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Benomar talks Houthi conflict, silent on who is responsible

■ Ali Ibrahim Al-Moshki

SANA'A, June 22—UN Special Adviser on Yemen Jamal Benomar has stirred up controversy in Yemen with his report to the UN Security Council on Friday. He drew criticism for failing to publically mention the government's involvement in the Houthi conflict and for shying away from holding parties to account.

During the closed-door meeting to discuss the political transition and the latest developments in Yemen, Benomar said ongoing clashes in Amran are taking place between the Houthis and other militia groups but didn't specify which groups he was referring to.

Benomar informed the Security Council that Yemen needs a political process in the north to ensure sustainability of the current truce and establish a peace plan through direct negotiations based on the National Dialogue Conference (NDC) outcomes.

A truce supervised by the Defense Ministry between the Houthis and the 310th Armored Brigade in Amran on June 4 was broken ten

days later. The government has claimed the truce was broken by the Houthis, but Benomar did not mention the truce being broken at all.

"Benomar's speech was very poorly written because he [barely touched on] the human suffering caused by wars in Yemen," said human rights activist Habib Al-Dhabiani. "Benomar also didn't explicitly mention those who obstruct the political process in Yemen... although people anticipated that he would."

Al-Dhabiani asserts that Benomar's report serves the Houthis because he didn't say they are fighting the military, instead describing their opponents as militia.

In contrast, Ali Al-Emad, a member of the Houthi's Political Office in Sana'a, said Benomar's report was very balanced and realistically conveyed the situation. In his view, the report correctly implied that those fighting the Houthis belong to the Islah Party, not the army.

The Houthis claim the 310th Armored Brigade, whose commander is a member of the Islah party, is a militia rather than part of the central government.

"We are committed to the Nation-

al Dialogue Conference outcomes, particularly the weapons handover. We will hand over our weapons as long as other armed groups do so," said Al-Emad. He continued, "Islah supporters were expecting that the report would say the Houthis are terrorists and rebels, but the report disappointed them."

Ahmed Abdulmoghni, a member of Islah, said that Benomar's report is dangerous because it implied the military forces pitted against the Houthis are militia. "This report is widely criticized by people in Yemen," he added.

Zaid Al-Shami, the head of the Islah Party in Parliament, said Benomar wants to appear neutral and gain the approval of all sides. Al-Shami said the army, not Islah, is fighting the Houthis. "Warplanes target Houthi locations. This means the government orders this move of force," he explained.

Following the closed-door meeting, Benomar spoke to the press about his UN Security Council report.

"There are some factors that could negatively affect the transitional process in Yemen," Benomar

said, though not mentioning which factors in particular.

Security Council members expressed concern that some "spoilers" continue to create trouble in a bid to derail the implementation of the NDC outcomes and the remaining steps of the political transition, Benomar informed the press.

UN Security Council Resolution 2140 (2014), made on Feb. 26, 2014, established a sanctions committee to investigate and report to the council which individuals are disturbing the transition process in Yemen. The resolution calls for individuals, based on the committee's suggestions, to be sanctioned, yet no names have been put forth. The sanctions committee arrived in Yemen last week and met with former President Saleh.

Benomar stressed the importance of committing to the NDC outcomes that call for "disarming the armed groups and the return of government-owned weapons that were taken over." He also said that "international support for Yemen should be intensified... so that Yemen could be able to face the ongoing challenges."

Yemenis brace for the arrival of locust swarms

■ Amal Al-Yarisi

SANA'A, June 23—The Ministry of Agriculture and Irrigation is preparing for the arrival of swarms of locusts from Saudi Arabia to Yemen's northern Al-Jawf governorate.

Ahmed Saleh, a farmer in Al-Jawf, told the Yemen Times that he noticed a swarm of locusts in the governorate on Sunday and rushed to burn tires to keep the locusts away from the crops. "The swarms of locusts came from Saudi Arabia and went to other areas after we burned the tires," he said.

Saleh said they informed the ministry's office in Al-Jawf to take the needed precautions to protect crops from the locusts but nothing has happened so far.

"The ministry has monitored swarms of locusts coming from Saudi Arabia in Sa'ada, Marib and Al-Jawf. They have arrived in Yemen due to the north-easterly wind. They spread in different areas including Sana'a," Dr. Mohammed Yahia Al-Ghashm, deputy head of Agricultural Services at the Ministry of Agriculture and Irrigation, told the state-run September 26 news website.

Dr. Al-Ghashm explained,

"these locusts are unstable and sexually immature and are currently looking for a suitable place to land and lay eggs. The ministry is monitoring them until they reach their breeding grounds, which are usually Al-Jawf, Marib, Shabwa and Hadramout governorates during the summer. These areas are wet due to the rains and are suitable for the locusts to breed."

Field control teams are preparing to deal with the locusts and control their spread in the area, Al-Ghashm said. He added that they have coordinated with the security apparatus to enter these areas.

Al-Jawf and Shabwa are witnessing periodic fighting and it is necessary that government teams visiting these governorates coordinate with the security apparatus in advance.

Residents said that large swarms of locusts were also seen in Sana'a governorate, particularly in open areas such as Arhab, Al-Rahaba, and Bani Al-Harith districts.

Abdulla Al-Hashedi, deputy head of the ministry's office in Al-Jawf, told the Yemen Times that "although the office has weak capabilities, we are attempting to implement a plan to control the locusts."

Houthis advance towards Sana'a

■ Ali Saeed

SANA'A, June 22—Houthi fighters on Saturday took control of Matna city, the capital of Bani Matar, a district only ten kilometers from the capital Sana'a, Ali Al-Ghashmi, the deputy governor of Sana'a governorate, told the Yemen Times.

Matna is an important strategic gain for the Houthis because it is located on the Sana'a-Hodeida Road, a vital thoroughfare for commodities being supplied to the capital from the Red Sea port in Hodeida.

The Special Operations Command, the largest military camp in the vicinity of the capital, is located near Matna in the town of Subaha. Additionally, control of the road connecting Subaha to Shibam in Mahwit governorate was taken over by the Houthis on Friday, Al-Ghashmi said.

On Friday evening, Houthi rebels clashed with security forces in the Al-Jiraf neighborhood near Sana'a International Airport, according to local sources and the Ministry of Interior.

Two police cars were ambushed after the police arrested Houthi members near the Political Office of the Houthis, according to the Ministry of Interior. Seventeen policemen were reportedly injured. According to a Houthi press statement, there were no Houthi casualties but the Political Office building sustained some damage.

Ali Al-Emad, member of the Political Office of the Houthis, said in a conversation with the Yemen Times that security forces of the Interior Ministry attempted to break into the Houthis' Political Office and that the Houthis defended themselves.

A local source who lives in Al-Jiraf and asked not to have his name published in fear of reprisals, said that following the incident Houthi fighters mobilized around the Political Office and set up checkpoints at the neighborhood's entry points.



One of the police cars that was ambushed by the Houthis in Al-Jiraf in the capital Sana'a while the policemen were on duty.

As the Houthis were encroaching on Sana'a the Defense Ministry on Sunday proposed a ceasefire agreement in Amran and other fighting fronts. An earlier agreement on June 4, which was also supervised by the Defense Ministry, failed to hold.

Under the terms of the proposed agreement, a committee will visit the fighting fronts and will oversee the removal of "all new military posts set up by all parties in Amran, Arhab district, Hamdan district and Bani Mater district. The agreement is due to come into effect by Thursday.

The text of the agreement also reads as follows: "immediate change of military, security and administrative leaders must be undertaken [in Amran] within the maximum period of a month." Since March the Houthis have been demanding the removal of the 310th Armored Brigade's commander in Amran, General Hamid Al-Qushaibi. They accuse Al-Qushaibi of being loyal to the Islah party, with which the Houthis have very tense relations.

The recent developments in the conflict with the Houthis echoes the 70-day siege of the capital in 1968 by armed tribesmen supportive of

re-establishing the northern imamate. The imamate's supporters attempted a coup against the newly-formed republican government, but failed to control Sana'a after the republicans used warplanes against them.

The Houthis, a heavily armed rebel group made up of Zaydi-Shiites, are accused of attempting to revive imamate rule in north Yemen, which lasted from 1918 to 1962. They entered into six rounds of war with the national army between 2004 and 2010, and have been engaged in periodic confrontations since then.

"These accusations were made when we were fighting in Maran," said Al-Emad, referring to the hometown of the Houthis' founder Hussein Badr Al-Din Al-Houthi in Sa'ada. "We are defending ourselves," he said.

The Houthis took over Sa'ada in March 2011 during the uprising against former President Ali Abdullah Saleh. They participated in the National Dialogue Conference (NDC) that aimed at establishing a new political system for the country following Saleh's departure from office.

The NDC outcome to disarm all militias of heavy weaponry has yet to be carried out.

"Because the interim government, headed by Hadi, failed to implement the NDC outcomes, Ansar Allah [the Houthi military wing] is obliged to struggle to access the implementation of the NDC outcomes," said Al-Emad.

Ridhwan Al-Hamdani, a senior editor at the state-run Saba News Agency, said that "the state will pay a heavy price if it does not act quickly to prevent the Houthis from controlling the Hodeida-Sana'a road."

