

Al-Qaeda 'claims' attacks in Abyan governorate

By: Shatha Al-Harazi

SANA'A, July, 27 — Al-Qaeda has released a statement implying responsibility for the conflict between militants and the state in Abyan governorate that has been ongoing since late May.

A voice recording alleged to be Nasser Al-Wuhayshi, leader of Al-Qaeda in Yemen has been posted on an Islamist website. It is directed towards Ayman Al-Zawahiri, seen by many terrorism experts as the leader of Al-Qaeda since Osama bin Laden's death.

"Our situation is good, thank God, and we are progressing well on the local and international level, according to your [Al-Zawahiri] plan," said Al-Wuhayshi. Whilst the recording does not specifically mention Abyan, the text implies that the governorate is the topic of the statement.

In the recording Al-Wuhayshi vows to continue fighting the "US enemy," accusing them of starting the war against Al-Qaeda in Abyan by sending in drones.

"The American enemy stood disabled against the situation in Yemen. The only thing they could do is intelligence work and air strikes... They choose the war," said Al-Wuhayshi, accusing both the Yemeni regime and the opposition parties of accepting American interference in Yemen.

Al-Wuhayshi also claimed that Al-Qaeda should support the peaceful revolution in 'Change Squares' na-

tionwide, saying that the revolutions in Arab countries supports their plans in vanquishing the 'enemy'. He added that the Yemeni people are 'over' their political parties that only look out for their own interests and serve the enemy.

Moreover, Al-Wuhayshi announced that members of Al-Qaeda are part of the revolution, and they are in the 'Change Squares' sharing with the protesters their happiness and sadness.

Political analyst, Ahmed Al-Zurqa, suggests that the tape was created to serve President Ali Abdullah Saleh's interests, and that the voice may not be that of Al-Wuhayshi.

"Al-Wuhayshi speaks about what is happening in the 'Change Squares' and that Al-Qaeda is part of it," said Al-Zurqa. "Everyone knows that Al-Qaeda believes in violence and not peaceful means."

Al-Zurqa suggested that the message in this tape is only a repetition of what Saleh and his security bodies have said previously, which means that Al-Qaeda is delivering Saleh's message to the world.

According to Al-Zurqa, the fact that the message attacked the opposition political parties, and said that Al-Qaeda members were in the 'Change Squares' is meant to lead to the conclusion that the independent youth in the squares are Al-Qaeda members.

"The fact that the youth in the squares remain peaceful assures us that no Al-Qaeda members are in the squares" he

explained.

"The timing of the tape is another factor that makes me suspicious that the tape was sent by Al-Qaeda," said Al-Zurqa, adding that the regime needs this step as means to negotiate the current transfer of power that is currently on hold.

"He [Al-Wuhayshi] didn't talk about any of their operations in Aden, like the car bombing operation last week that targeted the British expert and the second that killed military soldiers," said Al-Zurqa.

"He didn't talk about the fight in Abyan directly, and he didn't mention the condition of the president's health which are the main things Al-Qaeda usually talk about."

Al-Zurqa claims that this tape has been released to justify the expected violence against the 'Change Squares'. He also said that this is not the first time a tape alleged to be made by Al-Qaeda has been released to serve the aims of the regime. He referred to a tape by Al-Wuhayshi that was released when Saleh was threatening that the south would separate from the north, which Al-Zurqa alleges, justified the regime's next step.

Recently, tribes in Abyan have joined together to fight the alleged Al-Qaeda militant groups in their governorate. Yemen's official news agency has reported a number of Al-Qaeda leaders have been killed by the military in Abyan, though few admit to recognizing



Amir of AQAP, Nasser Al-Wuhayshi, released a recorded statement commenting on the Abyan fighting in the past month.

the names of these Al-Qaeda leaders.

Last week the army launched an offensive against militants in Abyan. Reuters reported that the army so far has only regained one military site. An army spokesman, speaking on condi-

tion of anonymity, told Reuters that Al-Qaeda fighters had attacked one of its camps on Monday night.

"Ten militants were killed by heavy shelling before they could make it to the military camp," he said, adding that

one of those killed was a senior member of the militant group.

At least 60,000 families have been displaced from Abyan to Aden and Lahj governorates since the fighting began in May.

Potential roadmaps for a transition of power

By: Mohammed bin Sallam and Nadia Al-Sakkaf

SANA'A, July 27 — Vice President Abu Rabo Mansour Hadi announced on

Sunday that Yemeni political opponents are on the verge of reaching an agreement that would put an end to Yemen's political crisis once and for all.

He said this during a meeting at his

office with members of parliament, the cabinet and the general committee of the ruling party, the General Peoples' Congress (GPC).

"We are facing multi-angled problems, whether they be political, economic or security. Life has become hard for Yemenis, especially the poor. It is time to put an end to this ordeal," he said.

However, the five-party opposition coalition known as the Joint Meeting Parties (JMP), said in response to this news it "has no idea what he is talking about." They insisted that no dialog shall take place unless and until Saleh signs the power transfer deal represented by the Gulf Initiative which the president has so far backed out from signing three times.

Mohammad ba Sundowa, chair of the preparation committee of national dialog announced to foreign media that along with the lack of communication apparent between the ruling party and opposition parties, the United Nations' attempts to redeem any sort of dialog has also failed, especially since the JMP has made a transfer of power from the president to his deputy a condition to proceed.

This will be the fourth visit of UN Secretary General Envoy, Gamal Omer,

since the beginning of the uprising in February without much apparent progress.

Although some local media reports claimed that the envoy said there will be a breakthrough in Yemen's political stagnation via a transfer of power, no details as to how and when have been given.

Ironically, Vice President Hadi has acknowledged the demands from the JMP, but he considers them as unconstitutional and unreasonable. However, Yemen Times sources revealed that there is some kind of dialog behind the scenes between the JMP and the vice president, the latest having occurred on Monday, and some sort of agreement may be announced soon.

Another roadmap

Simultaneously, the Justice and Construction political organization headed by Mohammad Abu Luhood has also recently announced their own roadmap to carry Yemen through this political crisis.

The roadmap first suggests the creation of a temporary National Council of 335 members within one week of endorsing the roadmap. The council will carry out the responsibilities of the both the parliament and the Shura Council

in coordination with the government. It has 12 months to create a new constitution with an emphasis on the separation between legislative, judicial and executive powers, and must be endorsed through a referendum within 90 days of its creation. It includes the creation of a mechanism to transfer the regime from a presidential to a parliamentary based one, along with an inclusive vision for a federal state system taking into consideration the geographic and economic characteristics of each region. It also talked about solving pending grievances such as that of the Southern Movement and the Houthis in Sa'ada.

But the most important aspect of this roadmap is that it provides complete unconditional amnesty to the president and a safe exit for him and whoever wants to leave the country with him.

The other interesting fact of this council is its composition, as it does not consider the JMP as one entity, but has suggested that ten seats be allocated to all existing political entities regardless of size. It has dedicated 10 seats to academics, women, military institutions, the dialog committee, civil society organizations, the opposition based outside Yemen, religious leaders, tribal leaders and ten seats for each of the eight prominent revolutionary squares across the

country. The remaining 45 seats are for representatives from the revolutionaries in the remaining nine governorates.

The Justice and Construction organization states that membership of the council be restricted to Yemenis no younger than 25 years old, with a university degree or equivalent, who were not involved in any of the crimes against the revolution. Members must also commit themselves to not run in the coming elections or to take part in the government formed after the transitional period.

Simultaneously, along with the transitional National Council there will be a temporary Presidential Council made of 11 members based on the 1990 unity government agreement. The organization suggested that Vice President Hadi head this council and that its members come from political parties including the Justice and Construction organization, military institutions and other political entities. Each member must be Yemeni of Yemeni parents, have a university degree, be no younger than 40 years old, and who also was not involved in any crime against the revolution.

