



YEMEN TIMES



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Otto Schilly Discusses
Yemeni-German Relations.
Page 3.

German Firm Does Border
Demarkations in Arabia.
Page 5.

Prof. Nonneman's Paper to
the SOAS Conference.
Page 7.

Review of Book on Civil
Society in the ME.
Page 10.

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Yemenis Rally Around President Saleh In Aftermath of Eritrean Occupation of Greater Hunaish :

SUCCESSFUL ETHIOPIAN MEDIATION BETWEEN YEMEN & ERITREA

The Ethiopian mediation in the conflict between Yemen and Eritrea on the Hunaish Archipelago in the Red Sea seems to have succeeded. The Ethiopian mediation, which is carried out under American patronage/blessing, has three points:

1. Eritrea is immediately to hand over the Yemeni wounded and prisoners to the Red Cross in Asmara.
2. Both Yemen and Eritrea will withdraw all their forces and any other presence from the Hunaish Archipelago (Greater Hunaish, Little Hunaish, Al-Memaleeh, and Zuqar).
3. The two sides will revert the matter to the International Court of Justice and present their documents in order to prove ownership, and abide by its decision.

Over the last four days, Ethiopian foreign minister Seyoum Mesfin has been shuttling back and forth between Addis Ababa, Asmara and Sanaa, carrying messages to/from Ethiopian Prime Minister Melles Zeinawi. The Ethiopian mediation will probably be cemented by UN good offices.

Meanwhile, Yemen Times mounted a survey of the Yemeni public. Just two questions were asked, and the answers were invariably the same.

"How do you feel about what happened?" and "Who do you think is responsible?"

The 500 Yemeni intellectuals, students, businessmen, government employees and laymen, including some 135 women gave almost the same answers.

The feeling about what happened was humiliation, frustration, and disgust. The mood was even ugly. There are two reasons for this:

First, the Yemeni government has known that the Eritrean side has explicitly and emphatically demanded the withdrawal of the Yemeni garrison on Greater Hunaish. The Eritreans, in fact, gave the Yemeni government an ultimatum. "How can our government ignore this situation?"

Second, when the Yemeni government attempted to militarily retake the island - two days after the Eritrean attack - why did it try that with such a small force that was quickly beaten. Moreover, the fate of the commander, Col. Mohammed Saleh Al-Quhali is still unknown.

The answer to the second question was equally clear and unified. The people hold the government of Abdulaziz Abdulghani responsible for the humiliation which Yemen suffered at the hands of Eritrea. When pinned down, many mentioned the Prime Minister and the Minister of Defence by name as directly responsible. The majority of the respondents insist that the government should be sacked, or at least those two officials either have to resign or be sacked.

As quiet diplomacy replaced the frenzied calls for military action, the international concern regarding the safety of shipping in the southern Red Sea has subsided. But it is still too early to throw in the towel.

More details on page 11

Thugs Beat Up Abubakar Al-Saqqaf, Again

"STOP WRITING!"

It happened in January 1995. It also happened on Friday 23/12/1995. Unidentified thugs beat up Professor Abubakar Al-Saqqaf, 61. Yemen's foremost intellectual-philosopher. He is sure the thugs are agents working for the Political Security Office. His reasoning is simple. The PSO is under orders to silence him. His views on politics and events contradict those of the regime.

"Stop writing" they kept yelling as they beat me," he explained after he was hospitalized. He lost a tooth, and another is broken, his left eye and lips are swollen. His left elbow is swollen. His arm and back are filled red stripes and patches - the impact of beating by electric batons.



Continues on pag 15

PSO Sees Light ?

The Political Security Office (PSO) has hand-delivered the passport of Prof. Abdulaziz Al-Saqqaf, Chief Editor of the Yemen Times, on Wednesday, December 20th. In addition, the PSO apologized for the 'mis-hap' of taking away the passport, which it said was due to an unauthorized decision by some of its airport staff.

The Yemen Times would like to thank the PSO for seeing light, and for correcting the mistake. It further wishes that such

unconstitutional actions, whether against journalists or other citizens, will not be repeated in the future.