Al-Ghail and Darwan, villages in Hamdan district about six kilometers away from Al-Azraqin security checkpoint—the northern entrance of the capital Sana'a—witnessed on Friday heavy fighting between the Houthis and local armed tribesmen affiliated to the predominantly Sunni Islah Party.

These new fighting fronts have expanded amid ongoing battles between the Houthis and the 310th Armored Brigade in Amran, 50 kilometers north of the capital, since mid-May.

In March, President Hadi met tribesmen from areas surrounding Sana'a, including Bani Mater in the west, Hamdan in the north, and Bani Hushaish in the east, according to Saba News. Hadi called on the tribesmen to defend the capital.

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Local Houthi leader assassinated in Al-Dhale

■ **Amal Al-Yarisi**

SANA'A, June 22—Mohammed Saleh Al-Hashimi, head of the Houthi movement in Al-Dhale, was assassinated on Sunday by unidentified gunmen.

Two masked gunmen on a motorbike opened fire on Al-Hashimi and his son when they were in front of their house in the airport neighborhood of Al-Dhale, according to Walid Al-Khatib, the media officer of the Al-Dhale Supreme Coordinating Committee, a local militia established early this year

to provide security in the city.

A bullet struck Al-Hashimi in the head, killing him immediately, while his son sustained an injury to his hand, according to Mohammed Mused Al-Aqla, a tribal leader in Al-Dhale.

Al-Hashimi, who was also the manager of the tourism office in the governorate, was previously a member of the Southern Movement (Hirak) before joining the Houthis. Al-Hashimi was trying to recruit locals to the Houthi movement amid heightened tension between the Houthis and other

armed groups.

Al-Khatib said the gunmen were not captured due to the increasing lawlessness of the governorate, which was formerly part of South Yemen. The army has been in conflict with local armed groups and pro-secessionists from the Southern Movement in Al-Dhale, Al-Khatib said, adding that "the security department in Al-Dhale is doing nothing."

The assassination comes as the 310th Armored Brigade backed by allied tribesmen is confronting Houthi rebels in Amran.

Secondary school exams resume after nearly 900 violations reported



mouthpiece for the General People's Congress which is widely seen as aligned to the faction of former President Ali Abdullah Saleh, responded to the allegations by saying: "the education minister's claim that leaking the exam was politically motivated is unfounded. It is impossible to believe in such claims. What happened is an indicator of the administrative failure of the Education Ministry. It is the first time the exams are leaked out in such a way. The education minister should be held accountable for this."

This has also the first time that leaked exam papers were widely circulated on Facebook and Twitter. Al-Ashwal emphasized that those suspected to have leaked the exam papers are being investigated.

The Education Ministry on Tuesday formed a committee to investigate the leak of high school examination papers on the topics of algebra, geometry, and geography. The ministry also took the initiative to replace papers on Arabic language, biography and chemistry. Students resumed their exams on Sunday, June 22.

"When I heard of the exam postponement, I felt a real shock. I did not expect it, and never heard of such incidents in the past. I was anxious to hear about the leaked papers. Now I feel calmer. I sat the Arabic language exam today, and I feel I did well," said Z. Al-Amari, a grade 12 student in Sana'a.

She hopes the remaining exams will be carried out without cheating and impersonation (the latter involves students getting others to write the exam on their behalf; something many can easily get away with given the over-crowding of examination centers).

Ali Al-Haimi, the deputy minister of education, told the state-run 26 September newspaper that investigations are ongoing.

Al-Haimi said the violations reported included cheating, breaking into centers and impersonation. He added that the Operations Department of the Education Ministry is keeping a close eye on the examination process in the country and will help in resolving any problems that may come up.

■ **Khalid Al-Karimi**

SANA'A, June 22—The Ministry of Education reported 896 violations during the first week of secondary school examinations in Yemen, said Abdulrazaq Al-Ashwal, minister of education. He said violations this year ranged from cheating to impersonation, as well as unprecedented leaks of exam papers.

"We know worse violations happened in the past, yet these issues were not reported. However, now we have followed through with the transparency and accountability policy," said Al-Ashwal in an interview with the state-run Al-Thawra newspaper published on

Sunday.

Al-Ashwal believes this year's unprecedented leaking of papers was a politically motivated ploy against himself and President Abdu Rabu Mansour Hadi. "I call on the readership to question why the exam papers were leaked in Abyan and Hajja. It is clear that the exams were leaked in these two governorates because the minister and the president are based there. They also want to show the government and the state are failures. This is a problematic scenario that targets the revolution and the entire political reconciliation," he said.

Abdumalik Al-Fuhaidi, the editor-in-chief of Al-Motamr Net, a

Three soldiers abducted in Ibb

■ **Ali Ibrahim Al-Moshki**

SANA'A, June 22—A source from the 55th Artillery Brigade positioned in Yareem district of Ibb alleged that gunmen kidnapped three of the brigade's soldiers Thursday and took them to Rada'a district of Al-Beidha.

Colonel Ismael Al-Jaifi, chief of staff of the 55th Brigade, alleged that Al-Qaeda gunmen abducted the soldiers in Al-Radhma area as the three were returning to the brigade base in a truck. He said that tribal mediators informed the

brigade's command that the soldiers were taken to Al-Sabah village in Rada'a district.

"A tribal mediation [committee] led by sheikhs from the Al-Waqedi tribal family has intervened to release the soldiers but we have informed the security apparatus to be ready in case the mediation fails," according to Al-Jaifi.

Abdulqawi Al-Said, a soldier from the brigade, alleged that a well-known local tribal leader with links to Al-Qaeda was behind the hostage taking.

According to Ghamdan Odah,

a resident of Al-Radhma district, the local tribal leader "is known for his affiliation to Al-Qaeda." Odah added, "we see Al-Qaeda cars driving to Sabah area in Rada'a where [the tribal leader] is positioned."

Several tribes in the district are alleged to have direct or indirect links to Al-Qaeda, such as the Al-Dahab tribe whose members have been the target of US drone strikes in the past. The Al-Dahab tribe controlled Rada'a district in 2012 but withdrew after an agreement with the military.



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- Provide technical assistance in and contribute to the development, management and facilitation of the implementation of C4D strategy and plans of action aiming at general public and service providers through:
 - Behavior and social change at individual/household levels;
 - Social mobilization of civil society organizations; and
 - Increased community participation in development programmes for positive social change.
- Contribute to the budget and programme review and planning processes as required.

2. Provides technical support and assistance in the research, development, pre-testing, and production of culturally relevant communication materials.

- In Collaboration with partners in the Field Office and at national level, carry out or assist in formative research, development, pre-testing and production of culturally relevant communication materials to ensure effective and efficient programme delivery.
- Supports the UNICEF global communications objectives and strategies through development of complementary country specific and local community materials to the required quality standards.

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GPC faces bleak future

■ Khalid Al-Karimi

Since its establishment in August of 1982, the General People's Congress has been in the lead in the political arena in Yemen. Prior to unity, the party dominated politics in the northern Arab Republic of Yemen under former President Ali Abdullah Saleh.

When the South and the North merged into the Republic of Yemen, Saleh continued to be both the head of the GPC and the president of the united Yemen. The GPC has been the most powerful political party given its strength in parliament during Saleh's reign and its relatively broad support base. Election results, although highly controversial, continuously swept the GPC to power.

When Saleh handed over the power to President Abdu Rabu Mansour Hadi in February of 2012, Saleh was still the president of the GPC, of which Hadi is general secretary. The power handover was based on the Gulf Initiative which both Saleh and the heads of the various other political factions signed in Riyadh in November of 2011. Despite Saleh's unwillingness to ink the agreement, he was somewhat reassured that the person he was handing power to was at that time an ally.

However, we are now seeing the growing rifts in the GPC being brought to the fore. When on June 11 President Hadi ordered the shutdown of Yemen Today, a TV channel owned by Saleh, the disharmony between the two GPC politicians seemed patently obvious. Official news institutions said the channel functions to provoke anarchy in the country.

On the second day of the channel's closure, the state-run Al-Thawra newspaper wrote, "when any media institution turns into a means to spark sabotage, violence, dispute and threaten the social welfare, it becomes dangerous for the stability and security of the country, the society and the people." Considering the channel is seen as a mouthpiece for Saleh but also promotes the GPC, its



closure is a blow to both.

Following the closure, the GPC issued a statement denying accusations that Yemen Today operates to spark chaos. The statement also called for the return of looted equipment and demanded the "perpetrators" of the closure and raid of the channel stand a trial. Although the Presidential Guards told the state-run Saba News Agency that shutting down the channel was a regulatory measure by the secretary general of the GPC, namely President Hadi, the GPC statement described the channel shutdown as "gross misconduct." The statement also referred to the incident as "illegal and a coup against the National Dialogue Conference outcomes." The controversy is very telling of the GPC's current dilemmas. With its heads divided, its power could be seriously waning.

But the controversies and ruthless politicking between Saleh and Hadi did not begin with the channel's closure, nor do they end there. In October of 2013, Hadi held a meeting in Sana'a in the presence of the NDC and Jamal Benomar, the United Nations Special Envoy to Yemen, hinting that he would annul the immunity law and enact the political alienation law against Saleh. This strongly suggested that both Saleh and Hadi were heading for a showdown.