The final step for this roadmap is the creation of a technocrat government that would be representative of the new federal parliamentary system with a special focus on solving the economic problems of the country. It will be composed of 17 ministries, with the ministries of water and electricity being merged, and other ministries being replaced by national councils for information, the environment, arts and culture, and youth and sports.

The roadmap also details issues regarding reforming the judiciary, the constitution, the military, national intelligence bodies, security and police, and the reform and anti-corruption bodies.

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Microfinance sector in Yemen in trouble

By: Sadeq Al-Wesabi

SANA'A, July 27 — In 2010, microfinance was one of the strongest business sectors in Yemen, and Yemen ranked first in the microfinance industry among the Arab countries. But the recent uprising has negatively affected this vital sector that serves tens of thousands of poor Yemenis.

On Wednesday, the Yemen Microfinance Network (YMN) organized a workshop on the impact of the current situation on microfinance in Yemen. It brought together many different Yemeni microfinance institutions (MFIs) with the aim of finding possible solutions to the challenges that face this sector at this time.

YMN has showed its willingness to work together with its members to play an important role to reduce the difficulties facing the microfinance sector in

Yemen.

According to a recent survey carried out by the YMN, about 88 percent of MFIs show that their operations have been impeded due to a number of factors such as power cuts, lack of fuel and difficulty of movement.

The survey shows that some clients refuse to repay loans because they want to keep some liquidity in a possibly worsening situation. About 50 percent of MFIs said that communication between staff at the institutions has been affected, and none of the MFIs said they had received any help to overcome the current situation.

According to the survey, about 55 percent of MFIs said that had not prepared a contingency plan, though the remainder said that they are dealing with the situation based on the contingency plans they had made.

Minister of Social Affairs and Labor,

Amat Al-Razaq Hommad, said during the workshop that poor people have been affected most by the current crisis.

"The economic and security situation has been affected due to the political crisis. All of us were affected because of the current situation, but the poor are the most affected people," said Hommad.

Mohammad Al-Lai, YMN chairman, pointed out that there are more than 60,000 projects funded by MFIs in Yemen, and about 300,000 people benefit from the loans and financing from these institutions.

"Yemeni MFIs have been highly damaged during the recent crisis and they have lost much of their financial potential," he said. "It's difficult for these institutions to collect the loans that exceed YR 5 billion (about USD 21.2 million)."

Khalil Al-Mikhlafla, research and development executive at the YMN, stated that microfinance in Yemen gives a great opportunity to poor Yemenis to prove themselves to be reliable workers. Al-Mikhlafla stressed the importance of providing poor people with economic chances to help start new businesses.

"We are proud that Yemen has a microfinance law that has contributed greatly to expanding the microfinance sector. There are growing demands for the services of microfinance institutions in Yemen," said Al-Mikhlafla.

According to YMN, there are many reasons that have led to MFIs being badly affected by the current crises. They include: mass immigration of some clients from their livelihood areas, shortage of fuel and electricity, delay in repayments, looting and theft from some MFIs, significant financial losses due to high operational costs, inability of some MFIs to fulfill their obligations to donors, weak infrastructure and lack of contingency plans by some MFIs.



Yemeni MFIs have been highly damaged during the recent crisis and they have lost much of their financial potential

WFP-Yemen expands food assistance to all internally displaced people in Aden

WFP Report

SANA'A — The World Food Programme is expanding its food assistance to the total population of 50,617 internally displaced persons who have fled fighting in Abyan governorate and who are now residing with host families or in vacant schools in Aden. WFP was already providing assistance to 18,168 IDPs living in schools, but the agency will now include the whole displaced population in Aden in its food distribution.

"The recent unrest in Yemen has pushed thousands of people into the countryside," said WFP-Yemen Country Director, Gian Carlo Cirri. "Many are being generously hosted by other families that have already been under stress and whose resources are diminishing. Our assistance will help not only those who have been displaced by the conflict; it will also relieve host families of their huge responsibility."

The current IDP crisis began in June 2011, when fighting between government forces and alleged affiliates of Al-Qaeda in the Arabian Peninsula erupted

in Zinjibar, the capital of the southern governorate of Abyan. The violence has prompted a mass exodus of some 80,000 civilians, who have scattered across the governorates of Abyan, Aden and Lahj.

WFP is also looking in to the possibility of extending its assistance to the IDPs in Abyan. Food needs in Lahj are currently covered by the ICRC.

"Whereas previous displacements in Yemen's south have tended to be relatively temporary, there are indications that the most recent displacement in around Abyan will be different," said Mr. Cirri. "Unfortunately, we do not expect these people to go back home any time soon — at least not before calm and security is re-established."

In response to the wider humanitarian crisis, WFP has launched an umbrella operation to assist more than two million Yemenis facing severe hardship and who are becoming more food insecure by the day. These include the IDPs in the south, as well as severely food insecure persons, malnourished children under the age of 5, and pregnant and lactating women in the most affected areas

of Yemen.

For this operation, WFP has launched a donor appeal of US \$48.1 million, which is currently less than 30% funded.

"With the ongoing crisis, we expect the need to increase," said Mr. Cirri. "We will need at least US \$26.7 million more."

The latest contributions to WFP's emergency Abyan IDP operation in Yemen have come from the UN Central Emergency Response Fund (CERF) and Canada.

For 2011, WFP-Yemen has an operational budget of some US \$97 million with which to provide food and nutrition assistance to over three million food insecure men, pregnant and lactating women, schoolgirls, refugees, IDPs and children under the age of five. Thus far, the agency has received generous contributions from Austria, Finland, Germany, Japan, the Republic of Korea, Norway, the Russian Federation, Saudi Arabia, Spain, Switzerland, the UN CERF, the United Arab Emirates and the United States of America.



Oxfam

JOB ANNOUNCEMENT

Oxfam, an international NGO working with others to find lasting solutions to poverty and suffering, has been working in Yemen since 1983. Oxfam announces the following vacancies for its programme:

Livelihood / Food Security Project Officer – Based in Sayoun (2 Positions)

Contract Duration: Initially one year

The role

You will have a proven track record of contributing to overall project management including monitoring and evaluation. You will be able to provide intensive needs-based technical support to project partners, as well as an ability to monitor project activities on livelihood / food security, both technically and financially. You will undertake project budget preparation and monitoring, and will assist in fundraising and proposal writing for new initiatives.

What we're looking for

We are looking for someone with at least 2 years of experience working in livelihood / food security programmes and proven understanding of disaster risk reduction (DRR) and local socio-economic development issues, institutions and communities. You will show sensitivity to gender and equity issues. The ideal candidate will have demonstrated communication skills and the ability to work well with others and as part of a team. You will have excellent oral and written communication skills in both English and Arabic, and will possess good computer skills.

To apply

If you believe that you have the qualifications and skills to excel in this position, please send a copy of your CV and a cover letter, clearly stating the job you are applying for, to yemenjobs@oxfam.org.uk or send a fax to 01 450170.

Closing date for applications is 3rd August 2011

Please apply immediately as we will be interviewing suitable candidates before the closing date



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Oxfam, an international NGO working with others to find lasting solutions to poverty and suffering, has been working in Yemen since 1983. Oxfam announces the following vacancy for its programme:

Logistics Assistant

Location: Haradh- Hajja governorate

Contract Duration: 8 months

The role

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What we're looking for

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Ramadan season tainted by high prices

By: Amira Al-Arasi

Um Ali Ayoub finds her way through a sea of shoppers in a local supermarket in Sana'a as she tries to buy her family's Ramadan essentials for the month. "I have spent over YR 150,000 (around USD 600) and still haven't met ¼ of my family's needs for the month. My sons have their own shops and I can get their help but what about those poor families who don't have help?" she said, regretting the economic deterioration and instability the country is going through.

With a sigh, Um Ahmad Fatira launches on a rapid complaint on the situation and says how is she supposed to cover her family's needs on her hus-

band's YR 25,000 (around 100\$) salary?