On this occasion, Yemen Times would like to thank all colleagues in the independent and opposition media, the NGOs and public figures, the diplomatic community, the regional and international organizations which went into motion to provide moral and legal support for Dr. Saqqaf.

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OUR VIEWPOINT

Yemen Concludes 1995 on a Somber Note

So, this is it!

The year 1995 is coming to a close, and for Yemen, too many things have gone wrong, notably in December. The mood is decidedly grim.

1. The World Bank and International Monetary Fund are forcing down the throat of Yemen a bitter medicine. The country is "urged" to implement a reform program that calls for removal of subsidies, firing of government employees, increasing user charges, etc. All of these measures are going to affect the standard of living as they will raise the cost of living.

2. Less than one year ago, the Republic of Yemen grudgingly signed a Memorandum of Understanding with Saudi Arabia. It thought the most difficult part was over given that it recognized Saudi sovereignty over the Asir, Jaizan and Najran. It also entertained Saudi demands on certain internal arrangements in Yemen. But that was not enough to usher a new Saudi attitude towards Yemen. Saudi encroachments along the border continued, much to Yemeni rulers' embarrassment.

3. Eritrea, an infant nation - only a few years old - has battered Yemeni forces and wrenched the island of Greater Hunaish. In the process, it killed several Yemeni soldiers and imprisoned many more. Yemen remains unable to regain the island, and is now pursuing diplomatic means to regain the island. This dealt a hard blow to the prestige of the rulers of Yemen.

4. Problems between the ruling coalition partners (PGC and Islah) are far from normal. Several Islah senior officials have resigned from their government posts. They complain that the PGC leadership is not allowing them to get on with their duties as they see fit. Relations between the PGC and Islah are at an all-time low. Many Islah leaders are openly talking about breaking the partnership before the Islah breaks up.

5. Relations with the opposition parties - in Yemen and in exile - remain uneasy. The opposition parties, already weak by their own right, claim the ruling coalition partners are using state powers and resources to further marginalize them.

6. The Government of Abdulaziz Abdulghani has failed on yet one more of its promises. It is concluding the year with a budgetary deficit some 50% more than its target number amount of YR 36 billion. At another level, the Government has yet to work out a budget proposal for 1996. The law demands that the government present its proposal to parliament at least two months before the lapse of the preceding year.

7. The exchange rate of the Riyal vis-a-vis the US dollar has taken another tumble. The dollar fetches now some YR 130, and the Central Bank of Yemen has asked the banks to use YR 117 in their balance sheets when converting currencies. This is a far cry from the range promised by the government.

8. Unemployment continues to rise to scary levels. According to estimates, the percentage of unemployed persons among Yemeni adults is around 40%. Promises of a quick fix through massive investments and "public works programs" have yet to materialize.

Let us keep our fingers crossed for 1996. I hope it carries better news for Yemenis than 1995.

The Publisher
Abdulaziz Al-Saqqaf

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An Independent Economic & Political Weekly



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Yemeni TV Transmits Worldwide

Yemen's Channel One Television Station has hooked on the Intelsat satellite, thus beaming worldwide. As from Wednesday, December 21st, viewers from all over the world can now follow Yemeni television.

Indian Publisher Establishes Office at Aden University

The New Delhi-based New Age International Publishers Limited has decided to open a distribution office at Aden University. The Managing Director of the Indian company, Mr. A. Machave, has just concluded a visit during which he assessed the market potential, and the kind of books to be distributed. He decided to start with academic university books.

Mr. A. Meena, Charge d'Affair at the Indian Embassy in Sanaa said that the publisher has been supplying English books to Yemen for over fifteen years. "The establishment of the office in Yemen will evidently increase the level of exchange," he said.

New Treasury Bills to Be Floated

The Central Bank of Yemen (CBY) plans to issue another lot of treasury bills on January 8th. The first lot of YR 2 billion was sold on December 10th.

What happened on December 10th looks like this:

* Some YR 950 million was sold to the commercial banks.