Last week, the Presidential Guards besieged the eponymous Al-Saleh mosque, which overlooks the presidential house. Local media reported that the mosque contained a hidden stockpile of weapons. Whether this

information is authentic or not, the internal tension of the GPC was out in the open for all to see.

The GPC sustained its first big blow after the breakout of the 2011 uprising. Many government officials and military commanders stepped aside, declaring their support for the protesters, especially after the Friday of Dignity on March 18, 2011, when snipers opposing the uprising shot over 50 people dead.

New parties were established after the 2011 uprising including the Justice and Reconstruction Party whose founders were leading members of the GPC. Prior to 2011, Salafi leaders would preach against disobeying the authorities. But the uprising changed their convictions too. Salafis set up their own political union that was declared in June of 2012. The proliferation of parties does not seem to serve the purpose of the GPC given the fact the founders of such new parties were satisfied or silent towards the governance the ruling party.

When considering the fate of the GPC, it is also worth noting that it is not a truly national party. It is a party of leader worship. As a consequence, the demise of Saleh and the internal feuding between him and Hadi could potentially spell disaster for the party. Although it may be too early to say that the GPC is perishing alongside Saleh's political career, what we can be sure of is that the party will weaken after the departure of Saleh.

Critics of the GPC point out that the former regime embezzled vast amounts of public funds and ruled through complex networks of patronage. Now that Saleh is no longer at the helm of the state he cannot lavish resources on loyal tribes and individuals in the manner he once did. Although Saleh still maintains ties with powerful tribal figures in the country, these alliances are increasingly at risk of falling apart.

With Saleh and President Hadi still at loggerheads and the tension between them only heating up, the GPC faces an increasingly bleak future.

FROM THE ARCHIVES

First published Feb. 15, 1999

Yemen Socialist Party

The Yemeni Socialist Party (YSP) has passed through four main stages since its establishment on March 9, 1979. This came in the unification conference which stated that the YSP is the legitimate inheritor of all of the Yemeni nationalist movements, which worked for the nation's liberation and revolution.



The first stage

The YSP's formation was the result of a union of two groups, one that worked in all of Yemen, and the second that limited its activity to the southern part of the country. The first group included a number of parties:

a) Al Ba'ath was established in Aden in 1958 and it was split in 1972 into two main groups. The first was either loyal to the Ba'ath party in Iraq or to its rival in Syria. The second called itself the Popular Pioneering Party and followed the Marxist Leninist policies. That party also later was divided into two sections, one in the south and the other in the north which became part of the YSP.

b) The Pan-Arab Nationalist group which was created in 1959 and indulged in armed struggle for the liberation of the southern area of the country.

c) The Marxist trend which was weakened due to the Arab Nationalists' hostility. It formed the People's Democratic Union in the north which later merged in the Socialists Party.

The second group included six parties that limited their activities to the southern part of the country, some of which shared in the ruling authority.

The Second Stage

The YSP's second stage covered the sixties and mid seventies during

which the world witnessed a period of socialist expansion, especially in Third World countries.

In Yemen only the People's Democratic Union was formed as a Marxist party and later other groupings such as the Nationalist Front, which ruled southern Yemen, the Yemeni Revolutionary Democratic Party, the Popular Pioneering Party and the Labor Party gradually declared their commitment to Marxist ideology. The leftist parties in Yemen then competed to prove that they were more Marxist than one another.

The Third Stage

The third stage was the unification one, when the National Front, the Unionist People's Democratic Party and the Popular Pioneering Party signed a unification agreement on February 5, 1975 to establish the National Front which was the one and only ruling party in what was then South Yemen. Other leftist parties signed a similar agreement one year later but which later witnessed the withdrawal of the Ba'ath party.

At the same time, leftist parties in Yemen, north and south, opened a dialogue on political activities leading to the revolutionary change and unification of Yemen. They resolved to establish a pioneering

party in the south that would struggle for the downfall of the regime in the north and declare the establishment of the unified Yemeni state and signed an agreement to that effect on September 12, 1978.

The leftist parties in the north each held their own conference then held their first unification conference on March 8, 1979 which agreed to establish the Yemeni Socialist Party in the south and the People's Unity Party in the north that would merge following unification of Yemen.

On March 9, 1979, the unification conference was held in Aden, without official announcement, in which two political programs were passed for the south and the north with one party leadership.

The party's main goals in the south was establishing socialism without passing through the capitalist stage as a transitory period. The party's main target in the north, however, was to pave the way for revolutionary changes in the north and establishment of the unified Yemen.

The Fourth Stage

The fourth and final stage started in 1987 when theoretical changes in the party began including the talks on nationalist merger to overcome backwardness. The party also spoke of democratic instead of revolutionary change in the north. The party called for drafting a new concept for unity of Yemen that benefits from experiments of both regimes in north and south via peaceful means and on a democratic basis. The YSP relinquished the old economic concepts and endorsed the market economy, and democracy and liberal policies became the party's new political path.

The YSP's fourth general conference last November endorsed those basic new doctrines.

VOXPOP

The closure of Yemen Today TV channel: for or against?

■ Ezzaddin Al-Zain and Mohammed Al-Qalisi

On June 11 the headquarters of Yemen Today TV channel was raided by members of the Presidential Guard who had "presidential instructions to shut down the channel," according to Ahmed Al-Amri, a technician at Yemen Today. The private channel is owned by former President Ali Abdullah Saleh and was covering the protests in Sana'a over fuel shortages at the time it was shut down.

Some Sana'anis view the closure as a move against freedom of the press in the country, while others allege the station intentionally disrupted the transition process and was the mouthpiece of a dictator who ordered the killing of hundreds.

The debate is complicated by the political atmosphere in Yemen: the government has clamped down on the freedom of the press in recent months, deporting and refusing entry to multiple journalists. At the same time, so-called "spoilers of the transition," including Saleh, have been blamed by the UN and other organizations for disrupting the transitional process.

The Yemen Times asked Sana'anis what they think of President Hadi's decision to shut the channel down, and whether or not they think it should be reopened.

It is an irresponsible act to close the Yemen Today TV channel because such a move puts shackles on the freedom of the press. President Abdu Rabu Mansour Hadi should give orders to reopen the channel again.



Mohammed Al-Qaramani
Bright Advertisement Corporation employee

All channels that attempt to provoke people and create disorder must be closed in order to restore stability in the country. The situation has calmed after the Yemen Today channel was closed.



Ola Ahmed
Ministry of Foreign Affairs employee

I support this strong step by President Hadi because the channel tried to incite people to riot. It shouldn't be allowed to resume work because it will create disorder again.



Naseem Al-Matari
College student at Sana'a University

Each channel has its own policy and point of view and no one has the right to close it. Closing the channel was a wrong personal decision.



Hamoud Al-Sema
Famous Yemeni singer

Closing the Yemen Today was the right decision that serves the national interest because it attempts to create chaos. I support any decisions that aim to stop those who try to obstruct the political settlement in Yemen. There are other channels that must be closed too.



Mohammed Al-Saedi
Private sector employee

Other TV channels that aim to create disorder such as Aden Live ought to be closed along with the Yemen Today TV channel. A law should be made to regulate the work of the media.



Abdulrahman Al-Mualmi
State-run Saba News Agency journalist

Yemen's water crisis demands concerted action



Yemen is one of the most water scarce countries in the world, where consumption outstrips the rate of replenishment.

Murad Alazzany and Robert Sharp

Rapid population growth compounded by a flood of people relocating from villages to cities over the last four decades has resulted

in rapidly increased demands for dwindling water supplies. Wasteful flood irrigation and qat production, as well as poor water management, means that Sana'a is set to be the world's first capital to run out of water, and that could happen by 2040. What must be done?

Man and nature have contributed to the problem facing the

country, which is located in a dry and semi-arid region of the Arabian Peninsula. Not only is annual rainfall low, and not efficiently harvested, but Yemen does not have the finances to develop and support the water desalination facilities used to bridge the same water demand-supply gap jointly experienced by richer neighboring Arab

countries. For Yemen, it is reported that as much as 90 percent of water produced is used for small-scale farming at a time when agriculture, in the round, only contributes six percent to GDP. Regrettably, 50 percent of that available water for farming goes to the cultivation of qat, a mild narcotic plant chewed recreationally by most Yemeni men and many women. According to the Ministry of Agriculture, farmland acreage used for qat production has increased from 159,000 acres in 2011 to 162,000 in 2012. Add to the qat problem the random and unregulated sinking of wells, which further drains supplies, and it is clear that the situation appears to be getting out of control.

International and local reports suggest that water availability per capita is one of the lowest in the world. The World Bank in 1990 suggested that 71 percent of the Yemeni population had sufficient access to water, but this figure declined to 67 percent in 2004 while other countries' statistics were improving. Although the water situation is dire in some cities, it is most stressed in rural areas.

In Sana'a, residents usually receive public water once every nine days, while in Taiz they receive it every 45 days.