"My husband works in the police force. I have a family of three but I know many others who have to feed many more mouths on the same salary. What are they supposed to do?"

Not only are consumers complaining but salesmen and women are also noticing the change in prices and purchase capacity. Ashwaq is a saleswoman who had been working in a general food store in Sana'a for the last one and half years and has noticed the number and amounts spent by consumers dwindling.

"I have seen so many fights between spouses this year. Perhaps the bright side is that there is a lot of room to maneuver and shop as the number of shoppers have decreased. Last year during

this time I have witnessed a couple of people fainting because of the crowd and lack of oxygen. No one is fainting this year because of that reason for sure," she said sarcastically.

Um Maram Abdullatif had to sell her personal jewelry in order to cover the costs of this month's food supply. "If only my parents had allowed us girls to complete our education then we would have probably had a job by now and been able to support them in difficult conditions like today, and I would not need to sell my gold" she said with regret.

The month of Ramadan is considered a high season not only in terms of food because of the delicacies cooked during the month, but also because it ends with a holiday Eid Alfitr which requires families to bake cookies and buy new



Local supermarkets are packed with people buying food in preparation for Ramadan. Food prices this year have soared, catching many families off guard.

clothes for their children and gifts.

Khairaiya Al-Qaubati is a saleswoman in a cloths shop says that throughout her three years working in his field this is the first year she notices such a decrease in customers especially during this season. "I used to have around 50 a day now I am happy if 4 people buy

anything from my shop!" she said.

A lot of people just confine themselves to window shopping and leave soon after the hear the prices.

Businessmen Hussien Shumaila who owns Shumaila supermarket chain stores contradicts the notion that consumers have decreased. In fact he says

he expected the number of people to decline as much of the merchandise reached a 50% increase in price yet on the contrary the consumers are still coming and buying, although he noticed that people are not much into luxury items such as electronics and are more focused on consumer products.



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Child Protection Consultant for Sa'ada Emergency External Vacancy No. 12/2011

UNICEF Yemen Country Office, Sana'a seeks highly qualified Yemeni candidates to plan and monitor implementation of UNICEF Child Protection supported activities, coordinate child protection interventions with other actors within the overall Emergency Response to Sa'ada Governorate

Duration of work: 15th August to 31st December 2011

Location: Sa'ada, Yemen

Specific Tasks

- **Facilitation of Child Protection Working Group (CPWG) meetings in accordance with the CPWG ToR:**
 - Ensure involvement of all Child Protection actors, expand membership and ensure effective coordination with all in the field.
 - Facilitate efficient coordinated interventions to respond to incidences of violence, abuse, abandonment and exploitation against children.
 - Monitor and ensure the implementation of child protection in emergency response plan in an effective manner.
 - Promote uniform reporting from UNICEF's partners and other CP partners
 - Provide the CP Sub-Cluster and CP section focal persons with the reported incidences of violence, abuse, abandonment and exploitation; the rates of support services and gaps; and coordination issues on a weekly basis. Deliver other reports and minutes of CPWG meetings as required.
 - Develop partnership with actors and communities in the governorate to expand UNICEF's Child Protection interventions in all Sa'ada districts.
 - Work towards integrating UNICEF Child Protection component with other programmes, including Education, Health, nutrition, etc.
 - Disseminate and share information from CP sub-cluster and CP sections to the CPWG.
 - Ensure availability and updating of referrals and mapping with regards to child protection services.
 - Guide the CPWG to identify gaps in the implementation of UNICEF's Child Protection Core Commitments to Children in Humanitarian Action and devise means of meeting the CP CCCs.
- **Participation in protection coordination meetings and other meetings**
 - Ensure that other sectors (e.g. Protection, Health, Education, and Early Recovery) consider the protection needs of children.
 - Facilitate referrals and service delivery from appropriate service providers on individual child protection issues.
- **Monitoring of CP interventions**
 - Support UNICEF partners to adhere to project plans in their implementation of child protection interventions.
 - Undertake frequent monitoring of child protection interventions in Sa'ada area, and report concerns or deviations from the plans to the emergency focal point in Sana'a.
 - Identify child protection needs (with respect to incidence of violence or service delivery) and recommend actions/intervention to CP section
 - Closely liaise with and timely report to child protection chief and emergency focal person in Sana'a and the Head of the Field Office if urgent actions or correctional measures are required.
 - Ensure that CP programmatic approach and principles are adhered to by partners, and provide technical advice to partners (in consultation with Sana'a CP section) when needed.
 - Monitor warehousing, delivery and distribution of supplies to beneficiaries and assess effectiveness of response and supply needs.
 - Collect necessary data and information on child protection and movement trends of IDPs

Expected background and Experience

- » University degree in law, education, social sciences or related field;
- » Minimum of five years' experience in development. Previous emergency work or community based experience is preferable;
- » Computer skills with good knowledge of word processing and excel;
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Yemen: the fight goes on

By: Wasim Alqershi

Yemen's popular youth revolution faced a unique set of circumstances among the contemporary revolutions of the Arab Spring — a despotic regime; armed tribes; and an Al Qaeda presence under the official auspices of the regime. But faced with all this, the youth insisted on achieving a comprehensive transformation by peaceful means. And millions of Yemenis responded to this invitation, descending on protest squares across the country.

The challenge of inviting the tribes of Yemen to join in with a revolution that was peaceful was significant; the tribes represent a major segment of the population, and weapons are a part of their makeup. So when they began to pitch their tents in the squares, stripped of all weapons, it was a surprise and an indication of the desire by all Yemenis to move towards a modern democratic state.

Now, after spending 120 days in the squares, during which time we have suffered intense violence from President Ali Abdullah Saleh while the international community has spared him, no one has the right to condemn us for any step that we take. Because it was only concerned with preventing civil war in Yemen, the international community allowed Saleh to continue his violence, despite giving guarantees he would cease. Meanwhile, we were required to exercise self-restraint.

Safeguarding the peaceful nature of the revolution has become like grasping hot coals. Then Saleh's palace was bombed. It did not kill him, but lost

him continuity as leader. The youth of the revolution believe Saleh is finished and that his presence in Saudi Arabia for treatment is a card being played to arrange post-Saleh conditions.

It is also being used to get round our demands for radical changes, that the representatives of the regime be brought to trial and that Yemen be ruled by a transitional presidential council committed to the goals of the revolution. However, the youth have the stronger card: the protests will not cease until all their demands are achieved. Those who did not share in our sacrifice today will share our country with us. So the opposition political parties and the remains of the ruling party are to share the political authority, while the US controls the security services, and the Saudis are protected from the 'revolutionary plague'. Meanwhile, we are shot at by the remnants of Saleh's people, who America appears keen should remain in power. The US is ignoring the fact it may lose the cooperation of the Yemeni people in the fight against terrorism because the people hate those who stand at the head of the security forces, the same forces that killed hundreds of peaceful protesters.

The feelings of the youth towards the international community was optimistic but has become frustrated, as the community which claims to stand for the values of freedom, justice and democracy abandoned them to be killed for the sake of these values without protection. Our frustrations over the position taken up by the international community will not distract us from our beliefs. Rather it will teach us to follow them while acting in the interests of our country.

No 'Arab Spring' in Yemen

By: Henry Srebrnik

Yemen, the poorest Arab state, with a gross domestic product per capita of little more than \$1,000 a year, has descended into political chaos.

Located at the south-western edge of the Arabian peninsula, the present-day Yemeni state was formed in 1990, when the north, an ancient Arab kingdom and then a republic, united with the south, the former British colony of Aden and later a Marxist-ruled "people's democratic republic."

Ali Abdullah Saleh, Yemen's president, who took power in the north in 1978, has ruled the loosely unified Republic of Yemen since its formation.

Yemen's population, which now stands at more than 24 million, has far outstripped its meagre resources. Much of the country is desert, and its predominantly rural population has a literacy rate barely above 50 percent.