* Another YR 950 was sold to the government companies and corporations.

* The balance (5%) was sold to individual citizens.

* The average rate of return on the bonds was 24%, though the rates ranged from a low of 18% and a high of 31%.

* The actual return to investors was more than the above return by 32%, which represents the full exemption from any taxes on income.

* Average return on next lot is estimated to rise, given that the offers will start from the average return of the previous T. bill offerings.

The amount of money raised from sources other than those previously accessible by the CBY is about 14%, whereas the government has paid up an average interest of 31% on 86% of the money that was available to it at 5%. As more and more T. bills are offered, the resources available to the banking community and the government companies and corporations will be depleted, thus raising the price expected to be asked by investors.

Traffic Week in Yemen

Last week, the Traffic Authority embarked on the annual event of traffic week, during it attempts to bring sanity to motor circulation. It is also time for drivers and car owners to renew their drivers' licences, change plate numbers, and various other documents required by law.

The traffic people also man the streets more visibly, and mount a media campaign to help pedestrians and drivers better understand the rules and laws.

Minister of Fisheries Discusses Red Sea Environmental Protection With Gulf Authorities.

Dr. Abdurrahman Bafadhl discussed the UNDP project for Red Sea Environmental Protection with visiting Saudi and Kuwaiti relevant authorities.

Concepts & Policies in Middle Eastern Politics

I was intrigued by some of the concepts and policies referred to in the new book "Toward Civil Society in the Middle East? A Primer", which I devoured in one extended reading session. Please read the book review on page 10. Let me describe three concepts and policies, and then ask the readers to decide which one most applies to today's Yemen.

Looking at contested politics in the Middle East and the strategies available for political reform to the regimes in power, rulers have three ideal-typical strategies in dealing with political pressures from within - inclusion, exclusion, or repression.

Inclusion:

A policy of inclusion assumes a basic understanding, acceptance, and appreciation of the rules of the game (democracy, pluralism, peaceful transfer of power) by both the regime and its adversaries. It accepts the notion that power and governance may be shared in principle as well as the possibility that one's adversary may in fact gain ultimate political power. It further assumes that the rules of the game will not be changed unilaterally by a single contestant that happens to be at the helm of power.

Exclusion:

A policy of exclusion rejects the notion that power may be shared by adversaries even if the rules of the game are observed. Adversaries' roles and actions are considered serious threats to the survival of the regime and the state. Opponents can "play ball" only if they accept the regime as the ultimate arbiter and the paramount decision-maker. In other words, it is either acceptance or exclusion.

A variant of the policy of exclusion is the attempt to keep opponents from power-sharing through calculated, purposeful, and organized collective force by the state. In such a situation, the regime in power uses its monopoly of means of physical violence to prevent the emergence of the adversaries as claimants to power. Alternately, it will use the arm of the state to crush opponents who have managed to emerge through unnoticed, illicit or underground means.

Repression:

A Policy of repression, well you don't need me to tell you about that. Just think Saddam!

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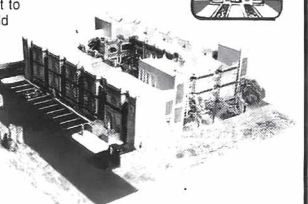
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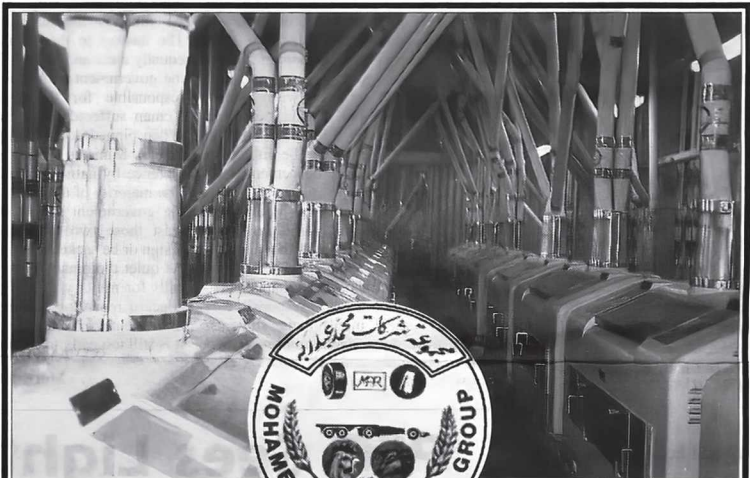
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Otto Schilly:

“We are working to shift the focus of our cooperation from the governments to the private sector.”