Some residents receive none and live on water they buy locally from wells outside cities. Villagers in some areas trek many kilometers along unpaved roads to reach working wells. One villager once described how two of his daughters had to walk to another village to fetch 40 liters of water from a well located far from their home.

He jokingly said that his daughters would drink half of the water on their trek back home.

In 1990, total water use in Yemen was 2,799 million cubic meters per year, and in 2010 it had increased to 3,970 million. A dry Yemen is a distinct possibility if nothing changes. A study by Qahtan Yehya Al-Asbahi reported that Yemen's total renewable water resources amount to 2.5 billion cubic meters per year. Yemen cannot sustain the loss. As a result, compounded by climate change, ground water aquifers are declining from one to seven meters each year. It is therefore only a matter of time before the existing groundwa-

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ter is all used up. Sana'a is likely to be the world's first dry capital. In 1972 its water table was 30 meters below the surface, but today it has dropped to a staggering 1,200 meters below in some areas.

There were 180 wells ten years ago, but because they cannot be drilled deep enough there are only 80 today.

Conflicts over water may become the norm in Yemen, although we argue that many Yemenis are not aware of the problem. If punitive and meaningful action is not taken soon, the consequences will be as long-term as they will be devastating. Yemen urgently needs policies and laws to govern its water and must also adopt regional best practice water management lessons. We advise President Hadi to take immediate action and to establish as a national priority a crisis committee with representation from various government ministries under senior National Security chairmanship.

The committee must be empowered to seek international advice and funding to quickly direct policies, strategies, advice, activities and laws to start a sea change for

Yemen's water management.

We suggest the immediate consideration of modern water technologies, including trials of drip irrigation for qat, more efficient rainwater harvesting, water meters, and domestic advice to all concerned households about water conservation measures including half-flush toilet technologies and the effective re-use of waste water. Equally important is the urgent need for a public outreach campaign to make people aware of the problem so they may begin their own water management, maybe supplemented by rewards and grants for innovation. Concurrently, Yemen should approach richer Gulf Cooperation Council countries for aid to support water desalination projects. If Yemen does not act quickly, there will come a time when Sana'a initially, and then the whole country, could run dry.

Murad Alazzany is an associate professor at Sana'a University, Yemen. Robert Sharp is an associate professor at the US National Defense University, Near East South Asia Center for Strategic Studies (NESAS), Washington DC, USA.

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A tale of two policies: US in Iraq and South Sudan

The US is becoming very skilled at conjuring up failed states, and helping them fail even more

Abdelwahab El-Affendi
aljazera.com
First published June 19

During the past couple of years, an almost identical scenario unfolded in two recently "liberated" countries whose regimes are proud US creations. In both cases, the leader, who also happens to be the

commander-in-chief of the armed forces, accused the vice-president of treason and crimes against the state and ordered his arrest. As the accused were forced to flee, the country descended into chaos and civil war.

The United States moved swiftly to tackle the crisis and safeguard its investment. But the policies it adopted in each country were diametrically opposed. In the first instance,

it hastened to enhance peace-keeping operations and put pressure on both sides into reaching a ceasefire and urged peace negotiations. The overall emphasis was on reconciliation and the reconstruction of the political space on a more equitable basis.

In the second, the US quickly voiced support for the leader, and even offered military assistance to crush the dissent. No offers of peace negotiations or ceasefire were made, and the leader was not advised to practice democratic virtues. In both countries, the situation continues to deteriorate. Ironically, the tyrant the US promised to help militarily is faring much worse than the one being supported politically.

The first country is South Sudan, and the second Iraq. Both were pet projects of US politicians and policy-makers, not to mention powerful lobbies. Both were initially trumpeted as glorious "missions accomplished."

A 'pre-failed' state

In the case of South Sudan, the investment included decades of support for the rebel Sudan People's Liberation Army (SPLA), and the constituency involved was much broader. Iraq was a more recent—and much more controversial—venture. But the investment was direct and massive: thousands of lives sacrificed and tens of billions of dollars squandered, not to mention reputations and careers staked. In both cases, the warning signs were clear from the beginning, but few wanted to take heed.

For decades, successive US administrations offered enthusiastic support for the South Sudan rebels, often in defiance of Cold War logic (SPLA rebels were supported by pro-Moscow Ethiopia and Cuba, while Sudan was a US ally when the rebellion broke out in 1983).

In 1985, a "Sudanese Spring" that was uniquely ahead of its time ushered in a democratic (and pro-Western) government.

Yet Washington support, even for peace, was conspicuous by its ab-

sence. By the end of its shaky tenure in 1989, the only democratic country in the region was paying the US more in debt service dues than it was receiving in "aid."

Ironically, the US moved to encourage peace negotiations when a military regime came to power in 1989, indicating that the habit of trusting of military dictators to break.

The Clinton administration presided over its own mini-Cold War in the region, only to reverse its "regime-change" policy in 2000 and initiate intelligence cooperation with Khartoum. The Bush administration did more of the same, and also pursued aggressive peace-making policies, culmination in the signing of Comprehensive Peace Agreement (CPA) of January 2005, which offered the South the option of secession.

Maintaining a united Sudan was the preferred US option, but the Darfur crisis intervened, making it difficult to provide the necessary support for the CPA. The US and its allies consequently presided over a shambolic process that ended in a chaotic separation, bringing into existence what many dubbed in advance a "pre-failed state."

Yet for the true believers, the warning signs (including serial atrocities by SPLA factions, a flawed 2010 elections, endemic corruption and gross human rights violations) were repeatedly brushed away. But as Mahmood Mamdani would later say about Darfur, this was seen as a "moral crusade" where politics was not allowed to intervene.

However, only the gullible and true believers would have been surprised when President Salva Kiir began sacking his generals en masse in early 2013, having earlier precipitated a senseless war with Khartoum. By mid-2013, he sacked his entire cabinet and practically dissolved the party hierarchy. In December 2013, a botched attempt to selectively disarm non-Dinka soldiers in the Presidential Guard led to a mutiny that was then dubbed a failed coup. Mass arrests of dissi-

dents followed, sparking a civil war that is still raging.

'A suicide pact'

In Iraq, the warning signs were even clearer, as the much trumpeted re-invention of a democratic Iraq turned into a debacle. US troops responded to the failure of the invasion to receive the universal welcome anticipated with tactics reminiscent of Saddam Hussein's brutal ways. Eventually, as the US gave up and decided to cut and run, the wily prime minister, Nouri Al-Maliki, saw an opportunity to carve anew his own power monopoly. He took full control of the army and security sector, and began to extend his dominance over the judiciary.

The parliament was paralyzed by factionalism, and the presidency's limited influence was compromised by President Jalal Talabani's ill health. But Maliki still tried to neutralize the presidency by charging Vice-President Tariq al-Hashemi, the most senior Sunni politician in the administration, with terrorism offenses in December 2011.

Al-Hashemi was forced to flee the country, but interestingly no effort was made to appoint an acting president or a new vice-president, which clearly meant that the objective was to paralyze the presidency, above all else.

Even before last week's calamity and the total collapse of the Iraqi army, it was clear to all rational observers that Maliki's power grab was going to send Iraq into a tail spin. But the US did nothing to restrain its ally, who chose the day after the completion of US troops to pull out to indict the vice-president.

He was warmly welcomed in the White House, and military support kept pouring in. Maliki, it is to be recalled, has been installed in 2006 with full CIA support in a naive attempt to "curtail Iranian influence." Keeping him sweet, the delusion still persists, will prevent him from falling into the arms of the Ayatollahs. This borders on the farcical, since the man is a true believer as far as Tehran was concerned, while

Washington is for him merely an ally of convenience.

It is clear that while the US has adopted the correct policy in South Sudan, albeit after trying everything else, its embrace of Maliki looks like a suicide pact. In both cases, the US has moved too late and done too little. In South Sudan, the credit goes to local regional actors (the African Union—AU, and the Intergovernmental Authority on Development—IGAD), who took lead in responding quickly and constructively to the situation.

IGAD provided mediation and sent monitors to police the ceasefire, while the AU set up a Commission of Inquiry to investigate claims of war crimes. The US had only to follow their lead. No such credible and competent actors existed in Iraq's vicinity. In both cases, the problem was not adopting a "tough love" policy towards its spoiled proteges, who were indulged too much for their own good.

The divergence in policies also reflects two sides of an "Orientalist" paradigm of condescension and demonization that continues to inform US foreign policy towards the region. In South Sudan, "Africans" were treated as children who are not responsible for their actions. So perpetrators of vile atrocities were not condemned and ostracized, but merely admonished to be "good boys."

In Iraq, people with genuine grievances were treated as "terrorists" who can only be annihilated, not as human beings who could be bargained with. In both cases, it was an attitude demeaning of those involved, and a policy that leads nowhere.

Dr. Abdelwahab Al-Affendi is Reader in Politics and the Center for the Study, University of Westminster and Coordinator of the Center's Democracy and Islam Program since 1998. His new book Genocidal Nightmares: Narratives of Insecurity and the Logic of Mass Atrocities will be published by Bloomsbury later this year.