Yemen is a small petroleum producer, but output from the country's oil fields is falling and they are expected to be depleted by 2017 — a major concern, since oil provides around 90 percent of the country's exports.

Saleh supported Iraq's conquest of Kuwait in 1990, alienating not only that emirate but also Saudi Arabia, which was providing critical financial assistance to Yemen. The Saudis, in retaliation, expelled 1 million Yemeni expatriate workers.

Also, endemic civil warfare, mainly various northern tribes and secessionist socialists in the south fighting the central government, has further hampered economic growth. As a consequence, for the past 10 years Yemen has relied heavily on aid from multilateral agen-

cies to sustain its economy.

The northern part of the country is controlled by tribes belonging to the Zaidi stream of Shia Islam; they constitute about 40-45 percent of the country's population. Sunni Muslims live mainly in the south and southeast.

In 2004, one Zaidi insurgent group in the northwest, the Houthis, launched an uprising against the government. The Yemeni regime accused them of having ties with Shi'ite Iran, and in 2009, the Saudis, fervent Wahhabi Sunnis, intervened on the side of the government, bombing Houthi regions.

Yemen has now also been swept up by the turmoil that has spread across the Arab Middle East.

More than 20,000 anti-government protesters gathered in Sana'a, the capital, for a "day of rage" against President Saleh in early February. They called for immediate regime change and rejected Saleh's offer to step down in 2013.

They want a transitional government of national unity, composed of technocrats, that will function until new parliamentary and presidential elections can be held. The Houthis announced their support for the pro-democracy protests.

More protests followed throughout March and April, but Saleh stood his ground. However, in May, the powerful Hashid tribal confederation, also composed of Zaidi Shi'ites, joined the fight against the president.

Battles soon ensued in Sana'a, and in early June Saleh was himself severely injured by a bomb, and was flown to Saudi Arabia for treatment. Meanwhile, vice president Abed Rabbo Mansour Hadi has assumed power. Many in the opposition movement like him, because he is a southerner and shows no signs of tribal loyalties.

Yemen: after Saleh, what?

By: Gwynne Dyer

President Ali Abdullah al-Saleh, in power in Yemen for the past 33 years and under siege for the past three months, left the country on Saturday night with a large piece of shrapnel lodged just below his heart. He may not come back.

Accompanying Saleh to Saudi Arabia for medical treatment were the prime minister, the deputy prime minister, the speakers of both houses of parliament, and Saleh's personal security adviser, all of whom were also wounded in the Friday explosion at the al-Nahdayn mosque in the presidential compound in Sanaa. It's a pretty clean sweep, so the question is: who comes next?

Nobody even knows whether the explosion was caused by a bomb planted in the mosque, a shell, or a rocket. The situation is very complicated, so you'd better take notes.

The turmoil in Yemen is really two separate conflicts. One is a traditional power struggle between two elite factions. The other is a nonviolent, pro-democratic youth movement inspired

by the popular revolutions elsewhere in the Arab world. They were linked at the start (though most of the young idealists didn't realize it), but they will be disentangled by the finish.

One of the elite factions is dominated by President al-Saleh's own family: his son Ahmed Ali commands the Presidential Guard, and his nephews Tariq, Yahya and Ammar control other vital elements of the security and intelligence apparatus. The rival faction is led by the al-Ahmar family, whose current head, Sheikh Sadeq al-Ahmar, is the leader of the Hashid tribal confederation, one of the two most powerful in Yemen.

The most important al-Ahmar brother is Hamid, a businessman and a leader of the opposition Islah party. There is ample evidence that Hamid helped to get the student protests under way, making his Sabafon mobile network available to send out messages organizing the protests and then covering the demos lavishly on his Suhail TV network (whose head office was burned by Saleh's troops last week).

What makes it worse is that the quarrel is among such a narrow and unre-

presentative elite. The Saleh family, like the Ahmar family, belongs to the Hashid tribal confederacy. They both therefore follow the Zaidi tradition of Shia Islam, whereas a majority of Yemenis are Sunnis. Eighty percent of Yemenis don't even have a dog in this fight.

But the young Yemeni protesters in the streets are not interested in a mere reshuffle of the elite, and the Ahmar family has never controlled them. They actually do want democracy, and they have already paid a high price for their idealism: about half of the 350 people killed since the first "Day of Rage" in January have been unarmed youths.

The other half, in the past two weeks, have mostly been tribal fighters backing the Ahmar family and military forces controlled by the Saleh clan (plus lots of innocent bystanders). In terms of how Yemen has always been run in the past, the Ahmar family is now on the brink of victory. But the drama will not end there.

One of the student leaders, Hashem Nidal of the Independent Movement for Change, put it well in a recent interview with the BBC. "They wanted to push the revolution towards violence

and we refuse this completely We are co-ordinating with many protesters across the country to make sure they don't fall into the trap of violence."

The departure of President Saleh won't be the end of the story. The Ahmar family's allies may take over the government, but they will face just the same demands from Yemeni youths who want a nonsectarian, democratic, non-tribal state that offers them a decent future regardless of their tribe, their sect, or even their sex.

If they get the chance to build that state, they will face horrendous challenges. Yemen is the poorest Arab country, and its modest endowment of oil is running out. So is the underground water it depends on for irrigation, and the population is growing at 2.6 percent a year. Half of the 24 million Yemenis are illiterate, and half the population is under 18.

The kids may fail, but who stands a better chance of surmounting these challenges? A democratic government run by the younger generation of Yemenis, or a regime controlled by the Salehs or the Ahmars?

Crisis in Yemen is not solved by president's exit

By: Rachel Alexander

An authoritarian president is forced to flee abroad after more than three decades in power. Crowds celebrate the autocrat's ignominious departure.

It is tempting to view the dramatic events surrounding Ali Abdullah Saleh's flight from Yemen as Egypt or Tunisia Part Two and hail it as a new chapter in the story of the Arab Spring.

Tempting, but probably wrong; there are many caveats in this narrative. No doubt the uprisings in Cairo and Tunis inspired those protesting against Mr Saleh's 32-year reign -- and the president surely did Yemen no favours by hanging on in the capital, Sana'a, a virtual prisoner, months after it had become clear that he had lost the confidence of the northern tribes on whose support his rule depended.

The problem is that Mr Saleh's departure doesn't change all that much and could even hasten Yemen's descent

into civil war -- a development that would embolden the small, determined al-Qai'da groups that have made use of Yemen's growing chaos to establish bases and put down local riots.

Yemen's crisis is existential and will not be solved by one government replacing another. A huge demographic bulge, a chronic shortage of water, massive unemployment, declining oil reserves -- the list of obstacles to a democratic outcome to the crisis is depressing.

Add into the mix a separatist movement in the south of the country, the former British colony of Aden, which used to be independent, and you have most of the ingredients for descent into the category of failed state.

Possibly, it won't come to that and Mr Saleh's departure will be followed by the establishment of a new, more consensual regime, which is able to reconcile the desire in the more secular south for more autonomy with the different agendas of the conservative northern tribes. But it is a long shot.

The Saleh regime broke down essentially because it ran out of money, after which the patronage system binding the key tribes surrounding Sana'a to the presidential palace fell apart. Where any new government is going to find new money is not clear.

Western governments are already being asked to dig into their pockets to help infant democracies in Egypt and Tunisia. The stalemate in Libya is another drain and a distraction, as is growing violence in Syria, where more anti-government protesters were shot dead yesterday.

The West is most unlikely to come up with the equivalent of a Marshall Plan for far-away Yemen, even though a massive injection of aid is probably the only thing that could shore it up in the medium term.

The United States will be watching closely. Many will see what's happened in Yemen as fresh proof that Washington is still getting it wrong in the Middle East, backing old dictators against the untried voices of youth.