Germany and Yemen enjoy an exceptionally good relationship. This is clear from the large German aid program to Yemen, the close views on world politics, and the recurrent visits exchanged by officials in both countries.

Last week, Otto Schilly, Member of Parliament in Germany, paid his fourth visit to Yemen. Otto was the first German delegate to visit Yemen after the war. That was his third visit, in August 1994, just one month after the war ended. He is often referred to in Yemeni circles as a “friend of Yemen”.

Last week, during his visit to Sanaa, Yemen Times Chief Editor Abdulaziz Al-Saqaf, met him to discuss his visit, the bilateral relations, and developments in Europe.

Excerpts:

Q: Could you highlight your visit's program?

A: Yes, I am happy to be visiting Yemen one more time. As usual, the purpose is to see how things are evolving in Yemen, and to discuss cooperation. I have met with a number of Government officials, including the prime minister, foreign minister, as well as businessmen, members of parliament and others.

Q: How did you find things evolving in Yemen?

A: I am happy to note that conditions are stabilizing. When I was here in August 1994, just after the war, the situation was uncertain. I was worried then. But now, I think the changes have been positive and productive. I would like to especially commend your president for having spent the winter in Aden. This has helped the people of Aden in particular, and the south in general, have felt the concern and interest of the president in their affairs. The general amnesty decision was also another step that helped Yemen. In short, I think the situation is evolving in the right direction.

Q: Germany is a key aid partner of Yemen. How do you see future cooperation?

A: Of course, Germany has been helping in Yemeni development. We will continue to provide assistance, probably not as much as we would like, given our own economic limitations.

I think that German assistance should focus more on human resource development such as education, training, etc. We have just inaugurated a big training center in Aden.

But I would like for our cooperation to shift focus from government to government aid, to private sector joint investments and trade. Towards that end, I am now putting together a team of German businessmen who will be visiting Yemen during 1996. I am sure the scope for private-sector cooperation is immense, and the prospects are very good. I am talking of goods and services of all kinds. German tourists already visiting Yemen in rising numbers.

Already, I have received an encouraging response from the Yemeni side on this idea. We hope that we will develop very concrete ideas



and proposals as the time goes. In any case, we need to prepare very well for the visit.

One way that Yemen can help in this regard is to show that foreign investments are protected and guaranteed. The overall environment must satisfy the preconditions required by investors.

Q: How about exchange of visits between officials from both sides?

A: Of course, there is a good program of visits exchanged by officials on both sides. I hope that President Ali Abdullah Saleh will visit Germany in 1996. This is not my decision. It is the decision of our president and government. But, I am in favor of it, and I will work for it. I hope it will happen. Exchange of visits is a good tool to increase more appreciation and

better understanding.

Q: While you are here, a problem broke out between Yemen and Eritrea. What is your information on this?

A: It is an unfortunate thing to happen. I know that our president His Excellency Roman Herzog is going to pay a visit to Eritrea and Ethiopia next month (January 1996). I am sure he will advocate peace in resolving this problem. I am sure that neither side has anything to gain from war and violence.

Q: How do you assess Yemen's efforts towards democracy, human rights and freedom of the press?

A: A Russian author once said “You cannot introduce democracy. You have to live it.” In other words,

democracy is a process that grows everyday. You cannot wake up one day and just have it. It is an evolution.

I have seen in your newspaper (the Yemen Times) that you have some restrictions, especially on freedom of the press. I am not in favor of that. Freedom of the press is one of the key elements of a democracy.

There is another thing I would like to mention here. Enacting a good

laws and a favorable constitution, and actually observing such stipulations in reality is another. It is not enough to have a good constitution and good laws, unless they are respected.