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Radical clerics add fuel to fire in Iraq crisis

Mustafa Al-Kadhimi
al-monitor.com
First published June 20

The shock in the wake of the outbreak of violent acts in Iraq and the fall of entire cities under the grip of the Islamic State of Iraq and Syria (ISIS), as well as the emergence of different militant groups taking over territories in various cities, have upset the Iraqi scene. Perhaps the most dangerous part is the confusion that has accompanied the religious discourse of the two main sects in Iraq: the Sunnis and Shias.

A war of fatwas and sermons has filled the Sunni and Shia streets, mostly focusing on sectarian mobilization led by extremist clerics who have become part of the problem, instead of contributing to the solution.

Extremist Sunni clerics went as far as justifying the stance of militants and considering what is happening

in Iraq a "popular revolution," while completely disregarding the series of heinous crimes that were committed in the past few days and the marked presence of the terrorist ISIS organization on the ground.

As always, the pro-Muslim Brotherhood cleric Yusuf Al-Qaradawi, who lives in Qatar, supported this extremist current with his radical stance.

On the other hand, some extremist Shia clerics assumed that the incidents constituted a Sunni wave to oppress Shias, and they incited Shias against Sunnis and generalized the ISIS name to include all Sunnis of Iraq.

In fact, the national discourse was lost in the hubbub of the unprecedented sectarian mobilization of extremists from both sects. Sectarian slogans and expressions are more common than the ones directly referring to the crisis in Iraq, as a historical country undergoing a huge conflict to maintain its unity and the

coexistence of its citizens.

Most importantly, the bloodshed of innocent people under this escalation disappeared in the shadow of calls for defending their sanctities, including religious shrines, figures and political stances.

It seems that the rare attempts of moderate clerics from both sects, despite their high importance, are not enough to deter the fierce wave of extremism in Iraq.

In Sunni circles, the voice and discourse of Sheikh Ahmad Al-Qubaisi, a highly regarded cleric who called on Sunni Iraqis to confront the militants and expel them, was drowned out.

Moreover, only some parts of the recent statements of the high-ranking Iraqi Shia cleric Ali Al-Husseini Al-Sistani were published. In his statements, he tried to clarify the religious limits of the fatwa urging Iraqis to defend their country and its unity. He mentioned that the formation of militias should be forbid-

den and that armament should be restricted to the state only, besides calling on enlistment solely under the umbrella of the military institution.

What the Shia and Sunni clerics can do today is hold a large-scale meeting to produce a unified national discourse that impedes extremism and extremists.

Such meetings have been held various times in modern history, and after the US invasion in 2003 and the civil war in 2006. They largely contributed to appeasing the sectarian flare-up and preventing the country's derailment.

The problem is that such initiatives are not an easy task. They need intensive efforts, in addition to strong will, to—first and foremost—face the radical clerics. The latter do not embrace moderation in any way and tend to limit the influence and attractiveness of traditional clerics, who are very open to the concept of sectarian coexistence in Iraq.

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Studying in the dark

■ **Ali Abulohoom**

It has been about three weeks since the general exams conducted by the Ministry of Education began for students in grade nine and 12, but For Mohamed Al-Emad, a 19-year-old secondary school student, the days have felt like hours due to the constant electricity blackouts.

Al-Emad says he devoted the month prior to exams to revising his notes but that that time has been insufficient.

"I spend a few hours during the daylight to revise my school subjects. However, only half an hour is dedicated during the night to studying under the candle light; I can't bear the light of the candles as it hurts my eyes," said Al-Emad.

The majority of governorates in Yemen sunk into complete darkness two days before the exams started, due to an attack on the primary power station in Marib and the overall fuel crisis the country is experiencing.

Partial electricity outages, lasting up to 10 hours a day, have become commonplace following the 2011 uprising. Power outages have increased dramatically in the past two months, often lasting more than 18 hours a day. The government budget for 2014 is insufficient to import enough diesel to meet the country's demand, and attacks against oil pipelines and electricity stations

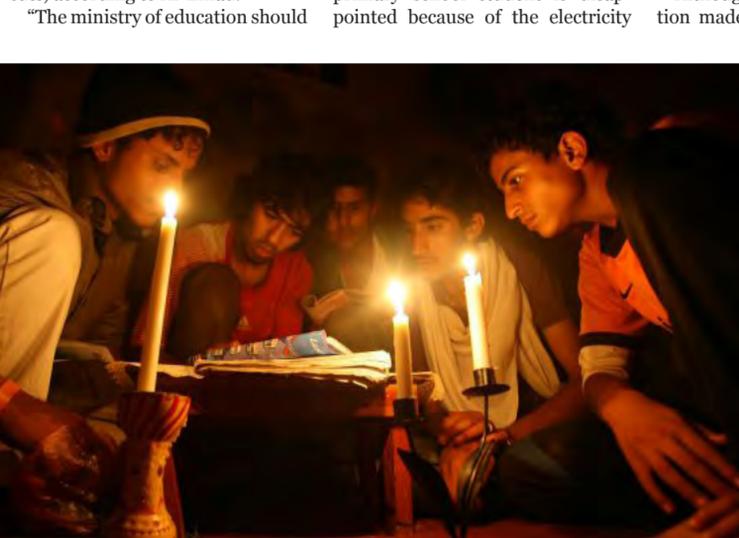
continue.

Although the Yemeni Petroleum Company announced on its website earlier this month—the same day as Sana'a's streets were blocked by protesters demanding the fuel crises be resolved—that the company has provided gas stations in Sana'a and all Yemeni governorates with fuel, little improvement has been seen on the ground so far and the electricity has reverted to sporadic cuts, according to Al-Emad.

"The ministry of education should

realize this bad situation is not our fault. How can we revise...?" Al-Emad said.

Abdualrazaq Al-Ashwal, the minister of education, said that he and the ministry personnel acknowledged the difficult situation students are facing due to the elec-



Electricity cuts lasting most of the day have become commonplace in Yemen, forcing students to study mostly by candlelight or preventing them from studying altogether.

tricity cuts. The minister promised that 10 percentage points would be added to all students' subject results if the average is lower than in previous years.

"We know that our children in both secondary and primary final grade exams have experienced difficulties so I encourage them to do their best and I will do my best for them," the Al-Ashwal said.

Sawsan Mohsen, a 15-year-old primary school student is disappointed because of the electricity

cuts. The minister promised that 10 percentage points would be added to all students' subject results if the average is lower than in previous years.

"Although I had two exams already, I have not had time to revise for other subjects," Saeed said.

For almost two months now, Saeed has been standing "almost six to seven hours daily in the station queues" to bring 10 liters of petrol to his father's bakery—the only source of income the family has, he says.

Although the minister of education made it public that he would personally support the students and give them extra marks if the average is too low, Saeed says "the minister and the government do not have to show sympathy for us, they must do their job and put an end to electricity and fuel crises."

The ministry of education announced that about 600,000 students from both secondary and primary school headed for exams in the second week of June. The ministry endorsed four different types of exams in each subject for secondary exams and three for primary exams in an attempt to eliminate cases of cheating and leaking of the exams prior

to start time. In previous years, only two exam versions were used.

Another new measure taken by the ministry to reduce cases of cheating was transporting the exams by plane to the remote governorates to prevent them being confiscated by bandits, as has happened in the

past.

But from the perspective of Shaima Ali, a 20-year-old secondary school student, these preventative measures are overrated.

"The students feel disappointed this year and instead of tightening the procedures taken by the minis-

try to eliminate leakage [of exams], they should find solutions for the students to help them study hard during this period."

Ali said "the ministry did futile things," but added that students are ultimately responsible for studying enough.

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they should find solutions for the students to help them study hard during this period."