The US was a major donor to the Yemeni military, viewing Mr Saleh as an ally against al-Qai'da. In hindsight, Washington clung too long to his regime. But the options in Yemen were limited. There was no clear-cut pro-democracy movement to back in Yemen, just a mass of disappointed ex-clients, democrats, separatists and Islamists, temporarily united against Mr Saleh's corrupt rule. None has a clear objective, except for the southern separatists and the Islamists, and their agendas alarm leaders in the region and elsewhere.

Coming up with a foreign response to Yemen's troubles should not be left to Barack Obama. Britain may have forgotten Yemen, but not all Yemenis have forgotten Britain. British rule is remembered with some affection in the old colony of Aden -- not surprising, given what's happened there since.

If David Cameron wants Britain to "punch above its weight", he should make sure the country takes the lead in Europe in co-ordinating aid and advice for whatever government emerges.

Yemeni women find voice in revolution

By: Jessica Childs

When Yemen's beleaguered President Ali Abdullah Saleh scolded women for violating Islamic law by joining men in demonstrations on the streets of Sana'a, more than 10,000 Yemeni women flooded those streets to denounce their president.

The women had joined the pro-democracy demonstrations in February 2011, the event that catapulted Yemen onto the world stage. The nation's constitution gave women equal rights in 1994. But not until the national uprising and their April 16 march, could their veiled voices be heard. Their chants for the president's removal echoed throughout Change Square.

Dr. Ahlam Mothanna, a medical doctor was one of 10 women who first joined the men in Change Square.

"Females in Yemen who participated in demonstrations were exposed to violence by military forces," Dr. Mothanna said. In response, more and more women are demanding their rights be

respected, she said.

Anita Kassem, a student from Aden and a friend, Madiha Ahmed, are two young women inspired by the revolution.

"We had to get out of our houses because our sons, our husbands, our brothers, and our fathers are dying in the square," explained Anita.

She and her friend began working for charities as volunteers. They wanted to get more involved in the protests in Sana'a, but they had to calculate the political environment of the distant capital city, to get family permission to travel and overcome the fear of persecution.

Tradition

Most women in Yemen are marginalized. Anita and Madiha said Yemen is unlike Iran and Afghanistan where the opinions of women are grounded in law, constitution, and religion. Instead, Yemen's opinion of women is based on tradition and custom. By law, you can work, you can talk to men and you do not have to wear a burqa or a hijab. But while the law gives women these rights, husbands and parents usually forbid it.

Some women have begun to leave their homes to go to college and to become teachers, social workers, nurses, and doctors like Ahlam. That's possible in the capital city, Sana'a, but it's a new phenomenon for Anita and Madiha, who live in Aden.

Madiha says that before the revolution, women accepted the conservatism and traditions that bound them to the home. They accepted this subordination, she says, "because they were unsure of themselves. They lacked self-esteem, lacked self-respect, and lacked self-responsibility."

Change

Now, women in Sana'a and Taiz have joined the revolution, carrying food and water to protestors, teaching in the streets, or standing with the men, chanting, "The people want to overthrow the regime!"

Hamza al-Shargabi, a veteran of the protests, has watched women join his colleagues on the streets of Sana'a.

"Not so many people know that Yemeni women are very strong. They have been protesting in the streets with

us since the first day," al-Shargabi said. "On the political level, the humanitarian level, and the logistical level, on the ground, women have stood beside men very, very naturally."

It's normal now to see a woman talking to men on the streets. They say they now have the support of their families and the respect of men. Proudly, Anita boasted that she and other women "... broke the chains of traditions and conservatism." Women have proven that they are full citizens of the country who "stood hand in hand with men," she says.

The pro-democracy revolution does not promise more rights to the women of Yemen, but the protesters believe women who joined the protests will be more than mothers and wives; they will be recognized as citizens of Yemen.

"The revolution demands equal treatment of one another," said Hakim Al-Masmari, editor of the Yemen Post. He thinks women have achieved greater equality -- and the men, as well.

"I do believe that Yemen will see more freedom after the revolution," Al-Masmari said.

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In new Egypt, old conspiracies live on

By: David E. Miller
For the Media Line

Ministers, media can't shake off habit of blaming Israel, U.S. for country's woes

When a European laboratory announced two weeks ago that an infected shipment of Egyptian fenugreek seeds was the source of an E. coli epidemic that killed 48 Germans and a Swede, the Egyptian agriculture minister didn't apologize, nor did he call for an investigation into the matter.

The problem had nothing to do with Egypt, the minister, Ayman Abu-Hadid, told Egyptian press. "Israel is waging a commercial war against Egyptian exports," he explained and that case was closed.

Abu-Hadid isn't the only minister in Egypt's post-revolutionary government to blame Israel for his country's woes. In June, Deputy Prime Minister Yehia El-Gamal told the Lebanese news site Al-Nashra that Israel was inciting sectarian strife between Muslims and Christians in the country.

"Israel understands that a strong Egypt is a danger for them and they want to make Egypt weak," El-Gamal said. "Nothing breaks or weakens Egypt more than sectarian tension or clashes between Muslims and Christians."

Conspiracy theories – with Israel fingered as the power by the scenes – were common currency in the years Hosni Mubarak ruled Egypt. Many Egyptians expected that with the transition to a more open, accountable and democratic society, the politicians and press would no longer need to point to cabals to explain away problems.

Egypt's press today is freer than any time in the last half century, but the government remains in the hands of the Mubarak-era army leadership and the cabinet, even after this week's reshuffle, is made up of veteran politicians. And, even though Egypt and Israel are formally at peace, many Egyptians re-

main hostile to the Jewish state. Travel, commercial ties and cultural links are minimal.

"Conspiracy theories are part of the texture of our culture," Hani Henry, a psychology professor at the American University in Cairo, told The Media Line. "Even if we have a democratic government, the problem will not go away."

He says blaming Israel for Egypt's problems could be both a cynical attempt by politicians to distract the public or an honest belief that Israel is constantly conniving against Egypt. In either case, however, conspiratorial thinking was deeply ingrained in Egyptian thinking.

The Egyptian government, nominated and directed by the Supreme Council of Armed Forces (SCAF), is struggling with soaring unemployment, a sharp decline in tourism and inflation of nearly 12%. Given these troubles, it is much easier to blame an outside enemy than take responsibility and face public rage, experts say.

The arrest in mid-June of Ilan Grapel, a 27-year-old American-Israeli law student, on charges of spying for Israel and stirring social unrest in Egypt was viewed by many Egyptians as a government ploy to deflect public attention from its shortcomings. Grapel traveled to Egypt as part of his work for a charity helping African refugees. His family, as well as the Israeli government, deny he was involved in espionage.

"Those scoundrels want to occupy the people with the spy so that they don't talk about Mubarak and the gas [exports to Israel]... Come on, it's the same old regime, nothing has changed," one Facebook commentator wrote.

When protesters and police clashed at Cairo's Tahrir Square at the end of June, leaving 1,000 injured, SCAF announced that it was all part of an "organized plan" to destabilize Egypt.

"Here we come to the question that blew off the lid of Pandora's Box: Who sent the thugs? And all kinds of an-

swers start popping up, and with each answer an entire world of sneaky intrigues and mischievous plots reveals itself to an audience yearning for an action-packed story that absolves them from blame and holds some invincible power accountable for their misery," wrote Sonia Farid, who teaches English literature at Cairo University, on the Al-Arabiya television website.

Ishaq Ibrahim, a researcher at the Egyptian Initiative for Personal Rights, a Cairo human rights organization, says that decades of Western failure to address the Palestinian issue has caused Egyptians to become bitter and suspicious of the West. However, he added, that doesn't exempt them from examining their own mistakes.

"I don't like hearing about conspiracy theories," Ibrahim told The Media Line. "Even if we assume there was external intervention, someone from the inside must have contributed."

While he understood why simple Egyptians would blame the Israelis for the E. coli epidemic, Ibrahim says that such statements from an educated government official are unacceptable.