A government that oppresses journalists and others who advocate freedom of the press and human rights can be seen as weak and insecure.

Q: Do you express these reservations to Yemeni officials when you meet with them?

A: Yes, in a polite way. I don't want to give the impression we are here to teach or lecture or interfere in the internal affairs of foreign countries, which are quite different from our own. But we do give friendly advice, which I hope is welcome in Yemen.

Q: Your party, the Socialist

Party, has changed leadership. What does it mean?

A: Yes, we have had our recent change of leadership in the party. Oscar Lafontaine is the chairman, and Rudolf Scharping is vice chairman. Mr. Scharping is also the whip (leader) of our parliamentary group.

I think the two gentlemen make a good team, and we have high hopes of our party's performance in the coming local and regional elections.

There are also possibilities of early federal elections, as one of the partners in the coalition, the Liberal Party, is facing difficulty.

Q: How about the process of European unification?

A: As you know, this a long term process, and there is commitment to completion of this dream. In reality, European integration is a success story.

As you know we have just agreed on a single European currency, the Euro, which will come into existence by 1999. Of course, there are difficulties, and these could few delays here and there. But there is no turning back.

Q: Any last comments?

A: Yes, I am happy to meet with you again, and to express my views through the Yemen Times, which I respect very much.

I would like to repeat that the friendship between Germany and Yemen is deeply rooted and will last for a long time. We should work together to make this relationship stronger, and expand the scope and dimensions of our cooperation.

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The Company that Did Yemeni-Omani & Saudi-Omani Border Looks Towards the Yemeni-Saudi Border Demarkations

Border Demarkations

It all started at the residence of the German ambassador, over lunch. Dr. Helga von Strachwitz, was kind enough to include me in her list of guests in honor of German parliamentarian, Mr. Otto Schilly. Among the guests was Dr. Gunnar Rogwalder, Managing Director of Hansa Luftbild. Hansa Luftbild has been in the business of aerial photography and surveys, mapping, SPOT satellite imaging, border demarkations, etc.

Dr. Rogwalder explained that his company has been doing work in the Arabian Peninsula for over a quarter of a century. In 1991, they started constructing marks along the Saudi-Omani border. That is 660 kilo-meters long passing through the most harsh parts of the Rub Al-Khali. Then in 1993, they started constructing the marks along the Yemeni-Omani border, about 400 kilometers long. His company will complete the mapping of the Yemeni-Omani border by October 1996.

"We are now interested in doing the marks along the Yemeni-Saudi border, especially that part agreed upon by both sides based on the 1934 Tayif Agreement," he said.

But what are these marks?

These are monuments, that is actually what they call them. Based on the agreement between government as to where the border runs, the company establishes exact coordinates using the GPS (Global Positioning System) instruments. Satellites pinpoint the GPS, which are precisely known by the millimeter on the ground. At those points, the company then constructs a monument, the foundation of which can run up to 30 meters underground, depending on terrain. Then, a 2 meter by 2 meter concrete base is erected to 1.5 meters above ground. This take the shape of small pyramid, from which a six-meter poll stands out. "This idea is that these monuments should be visible from far away distances, and they should be durable," explained Dr. Rogwalder. On the Saudi-Oman border, 300 monuments were erected, and along the Yemeni-Omani border 60 monuments were erected.

Who supervises the work of the company, and



who pays for it?

Always, the company is given a copy of the basic border agreement for implementation purposes. A joint agreement between the border partners is signed with the company, and an equal number of representatives remain with the company during all phases of the work. "During the work on the Yemeni-Omani border, ten Yemenis and ten Omanis were with the site crew at all the time during the erection of the monuments," he said. Often, the countries share the cost of the work, but there are many cases in which only one side paid for the job.

The company is upbeat about getting the new Yemeni-Saudi border contract. After all, its influential local agent, the Al-Ahmar Group of Companies, is working on it.

By: Abdulaziz Al-Saqaf, Chief Editor, Yemen Times.