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وَلْيُذَكِّرْ
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بقلوب مؤمنة بقضاء الله
نتقدم بأحر التعازي وأصدق المواساة القلبية الى
الأخ / مجيد صالح الأحمدى
وذلك لوفاء المغفور له بإذن الله تعالى /
أخيه / محمد صالح الأحمدى
سائلين المولى عز وجل أن يتفمّد الفقيد بواسع رحمته وأن
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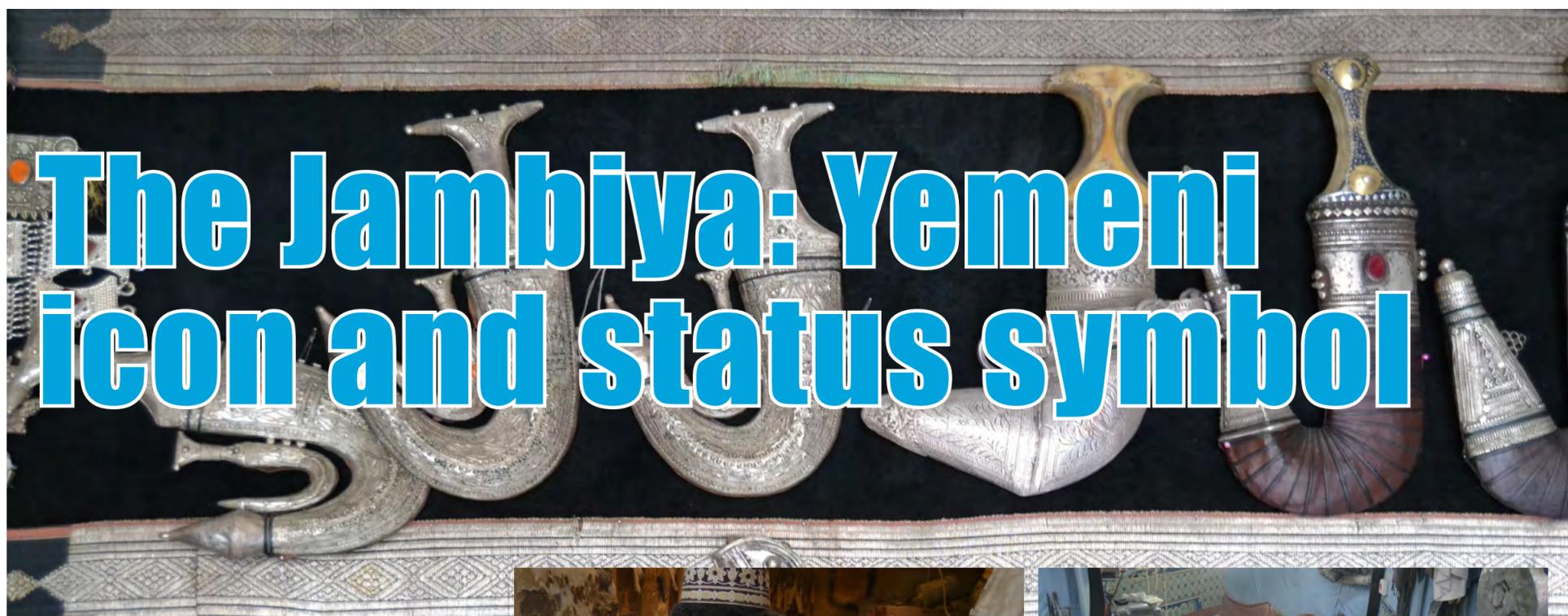
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The Jambiya: Yemeni icon and status symbol

■ Ezzaddin Al-Zain

Jambiyas are traditional Arabian daggers that are still popularly worn in Yemen. The Yemeni jambiya is typically a curved, thick, double-edged blade. The sheath is normally tucked into a thick embroidered belt. In Yemen, the styles of jambiyas differ remarkably from region to region.

The jambiya is worn by men as a token of their manhood and as a symbol of their wealth and social status. It is often gifted by fathers to their sons at the end of Ramadan to symbolize the transition from childhood to adulthood.

The price of jambiyas can vary from a few dollars to up to \$1 million. Najī Ab-

dulaziz Al-Shaef, the sheikh of the Bakil tribe, possesses a jambiya estimated at \$1 million. His jambiya is hundreds of years old and was once owned by Imam Ahmed Hamid Al-Din, who ruled Yemen from 1948 to 1962, the year of his death.

The worth of the dagger is usually determined by its handles—the most expensive jambiyas containing handles made out of rhino horn. Although in the 1970s and 1980s rhino horns were widely used for the handles of jambiyas, the Yemeni government has since put a ban on the rhino horn trade in compliance with international laws. This has led to a dramatic decline in the demand for rhino horn in the country, and nowadays jambiya makers use bone as an alternative to horn.



Abu Mohammad, a jambiya maker, took over the profession from his predecessors. His income relies solely on this business. Although there is little practical use for the daggers these days, they are nevertheless highly popular, as any trip through the streets of Sana'a will reveal. Men, rich and poor, wear them on all sorts of occasions.



Jambiyas are often characterized by intricate metallic patterns and inlays. Here, small holes are drilled into jambiya handles in order to attach decorative silver and copper buttons.



The Jambiya trade is highly specialized. Here, at one of the oldest jambiya workshops, the owner acts as a consultant to those seeking advice on the value of their jambiyas.



Rhino horn from East Africa was commonly used in the production of jambiya handles in the 1970s and 1980s. However, international pressures and a ban on rhino horn imposed by the Yemeni government has greatly reduced the demand for rhino horn in Yemen.



A lot of time and effort goes into designing the thick decorative jambiya belts. Artisans often spend weeks working on the belts, embroidering them with gold threads. In the shops the price of the belts ranges from \$18 to \$325. Often gold threads from France, India or Pakistan are used.



There are various types of jambiyas and their designs differ according to the region where they were made. Jambiyas made in Sana'a tend to have black handles and are decorated with brown and red colors. In the coastal areas, such as Hodeida, jambiyas are more commonly patterned with coins and engraved with figures of horses.



Ali Bin Ali sources jambiyas from different regions around Yemen and sells them to local shops. Some jambiyas are collectors' items that can fetch high prices abroad.

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A fresh start for climate change refugees

IRIN
First published June 12

Firmly attached to her home region and long used to the harshness of her living conditions, Amina Aliyu would probably not see herself as a potential “climate change refugee.” But there is a strong probability that in 10 or 15 years the place where she lives will no longer be fit for human habitation and migration to another region, or even another country, will be the only option.

Living in the toughest place on the planet

Home for Amina is the village of Sebana-Demale, just 60 km from the Danakil depression in north-eastern Ethiopia. This is one of the lowest places in altitude and one of the hottest anywhere on the planet, with temperatures of 40 degrees Celsius or more, all year round.

Aliyu's own village lies in a volcanic region described as one the harshest in Africa and often likened to a lunar landscape. There is a small river, the Demale, running through the village. Local residents, from the Afar people, with a long history as resourceful pastoralists, have tried in recent years to take up farming around the river. But not all families have access to motor pumps to draw water from the river when the depth of the water is low.

Aliyu has neither livestock nor the means to get food from the land. She lives off food aid and knows breaking out of that dependency will be difficult.

Difficult to leave, difficult to stay

Aliyu has seen climatic changes

first hand. Rainfall, already scarce, has further diminished. But Aliyu is adamant she will not abandon her home region for a less hostile environment. Asked if she could leave she responds emphatically—“no! Generations of my family lie buried here, I cannot leave them. This is my only home.”

But if living conditions become even less sustainable, Aliyu will face difficult options: to stay in the hope of finding new ways of generating income or receiving more external help; moving to another part of the region, or moving even further away and risking the loss of her coveted ancestral and cultural ties.

Mobility and planning

Cases like that of Aliyu are of obvious interest to the Nansen Initiative, which was set up by the Governments of Switzerland and Norway in October 2012. The Nansen Initiative seeks to develop “a protection agenda addressing the needs of people displaced across international borders by natural hazards, including the effects of climate change.”

Climate change and migration

The Nansen Initiative works on the premise that climate change and migration need to be looked at together. Climate change will mean larger populations being challenged by both sudden-onset disasters and slow-onset disasters in the future.

The Nansen Initiative argues that current planning mechanisms on climate change, both national and international, are insufficient. The body argues for more effective early warning for extreme climatic events, better water management and more sustained efforts to reduce pressure on fragile environments. The Nansen Initiative particularly high-

lights the need for the protection of affected populations.

In a joint policy brief with the UN University, Integrating Human Mobility Issues Within National Adaptation Plans, the Nansen Initiative highlights the need to integrate the idea of mobility and plan for it, rather than wait for people to flee.

The brief outlines obvious priorities. These include: putting human mobility at the heart of regional climate change and disaster risk management; identifying mobility and climate change in individual countries; helping countries design policies on migration, and ensuring affected communities are involved in any planning for their relocation and that resettlement leads to an improvement rather than a deterioration of living standards.

National Adaptation Programs (NAPs) are identified as the key mechanism whether in preventing unnecessary migration or in seeing migration as an adaptation strategy.

What turns “resilient” into “vulnerable?”

There is a warning here by the brief's authors of a lack of evidence to help countries draw up effective policy decisions. There needs to be more insight into the factors that can change environments so drastically, the circumstances that can make “resilient” households turn “vulnerable.” Countries also need to map out which communities might need to move. The brief argues, “once decision makers have an improved understanding of which populations may be on the move in the future, they can consider the appropriate elements to include in national adaptation planning.”

At present, the Nansen Initiative



A caravan of camels in Afar carrying blocks of salt cut from the Danakil Depression area.

has five sub-regional consultations underway in regions most affected by natural hazards and climate change. The findings will be used at a global consultative meeting planned for 2015, where government representatives and experts will discuss the protection agenda for cross-border displacement.

The International Organization for Migration (IOM) has already developed guidelines for integrating migration into the National Adaptation Planning process, notes the brief. It will be producing a module on migration and adaptation and will pilot test it in six countries in 2015.

Migrating to new jobs and livelihoods

The solutions on migration and climate change being proposed go beyond reinforcing planning mechanisms for countries facing natural disasters; they look also at the migration of affected populations to new countries, including relocation in the industrialized world and the employment possibilities that might be available.

The Nansen Initiative looks at

how states hosting migrants can provide a framework that “allows them to help their families with remittances so that they may stay on.” Part of the role for those states is providing professional training and sensitization programs and facilitating permanent migration.

The United States and the TPS solution

Some developed countries, like the United States, do provide Temporary Protected Status (TPS) to nationals from certain countries when there is evidence of extraordinary events and conditions taking place. These could include an ongoing armed conflict, such as a civil war, or an environmental crisis, such as an earthquake or hurricane, or an epidemic, events which could prevent migrants in the US from returning home.