"The government is placating the sentiments of the masses," Ibrahim said. "Rather than leading the way and enlightening the people, they are feeding their fears."

Conspiracy theories have been a part of Egypt's political discourse since the days of populist President Gamal Abdul Nasser, who toppled the Egyptian monarchy almost 60 years ago and was the first in a line of dictators that ended with Mubarak.

"There always has to be a foreign threat," he said. "In Nasser's day, imperialism was the bogeyman. Today imperialism has been replaced with Israel. It's a way of uniting a fragmented society," says Henry.

In the years before Mubarak was ousted last February, international conspiracies led by Jews or by Israel were regularly employed by government officials and echoed in the media.

When Culture Minister Farouq Husni lost his bid for head of the United Nations Agency for Culture and Education (UNESCO) in 2009, he blamed a Jewish plot "cooked up in New York" for his failure. Some outrageous theories have become the laughingstock of Western media. In December 2010, for instance, the governor of South Sinai blamed the Israeli Mossad spy agency for a spate of shark attacks in the resort town of Sharm Al-Sheikh.

In the early days of unrest in Egypt, an anonymous figure, cited as a former journalist, went on the pro-Mubarak Al-Mehwar television station to accuse Israel of backing the demonstrators in a bid to throw Egypt into disarray. She claimed to have been trained by Jews in the U.S. to destabilize the government.

The Protocols of the Elders of Zion, a

fraudulent anti-Semitic text purporting to describe a Jewish plan for achieving global domination, is only one example of many books espousing Jewish and Israeli conspiracies found in bookstalls on Cairo's streets.

Experts detect subtle changes in the way conspiracy theories are used and perpetuated. Although Israel and often the U.S. continued to be blamed for the country's problems, Egyptians are more preoccupied these days with internal politics, Marina Ottaway, an expert on Arab politics at the Carnegie Endowment for International Peace, a Washington think-tank, told The Media Line.

"Old habits die hard," she said, referring to the use of conspiracies even today. "However, neither Israel nor the United States figures prominently in

what is happening in Egypt. They are not motivating the actions of the participants."

Another change from the Mubarak-era conspiracies is that Egypt's press is far less beholden to the government. SCAF has attempted to forge direct contact with Egyptians through Facebook. With 1.2 million "fans," SCAF's Facebook page features official statements commending the courage of the protesters and offering public opinion polls on issues of policy.

Henry of AUC says the conspiracy theories are being generated by Egypt's sensationalistic media, not because the government necessarily favors them. "They [the media] want to score a few points with society," he said. "There are no ethics whatsoever about what is said."

Debt ceiling debate comes down to Iraq, Afghanistan drawdown

By: Sam Stein
For the Huffington Post

In the end, the debt ceiling debate could come down to a simple accounting question. Should the money saved from drawing down the wars in Iraq and Afghanistan count as part of a deficit reduction package?

Senate Majority Leader Harry Reid (D-Nev.) has put together a proposal, designed to break through the congressional impasse, that counts \$1 trillion in savings from the Overseas Contingency Operations (OCO) fund -- the veritable piggy bank for wars abroad. His logic is straightforward.

"It's legitimate savings," said Adam Jentleson, a spokesperson for Reid. It's true that the United States will be spending significantly less money on the wars in ten years than it is today. The Congressional Budget Office, which judges future expenditures against their current levels, will "score" the savings regardless, as an Obama administration official noted several weeks ago when the OCO issue first surfaced. Why not count them as part of the current plan?

More importantly, as Jentleson notes, when Republicans were putting together their latest plan for deficit reduction, they counted the OCO savings as well. Indeed, in his budget plan that passed the House earlier this year, Rep. Paul Ryan (R-Wis.) tallied an estimated \$1.04 trillion in savings from the OCO based on Congressional Budget Office estimates. When his Republican colleagues, including Speaker John Boehner (R-Ohio) repeatedly touted the \$5.8 trillion in savings that the Ryan plan achieved, they did not offer rhetorical footnotes about how a good chunk didn't count because it came from pre-existing policy.

When The Huffington Post raised the issue several weeks ago, House Majority Leader Eric Cantor's (R-Va.) office drew a distinction, saying that while everyone agrees that the drawdown of troops will provide savings over time, lawmakers would be hard-pressed to call it a "cut."

"We have never counted OCO as a reduction, especially since it is happening anyway and has nothing to do with this debt deal," Cantor spokesman Brad Dayspring said at the time.

Independent budget analysts concur with this point. "Personally, I don't think you should view this as real savings," said Todd Harrison, senior fellow for defense budget studies at the Center for Strategic and Budgetary Assessments. "It depends on what baseline you are comparing to. The Reid plan compares to the CBO baseline, which has to assume that current law will continue to the indefinite future."

"The problem is, we already know wars are winding down and war funding is falling," Harrison continued. "The president's budget for next year already calls for a 27 percent reduction in war funding. To call that a cut



when we already know we are not going to spend that money seems a little disingenuous."

And yet, it's the type of disingenuousness that has been injected into budgetary standoffs before. As the White House pointed out back in March of 2009, President George H.W. Bush used the drawdown of the Cold War to pad his budget savings in 1991.

"This is a little different than at the end of the Cold War," cautioned Harrison, noting that there were deliberate policy choices made in the early '90s to reduce the size of the military.

Still, in private negotiations, Democrats have insisted that -- on a strictly numerical standpoint -- lawmakers

should be able to count the so-called peace dividend as a money-saver, especially with the stakes as high as a potential default.

Reid made this very case directly to Cantor during a meeting in early July, but to no avail. Little has changed since then. Republicans are still smarting from the bad press coverage they received after the government shutdown standoff in the spring, when post-deal accounting showed the long-term savings were much less than advertised. On Monday, GOP leadership continued to oppose considering using the OCO as a deficit reduction contributor.

Reid's plan, Boehner said upon its introduction, is "full of gimmicks."

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Minister of Industry and Trade, Engineer Hisham Sharaf

“Yemen’s economic situation could be fixed easily, it just needs a little more work on the issues of security and stability and a lot more patriotism.”

Minister of Industry and Trade, Engineer Hisham Sharaf, has been quite vigilant in trying to control the illegal selling of fuel on the black market. This is not his main job, but it is the one that has been making headlines in the official media. Sharaf has also been meeting with members of the diplomatic community to lobby for their support of Yemen, both as a nation and a state.

He is doing this not only through his role as Minister of Trade, but also because his ministry is responsible for protection against commercial fraud, consumer protection, and the breaking of commercial monopolies.

Hisham Sharaf is one of the few ministers who has no problem mingling with people in the streets without any body guards, despite the political instability and the visible grudges against the regime which he represents. His latest project is overcoming the fuel crisis by selling unleaded fuel on the Yemeni market at international prices. He believes this will end the black market by decreasing smugglers’ profits and without causing the government much loss. He hopes this will gradually ease the country’s economy into a more normal condition.

Nadia Al-Sakkaf interviewed the Minister of Trade about his views of the next phase in Yemen’s future, with special emphasis on the economic deterioration that has engulfed the country.



Hisham Sharaf : The fuel prices and scarcity is a very troubling characteristic of this phase and is one which has affected everyday life. The reason for the oil crisis was basically the shortage in production and an inability to transport oil purchased from abroad to towns across the country.

Despite what is being said about Yemen’s political dilemma and the need for change, there is one issue that is true: Yemen was never economically ready for the millennium challenges. Not because of the conflicts or the political disagreements, but rather because the country’s economy was not built on manufacturing, industry or other non-oil activities.

This may sound like a disadvantage and indeed it definitely is, however, ironically it is the simple traditional economic structure of the country that has actually saved it during the world economic crisis of 2009. It has also saved the country during the crises and more recent armed conflicts of this year.

