoons of Kamal Sharaf, you can go to his website: www.kamal-art.com



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