The TPS allows migrants from those countries to work temporarily in the US and remit their earnings.

Since the 1990s, TPS has been granted in a number of cases, including Hurricane Mitch in Central America in 1998 where nationals of Nicaragua and Honduras were

granted TPS. Earthquakes in El Salvador (2001) and Haiti (2010) led to those countries being accorded the same status.

Koko Warner, head of the Environmental Migration, Social Vulnerability and Adaptation Section at the UNU and one of the lead authors of the new brief, says the TPS is useful as far as it goes.

“TPS is a way that some industrialized countries have chosen to manage the practical challenges of addressing human mobility (migration, displacement) in a context where the ‘normal’ policy frameworks to manage labor-related immigration and persecution-related fleeing (refugees) do not really apply,” Warner argues.

But she strikes a warning note, pointing out that “while constructive, one of the challenges of TPS today is that these kinds of policies are designed for temporary situations.” With TPS, Warner notes, “it is always assumed that people will be able to return to their place of origin.”

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CLOSING DATE: SATURDAY, 5 JULY 2014



TEEKAY CORPORATION



Jamal Benomar and the fine art of making peace in Yemen

Tik Root and Peter Salisbury
atlanticcouncil.org
First published June 17

Jamal Benomar, the UN special adviser on Yemen who in April started his fourth year on the job, isn't keen on talking about himself. He "hates" being profiled by the press, a colleague says. He seems far happier talking about the minutiae of the political transition he is overseeing. Yet with the departure of his friend and colleague Lakhdar Brahimi, who stepped down as UN special envoy to Syria at the end of May, Benomar has become the lone survivor of the UN's Arab Spring diplomatic middlemen. As such, the man and his methods are likely to be subject to growing scrutiny in the coming weeks and months.

UN diplomats have not had much luck in the aftermath of the Arab Spring. But in Yemen, the region's poorest and most fragile state before 2011, the political transition process set in motion by Benomar in 2011 is moving forward albeit increasingly unsteadily. Could Ye-

"Although they were happy to see the back of Saleh, many Yemenis were underwhelmed by their peace deal, which was based on Benomar's preferred model of coalition government, national dialogue, and incremental reform."

men, and Benomar, be the success story the international community so desperately needs? Or has its peace plan simply delayed the inevitable turmoil?

UN Secretary General Ban Ki Moon first dispatched Benomar to Yemen in April 2011. His arrival came roughly a month after what is now known as the "Friday of Dignity," when security forces opened fire on a peaceful demonstration killing an estimated forty-six people. Following the defection of Ali Mohsen Al-Ahmar, a onetime enforcer for then-president Ali Abdullah Saleh, to the side of anti-government protesters, the country was inching towards chaos.

Quickly entering the national consciousness as the country's arbitrator-in-chief Moroccan-born Benomar, a onetime political refugee who now holds British citizenship, aroused interest among anti-government activists. They were surprised to discover that, in his youth, the envoy had been not so different from them. "When I arrived, people Googled my name and a lot of stuff came up," he says. "I was a student activist. I distributed leaflets; I organized and took part in peaceful demonstrations against the government. We had this dream, that we wanted a different country. More prosperous, more democratic."

Over three decades after his activism landed him in prison and twenty years since he made his escape to UK, Benomar was watching another movement for change unfold from a very different viewpoint. Working from the executive suite of the upscale Movenpick hotel, perched atop a hill overlooking Sana'a, he shuttled from place

to place as fighting in the capital reached fever pitch. Yet rather than call for radical or instant change as he might have done as a younger man he advocated a step-by-step process based on dialogue.

The special adviser honed his attitude towards peacemaking over almost three decades of work, first as an academic, then at the UN. Since joining the international body in 1994, he has worked on some of the world's thorniest conflicts including Rwanda, Afghanistan, and Iraq. While preparing for a series of peace talks in Iraq in 2003, he authored a paper that distilled his thinking on the peacemaking process. He argued that it was important to allow elite groups ousted by internal conflict or external intervention to continue to play a role in national politics and advocated an interim power-sharing agreement between the main parties involved in conflicts as the best way of ensuring short-term stability. He placed a broadly inclusive national dialogue at the heart of any peace process.

Iraq's national dialogue was a resounding disappointment and few, if any, of Benomar's recommendations were used during the process. The de-Baathification process, which played a significant part in the country's current morass, little resembled his thoughts on keeping the elite involved. Ten years later, Benomar was, he says, trying to offer Yemenis a chance to shape the country's future without causing total social collapse. "[It was] all about addressing the inclusion deficit of the political process," he explains. But the more immediate task was bringing a spiraling conflict to a halt. "In 2011, it was clear that what you needed was for the two blocs to stop fighting."

After months of wrangling, Benomar's efforts seemed to be paying off. By November, he had helped convince Saleh, Yemen's president of more than three decades, to step down, pulling the country back from the brink of civil war. When Saleh quit, Yemenis joked that the bespectacled UN diplomat with the poker face and owl-like frown, should be made an honorary Yemeni for his part in keeping tensions from boiling over. Since then, he has also helped open space for once-marginalized political groups and Yemen's political transition has won praise from foreign diplomats who had privately believed the odds were stacked against the already unstable country. He was awarded particularly fulsome praise when he helped bring Yemen's National Dialogue Conference, a 10-month series of peace talks, to a close in January of this year. The 'Yemen Model' for peacemaking has subsequently been mooted as solution to a range of conflicts, including Syria's.

Although they were happy to see the back of Saleh, many Yemenis were underwhelmed by their peace

"Benomar, symbolic for many Yemenis of their country's internationally-backed political transition, has become a focal point for the frustrations they feel with both the perceived lack of progress and the overt role played by outside powers in national politics since Saleh's ouster."

deal, which was based on Benomar's preferred model of coalition government, national dialogue, and incremental reform. Those who had taken part in the protest movement looked to Egypt and Tunisia—where Hosni Mubarak and Ben Ali had been pushed out quickly, and preparations for parliamentary and presidential elections were already underway—as models for "the fall of the regime" that they had demanded. Tawakkol Karman, a leading force in the protest movement who was later awarded the Nobel Peace Prize for her role in Yemen's uprising, had demanded in 2011 that Benomar leave the country. The UN representative, she argued, was legitimizing violence against protesters by discussing a deal that would leave elements of the Saleh regime in place and hand the then-president immunity for crimes committed over the course of 2011.

But this perhaps misses the point of what Benomar was trying to achieve. "It's not helpful when people expect a miracle," adds Larry Diamond, professor of sociology and political science at Stanford University, who regularly works on negotiated transitions. "The generic

"Yemen has generally been viewed inside the UN—and by members of the international community—as a much-needed Arab Spring success story and the UN envoy as a rising star. But this fate is by no means assured."

goal is to break a political deadlock and facilitate. [An envoy must] facilitate dialogue with the goal of trying to get some kind of agreement that would ensure peace, first of all and then facilitate the emergence of a stable and viable settlement and hopefully one that has a lot of democratic features—even if it's not perfectly democratic."

Others are not sure of what, exactly, has been achieved in their country since Saleh stepped down. Plans to hold national elections this February were hopelessly optimistic. Unemployment is incredibly high, the economy is in tatters, security abysmal or absent entirely, and government services hardly extend beyond the capital. In recent weeks, there has been growing anger over a mounting economic crisis that has led to rising shortages of fuel, electricity and water.

Benomar, symbolic for many Yemenis of their country's internationally-backed political transition, has become a focal point for the frustrations they feel with both the perceived lack of progress and the overt role played by outside powers in national politics since Saleh's ouster. Even objective observers who are well acquainted with the enigmatic envoy's way of doing business are not quite sure if his stint in Yemen will seal or tarnish his legacy. "Jamal, in the space of peacemakers, has played it close to the edge where it is in danger of it all coming crashing down," says David Harland, a former New Zealand diplomat and director of the Geneva-headquartered Centre for Humanitarian Dialogue who has worked closely with Benomar in the past.

Certainly, Benomar has often



played a role greater than that of a mere facilitator. He has been given—or has carved out—enough space and power to implement a uniquely personal, and often opaque, brand of mediation. This approach was, for example, at the heart of getting Saleh to sign the Saudi and US-backed transition deal ostensibly brokered by the Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC) that brought his three-decade presidency to a close. Attached to the GCC deal signed by Saleh was an 'implementing mechanism.' Written and agreed upon by both regime and opposition representatives with Benomar's input, it laid out a framework for a transitional period of several years, during which the key issues would be

addressed and a new constitution written. Benomar, says someone involved in the GCC initiative, "basically tricked" the deal's sponsors and signatories into endorsing the mechanism. This characterization would not surprise those who know him best. The Moroccan diplomat is "quintessentially political," says the Centre for Humanitarian Dialogue's Harland. "He is not a simple man who is willing to put all of his cards on the table."

Benomar's stamp though is perhaps most noticeable on the country's national dialogue conference. The talks' lofty goal of determining the future structure of the state was virtually impossible for delegates to achieve in the proposed six-month

timeframe (they eventually overran by four months). Rather than just the same old faces of the Saleh-era elite, the dialogue included northern Houthis rebels, southern separatists, youth, women, and civil society organizations. It was in no small part due to the UN envoy that the conference ended with delegates agreeing on, among other things, the creation of a federal state made up of six regions and quotas for women, southerners and other minority groups in government. These decisions, which will inform a new constitution, a draft of which is due by July of this year have made no-one entirely happy.