For example, the Central Bank has announced that it can cover the needed credits for food items at the rate of YR 213.85 per US dollar, although in reality this rate is subject to the market supply and demand and the Yemeni Rial exchange rate ranges today between 230 to 240 per US dollar.

Considering the current situation of Yemen, and the conflicts the country has gone through, one would have expected the currency to have collapsed long ago, but it has not, and there is a reason for this.

One explanation is that while there were armed clashes in many areas around the country, hard currency was being pumped into Yemen through individuals and organizations in other countries – mainly from the Gulf such as the state of Qatar and the Muslim Brotherhood charities.

Ironically, although this was meant to strengthen the opposition against the state, it actually saved the economy from any shock that otherwise could have happened within weeks of the crisis beginning.

Also, during this crisis government expenditure has centered around essential issues such as salaries and covering basic commodities.

Another reason is that Yemen is surrounded by relatively strong economies, such as Saudi Arabia, the United Arab Emirates and Oman, and never at any point since January did Yemeni borders close to merchandise and products including fuel coming from abroad.

Therefore, Yemen’s economy should still not be portrayed as collapsing. Such a situation of collapse would be when all the ports have shut down, the airlines cease to operate, no products are found in the market, and the state fails to pay its employees’ salaries, etc. None of these are happening today which says something.

Actually, there is no reason for the economic situation to have deteriorated this much because of politics. Why can’t the politicians fight their own battles in a civil manner and let the rest of the country thrive without harming people’s very basic needs? Politicians

serve the public and not the reverse. Those politicians should know that they have a limited time to agree amongst each other.

I understand that there have been talks as to why the president did not sign the Gulf initiative in the first place, and that this could have saved the country from reaching this point. But first of all let me say that President Saleh was ready to go ahead with the initiative and sign. The problem was that some opposition leaders took the subject too personally and refused to attend a protocol ceremony at the presidential palace, although the US Ambassador was there. That situation made things more complicated and there was no signing.

The truth is that you cannot have your cake and eat it. The opposition leaders wanted to sign the initiative and they did. But they did not want to be seen doing so on TV by the whole world including the members of the youth movement.

Today things are different. President Saleh cannot give up power while Sana’a and other cities are full of armed militia and outlaws. The initiative can go ahead again when we create a suitably stable environment with proper circumstances in the country, i.e. the removal of all armed groups and militias and the resumption of regular living conditions. Sound political arguments can be implemented when we talk and discuss around the table, not while we are shooting at each other.

Post-conflict economy

Yes, there was a problem of ensuring the roads were open for goods to arrive at their destinations safely, and also the transportation of products from ports to cities and towns across the country, but nevertheless they did and do still find their way to local markets. Yemeni businessmen and traders are serving the people of Yemen, not the government or the opposition.

If you go to the main malls or supermarkets you will find their shelves still very much stacked with items, and the merchants have used their external hard currency accounts and their international networks to purchase goods, especially in preparation for the high consumption season of Ramadan.

That being said, we must also acknowledge that purchasing power has gone down significantly, especially among the low- and middle-class income families.

But going back to the supply side of the story, you will be surprised to know that between the beginning of the year and July 9, 2011, 1.7 million tons of wheat entered the country. This is even higher than the for same period last year, even though this year was characterized by instability and armed conflict. The same applies to sugar, rice and other commodities.

The crisis did not stop the Yemeni

business market from working, even if it did negatively impact it in some ways. It is probably something of a unique characteristic of the Yemeni people and culture that they are resilient, and in a way because Yemenis are used to crises, this has allowed the country to navigate its way economically. Somehow people have got used to what is known as a post-crisis conflict economy, which ironically is characterized by an abundance in merchandise and having many operating entry points to allow products into the country. This of course applies to the import of food items of all kinds.

You may be surprised to learn that currently there are several ships parked offshore in Yemeni waters selling oil, diesel and other petroleum products to the Yemeni government. The problem is that because of the instability, they are demanding cash which we cannot arrange in such a short time.

We have made several alternatives avenues for securing the needed fuel derivatives for the private sector. Either by allowing direct imports of fuel by the private sector, or by being the middle agent between the private sector and fuel exporters, whereby we get money in advance from Yemeni businessmen, then we buy the oil and guard it until it reaches them.

The problem is that due to oil subsidizing, we buy the oil at a higher price than we sell it through our gas stations and to the business sector. Also it is taking much longer to transport the oil with bandits blocking off roads and hijacking tankers. This has created a black market that is also contributing to the scarcity problem.

We realized that one efficient solution would be to deal with the issue of oil subsidies and at the same time allow the private sector to import oil directly on its own. The catch with the second option is that the business sector will eventually need to pass on the increased prices to the end consumers, because now they have to pay more for the operational costs of their factories.

The other problem is that oil tankers sell in chunks of such huge quantity that a single business could not use it. So when a group of businessmen get together to share a container bought from any Yemeni sea port, this means they will need to arrange for it to be divided and transported across the country. This is very risky and quite costly considering the unfortunate situation of bandits between cities. But you have to know that the government has offered its facilities and storage capacity for the private sector’s use.

We have just recently started doing it this way, and now we will sell unleaded oil at YR 3,500 per 20 liters. This way

we will be able to cover market demand, maybe not immediately, but after two or three shipments.

By the end of this month 20,000 tons of petrol will be available to Yemenis and another 200,000 tons is on its way to help satisfy market needs until the end of September. As for diesel, 270,000 tons will be available at the beginning of August 2011 and other quantities will follow.

We can import as much as the market needs and people will run away from smugglers and black market dealers. They will not be able to sell their smuggled petrol because fuel will be available all over the country.

The fuel prices and scarcity is a very troubling characteristic of this phase and is one which has affected everyday life. The reason for the oil crisis was basically the shortage in production and an inability to transport oil purchased from abroad to towns across the country.

Nevertheless, the economic deterioration is a symptom of a political problem and could be solved automatically, or at least be on its way to being solved once the country is politically stable. The only logical and efficient solution to do this is through having a coalition government made up of all political stakeholders in the country: mainly the regime, the traditional opposition, the youth and other stakeholders.

Those who care about Yemen’s future and the next generations should think of this as a good venue for a possible solution.

Once we create a reasonably stable political situation then we will conduct parliamentary elections. I believe that it is then that the revolution’s youth who proved their worth will play a significant role, provided they organize themselves into their own parties instead of allowing other parties to control them or use them to achieve their ends.

Actually there is no need and no use of ad-hoc measures such as the recently announced transitional presidential council to solve problems. Such councils are unconstitutional and no mandate gives them the right to speak on behalf of the youth movement.

I want to see the youth movement within a certain framework that talks to all stakeholders. They can organize into two or three parties and they can form a coordination council to be able to talk to the government and the opposition.

Those who formed the council or those who are behind it are responding to instructions from outside Yemen. Where are the representatives of the youth movement? Not the politicians who are already expired and who used to be part of the system itself. I am talking about young leaders with new visions. I

am talking about clean hearts and clean hands, those who are not receiving recourse or instructions from outside.

Exaggerated humanitarian crisis

A recent report conducted in Yemen by the World Food Program taking samples from some affected areas shows that there is an urgent need to help Yemen overcome food insecurity. However, the sampled areas for that report were exclusively taken from damaged areas targeting mainly displaced people, in order to build a case for Yemen and seek support from the international community at one of the UN and FAO meetings.

Such reports that talk about a humanitarian crisis and that the country is drowning in poverty and malnutrition provide only a partial picture of Yemen, and should not be used or understood to reflect the national reality. It is being used politically to attack the government instead being used to help the poor people of Yemen.

I am not saying that we don’t have a problem, in fact we have a significant problems economically and with poverty. But it is not true that half of Yemenis are threatened with starvation as recent local media reports have been promoting. That was used politically by some, not for the benefit of the poor but to attack the government.

It is also not fair or patriotic to claim that the country will collapse, because this will only push towards further deterioration of the economy. As you know, there is a virtual value for everything that is dependent on reputation and confidence in the brand, whether it is state institutions, the national economy or whatever.

This is the wrong attitude to have, especially in such difficult times. If we keep saying things are going downhill and the country has fallen apart, then what are we doing here trying to fix things? We might as well just close down everything and go home to die. This will harm all Yemenis except for those politicians who get their resources from outside the country.

We need to solve the problems. Yemen’s economic situation could be fixed easily, it just needs a little more work on the issue of security and stability and a lot more patriotism.

And we need to remember the facts before we go around spreading rumors. First of all, let’s remember that Yemen’s economy was not reliant for its GDP on factories or private economic activity etc. It was oil production which covered most of our costs such as salaries, national investment projects and capital investments in many areas.

Moreover, you need to remember that the entire national budget of the country

is no more than 8 billion USD. Our entire national annual budget is even less than that of any prominent university in the States.

In fact, just one month before the crisis in Feb. 2011 we had a cabinet meeting and we discussed the budget deficit of the total GDP in 2010 which was at around nine percent. When we created the projection for the 2011 budget assuming that salaries will be guaranteed, and that donor money and donor lead projects would enter the country, the deficit for 2011 would have dropped down to seven percent.

Then we met with the president to discuss the budget and he advised us that seven percent was quite high and that we should take it down even further. The president summoned the Minister of Finance and demanded that he did whatever he needed to do to decrease the 2011 deficit to four percent maximum.

That was an order from the president and it was no joke, so we had to cut expenditure here and there and decrease budget lines on various fronts in order to actually reach the requested margin. This shows everyone that our leadership was looking after such issues.

Coalition government

The reality of Yemen’s feeble economy in a way will be a source of pressure on both the opposition parties and the ruling party to come together and merge into a coalition government. This would be the case if they were looking after the country and Yemenis’ best interests.

Within this government each side will present their best men in order to prove to the constituencies that they are the answer to their problems, and this will be the real preparation for elections that should happen shortly after the creation of such a coalition government.

Moreover, a coalition government is probably the only solution to all of Yemen’s problems, because no matter who comes to power next they will face the same challenges and will not be able to deliver according to the people’s expectations considering how hard the situation has become today on so many levels. Don’t forget that Yemen is a versatile country with different political, social, cultural and geographic backgrounds, and therefore needs a government that truly represents the diverse nature of its people.

I don’t deny that things could have been much better and there have been many structural disorders and imbalances in the country’s economy for some time, but really Yemen is not an easy country to run. Think about this, a huge illiteracy rate reaching sometimes as high as 60 percent in rural areas, and a dispersed rural community spread across a vast geographic area that makes it difficult to reach them. It also has one of the highest population growth rates in the world with more than six children on average for every Yemeni woman.

Yemen’s political instability is not something recent or created by one regime. The country, both north and south, have gone through so many difficult political situations since the early sixties and seventies. We have never been able as a nation to truly breathe and look after ourselves and allow interested investors to contribute to our development.

We need ten years of peace, security and stability to work on the economy. We have to leave the politicians aside to discuss and talk and talk until they reach a certain vision on their politics in a way that does not affect our economic development.

Yemen needs more investors, more jobs, more tourists and a civil state to run the show. The people of Yemen will salute those who create sources of income for the youth, but not those who misuse the youth to reach their political interests and manipulate Yemen’s future.

إعلانات مبوبة



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عالمه الصوفي - خريجة شريعة وقانون جامعة صنعاء 2007م دبلوم محاسبية - كمبيوتر - طالبة شبيكات سكرتيرة أو أي عمل إداري. للتواصل: 700341587

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وزارة حقوق الانسان وزارة الاتصالات وتقنية المعلومات وزارة الادارة المحلية وزارة الاعلام وزارة التخطيط والتعاون الدولي وزارة التربية والتعليم وزارة الخارجية وزارة الداخلية وزارة المالية وزارة المواصلاات وزارة المياه والبيئة وزارة الكهرباء

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للبيع سيارة سوناتا أجرة موديل 2006 للتواصل: 700198874-777955508

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أرض عشاش حدة مساحة 30لبنه عشاري على شارع 12م بصمة الشرق معمه أوراقها في السجل العقاري ومسورة ومبوية. صنعاء- شارع 45 المسمى شارع اللواء محمد عبدالله صالح 777201079-733677848

منزل مكون من ثمان لبن في شارع الزراعه والسعر مغري. للتواصل: 777726176

باص 7 راكب نقل 2, سعر مناسب قابل للتفاوض وهو في حاله جيده موديل 1997م. علي عبد الغيل ت: 771533817

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Hussein Al-Qadhi



By: Shatha Al-Harazi

Hussein Al-Qadhi, 24, was one of the first young men who started an anti-government sit-in at 'Change Square' in Marib governorate earlier this year in March. The common stereotype of the tribes in Marib is of them being armed and violent, but Al-Qadhi wanted to show that the people of Marib are equally able to protest peacefully. Among others, he was successfully able to encourage the tribal youth in Marib's 'Change Square' to lay their weapons aside and protest peacefully under banners.

When protests first began in Marib, they were not calling for the overthrow of the regime. Hussein and his friends from various tribes in Marib had gathered for a qat chewing session by candle light. During the qat-inspired brain storming session, they discussed what action

should be taken so that Marib was treated equally with other cities as far as having access to electricity.

The youth in that session decided to protest in front of the governorate building to demand more hours of electricity. The next morning 40 young tribal youth went and protested but they were soon attacked Central Security Forces and Republican Guard with live ammunition and two were wounded.

"All we demanded at the beginning was equal distribution of electricity, as the gas [power generating] station is in Marib, but the electricity is always off in Marib and on in other governorates," said Hussein.

When soldiers opened fire on the protesters, the protesters immediately escalated their demands shouting for the regime to withdraw.

"At that moment our weapons were in the car but we didn't use them. We encouraged all protest-

ers to remain peaceful, and show that the power is in not returning violence, but in demanding their rights strongly," Hussein explained.

The protesters brought their tents and created a sit-in and then marched on the governorate building. The governor himself left the building and shot at the protesters according to some who were there. The official news agency, however, reported that protesters broke into the building and stabbed the governor in his neck.

The republican guards and central security joined in the attack against the protesters at this time, and at least seven protesters were wounded.

"He [the governor] came out. I saw him with my own eyes, and he was the first to shoot," said Hussein.

The regime has repeatedly accused the tribes and the political opposition parties of preventing fuel trucks from traveling

between Marib governorate and the capital Sana'a.

Hussein was one of three young protesters who wanted to show that the regime's accusations against the tribes were lies. He offered the director of the fuel company assurances that the trucks would arrive safely to Sana'a. They offered to protect the trucks, and even to drive it them if needed. According to Hussein the director initially seemed happy with that solution and promised to call them in few days, but the call never came. The director then became unreachable.

"Ten of the fuel trucks owned by Ahmed Ali [the president's son] were taken by thugs. Some were taken by those who called themselves revolutionaries, but were not. So that's when the company decided to no longer transfer fuel to Sana'a and the

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[fuel] crisis began," said Hussein.

Now there are two protest squares in Marib. One is the peaceful sit-in protest in front of the governorate building where the protesters plan and hold political discussions. The second protest square is in front of the government buildings and is armed to protect the buildings from thugs and looting.

"We revolted in Marib seeking to change two things. First, the stereotype that the tribes of Marib are violent, and to show that armed people can use a peaceful path. Second to demand the withdrawal of the regime,"

said Hussein.

Two escalation plans have been suggested by political parties and some revolutionary figures in Sana'a - a National Council or a transitional council. When asked which plan he prefers, Hussein said that those Marib's 'Change Square' lean more towards the transitional council, even though a National Council would include members from Marib's 'Change Square' and the transitional council would not.

"We need a realistic solution now to end the fuel crisis, and the transitional council seems the solution," he said.

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