Continued on the back page

REPUBLIC OF YEMEN

CIVIL AVIATION AND METEOROLOGY AUTHORITY (CAMA)
SANA'ANEW INTERNATIONAL AIRPORT PROJECT (Phase-2 Packages-1A+1B)
 Construction of the New Airfield, Infrastructure and Ancillary Buildings
 Including all its Related Facilities.

INVITATION FOR PREQUALIFICATION

The Government of Yemen has received a credit from Arab Fund for Economic and Social Development towards the costs of the construction Sana'a New International Project – Phase 2 Packages 1A+1B and intend to apply a portion of the funds to eligible payments under the contract(s) resulting from the bidding for which the pre-qualification is conducted.

The Civil Aviation and Meteorology Authority (CAMA) intend to pre-qualify contractors for the implementation of the construction works of the New Air field, Infrastructure and Ancillary Buildings and all its Related Facilities. The main Works included are as follows (but not limited to):

1. Airfield & Infrastructure;
2. Airfield & Infrastructure (Electronic Package);
3. Ancillary Buildings (Air Traffic Control Tower, Technical Building etc);
4. Elevated Water Tank;
5. Environmental Works (Storm Water Drainage System, Sanitary Sewerage System, Water Supply and Fire Fighting Distribution Systems etc)

Prequalification will be conducted through prequalification procedures of the High Tender Board Committee Guidelines and it is open to all bidders from eligible countries as prequalification document.

Interested eligible applicants may obtain further information and inspect to collect the complete set of the prequalification document at CAMA (Project Implementation Unit) address given below or from our web address www.camayemen.com (The Offices -Tenders) from the day of this announcement.

Application for prequalification should be submitted to CAMA (Chairman Office) to the address mentioned below by Monday 04/08/2014 at 10:00 o'clock and be clearly marked "Application to pre-qualify Contractors for the construction of Sana'a New Int Airport Project – Phase 2 – Packages -1A+1B, CAMA-TBD-2014/CBNO:Y0205/5/6".

(PIU) address is:
 Project Implementation Unit (PIU) Mohammed Y. Alyadomi
 Behind Dr. Banaga Medical Center Abou-Obaidaha Zone,
 near to Agel Mosque
 Alhai Alsiasy, Sana'a
 Republic of Yemen
 Phone: 00967 - 442312
 Fax: 00967 - 442312
 E-Mail: nsiap@camayemen.com

(CAMA) address is:
 The Chairman
 Civil Aviation & Meteorology Authority
 (CAMA)
 HEAD Office, Zubeiry Street
 P.O.Box: 1042,
 Sana'a, Republic of Yemen
 Tel.Nr. +9671274717
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Yemen must uphold UN rights reviews commitments, says rights group



Tens of thousands of Yemeni anti-government protesters shout slogans during a demonstration calling for the ouster of President Ali Abdullah Saleh in Sanaa on May 6, 2011.



Mohammed Al-Awadai, the manager of juvenile administration in Yemen's prison authority, stands in one of two communal cells in the juvenile wing of Sanaa's Central Prison.

Yemen Times Staff

Yemen made commitments to address a number of human rights recommendations on Thursday, including ratifying the International Criminal Court (ICC) treaty, establishing a commission to investigate rights violations committed during the 2011 uprising, and adopting measures to promote gender equality, according to a press release issued by Human Rights Watch (HRW) on Sunday.

Yemen made the commitments before the United Nations Rights Council in Geneva during its Universal Periodic Review (UPR), a mechanism for countries to review the human rights records of one another.

The recommendations were raised by other UN member countries.

"Yemen agreed to important initiatives that could address the country's longstanding impunity and prevent further abuses," said Nadim Houry, deputy Middle East and North Africa director at Human Rights Watch. "Now the authorities need to deliver on these commitments to improve human rights protections for Yemenis."

Yemen's parliament approved the ICC treaty in March 2007, but the president never took the steps to complete the process, HRW said.

The commission of inquiry into violations committed in 2011 was underway the following year after President Abu Rabu Mansour Hadi issued a presidential decree order-

ing the set-up of such a committee. However, the process stalled and a commission was never created.

"During its UPR, Yemen accepted a recommendation to expedite the appointment of the commission members as part of a process to bring those who committed human rights violations during the uprising to account," according to HRW.

"Yemen also accepted a recommendation to accelerate the passage of a transitional justice bill pending in parliament since January 2013 that would establish a truth and reconciliation commission mandated with reviewing violations going back several decades. Given the extent of violations in Yemen over many years, this is a much-needed step to address victims' grievances," the

rights group added.

Yemen also agreed to improve protection for women and children. It agreed to introduce a minimum age for marriage. According to data from the UN and the Yemeni government, more than half of Yemeni girls are married before reaching 18. About 14 percent are married before age 15.

HRW urged Yemen's cabinet to immediately submit to parliament the draft Child Rights Bill, deposited with the Prime Minister's Office in April, which would set 18 as the minimum age for marriage.

As part of the review, Yemen also committed to "put an end to any form of discrimination against women, both in practice and in legislation, particularly those remain-

ing in the Code of Personal Status."

According to the rights group, numerous provisions in the Personal Status Law violate women's rights, including in marriage, divorce, inheritance, and child custody.

While Yemen did not reject any recommendations outright, it was less co-operative when it came to the recommendations calling on Yemen to impose a moratorium on the death penalty. It has not responded to those recommendations.

"Last year, Yemen instituted reforms to end the use of the juvenile death penalty, such as creating an age verification committee. However, at least 13 people have been executed since the beginning of 2014, and perhaps many more that were not reported. Yemen should join the

growing majority of countries that have abolished the death penalty," Human Rights Watch said.

On Monday, the rights group issued a statement condemning the shutting down of a private TV station, Yemen Today, owned by former President Ali Abdulla Saleh. HRW called on the government to permit the station to resume broadcasting.

"Media freedom means covering the news, including presenting diverse views, even if the station owner is former President Saleh," said Joe Stork, deputy Middle East and North Africa director at Human Rights Watch. "Silencing the media betrays a commitment to human rights that Yemenis have demanded from the new government."

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CONTINUED FROM PAGE 12

Jamal Benomar and the fine art of making peace in Yemen

While completing the national dialogue was a feat in its own right, the alchemy of the kind practiced by Benomar to bring the conference to a close—"manipulation," say some Yemenis—has unsurprisingly attracted negative attention as well. Some participants complained that Benomar had exceeded his mandate, choosing to become an active political participant rather than acting as an impartial mediator.

In September 2013, forty-six delegates at the dialogue talks signed a petition formally condemning the special adviser for telling the UN Security Council that an agreement had been reached to adopt a federal system of government—a move they saw as predetermining the outcome of a still ongoing discussion. Leading members of Islah, the General People's Congress, the country's historical ruling party, and Ansar

Allah, the group formed to represent the Houthi movement at the talks, complained that Benomar, along with Abdu Rabu Mansour Hadi, the man who replaced Saleh as president, had ignored the rules of procedure on consensus in order to make sure some decisions, particularly federalism, were passed. Some dialogue members say that the president and envoy appointed people to key committees who were not representative of the views of their parties and, moreover, pressured them to pass motions on a variety of issues. In response, Benomar points to the fact that delegates at the conference overwhelmingly endorsed a final outcome document which contained all of the disputed items.

Yemen has generally been viewed inside the UN—and by members of the international community—as a much-needed Arab Spring success story and the UN envoy as a rising star. But this fate is by no means assured. In the next year Yemen must draft a new constitution, sketch out a plan to establish a working model for federalism and hold elections, all while the government tries to reverse a deteriorating security situation that many Yemenis fear is, in all but name, creeping toward civil war, just as the government runs out of money. Yemenis are growing increasingly disillusioned by the transition process, and the specter of Saleh's continued influence looms large. Military leaders are also said to be

watching events in Egypt with keen interest, and recent protests over fuel, electricity and water shortages in Sana'a are unlikely to discourage them from thinking that a counter-revolutionary movement in Yemen could succeed.

In the coming year, Benomar will have to work with significantly less political capital than in the past, flagging popularity in Yemen, and limited interest from the members of the UN Security Council, whose attention is more likely to be consumed by events in Ukraine. "This could all fall apart at any moment," he says. But the fact that the process continues to this day is perhaps its greatest marker of success. All the special envoy can do is keep trying.

Tik Root is a MENA focused freelance journalist who was based in Yemen for over a year. His work has been published with TIME, The Washington Post and Foreign Policy, among other outlets.

Peter Salisbury is a freelance journalist and analyst based in Sana'a, Yemen. He is the former energy editor of MEED, the Middle East Economic Digest, and until October 2013 was a project consultant at UK thinktank Chatham House's Yemen Forum. His work has appeared in the Economist, Financial Times, and Foreign Policy among others.

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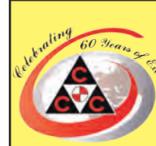
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