British & American Assistance to Aden University

Last week witnessed the launching of Higher Studies Center in English at the University of Aden. On hand to participate in the event were Mr. John Kincannon, the Cultural/Information Attache and Director of USIS at the American Embassy, and Mr. Brendan Mc-Sharry, Director of the British Council at the UK Embassy. Also attending were the Deputy Governor of Aden, Eng. Waheed Rasheed, and many Aden University officials and lecturers.

The UK and US embassies had provided audio-visual equipment, books, references and other teaching aids. The center offers courses in American and English literature, as well as the normal language courses.

In a statement to Yemen Times, Dr. Salim Abdulaziz, Chairman of the English Department at the University, indicated that the center co-financed by the university (30%), the British Council (40%), and the USIS (30%). We expect to pursue similar arrangements in further expanding the facility in the future, he said.

Dr. Salim also indicated that the British Council is finalizing arrangements to start a branch in Aden. A British Council office exists in Sanaa, and one had existed in Aden prior to independence.

Both Kincannon and Mc-Sharry expressed interest in continued support and cooperation with Aden University. They especially indicated willingness to help the University make up for the losses incurred during the civil war.

The Deputy Governor expressed gratitude to the two embassies. He then pointed out that English is going to be an important language skill for Aden given its free zone and commercial capital status.

Mona Mustafa, Yemen Times, Aden.



Movenpick December News 1995

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Common Sense

By: Hassan Al-Haifi

The Good Neighbor Policy of Yemen Faces a Tough Test



Frankly speaking, this observer and many Yemenis were caught by surprise by the Sunday (17-12-95) night news bulletin which indicated that the relationship between the Republic of Yemen and the newly formed state of Eritrea across the Red Sea has taken a 180° turn - from coziness to outright animosity. The surprise was not just because of the unexpected Eritrean invasion of the island of Greater Hunaish, but for the fact that the Republic of Yemen was not prepared, in the least way, to confront it.

The Government of Yemen has generally pursued a neighborly policy in the region, avoiding to initiate any conflict with any of its neighbors and extending a friendly hand to the neighbors who appeared to be weak, in addition to avoiding any interference in the affairs of neighbors that are bogged down in internal strife, as much as possible. Of course Yemen's neighbors have acted differently towards Yemen, each looking at the effects of Yemen's relationships on its own interest, and other important regional considerations. Yemen's policy towards its neighbors unfortunately was never handled by the same wide scope in which the neighbors viewed this relationship, believing that its declared good intentions are sufficient enough coverage against any difficulties with the neighbors, especially as Yemen is in no position to enter into any hassles involving any parties outside its borders, as it has enough hassles to deal with inside.

In fact, one may surmise that Yemen's policy towards its neighbors is not based on long-term strategic considerations or evaluation of the factors involved and the implications such a policy could have on the nation or the interests of the country and its people. On the other hand, one may conclude that Yemen's policy has been almost a spontaneous one, or reliant on an ad-hoc basis, and on emotional sentiments and other considerations that do not necessarily reflect a well studied policy that takes into account all the possibilities and prepares all the necessary alternatives in dealing

with such possibilities. The islands of Greater Hunaish, Little Hunaish and Jabal Zogr and the other small islands of the same archipelago are strategically located in the middle of the Red Sea, and this observer has not been able to obtain exact distances of the islands from the respective coastlines of Yemen and Eritrea, especially the island in question (See map, this issue). On another note it is hard to determine if the island has any indigenous inhabitants but so far most of the sources have regarded the island as merely a stopover point for smugglers and other sea traffic between Eritrea/Ethiopia and Yemen and other countries in the Horn of Africa (Somalia, Djibouti and perhaps the Sudan and Yemen). The fact that the island bears what is regarded as a Yemeni name since anyone can remember is strong enough proof that the island is indeed Yemeni territory. Yemen has also been said to have engaged in some tourism development schemes to attract divers to the island. On the other hand history does not recall that Ethiopia while controlling Eritrea, made any claims or attempts to dominate the island as recognition that the island does indeed belong to Yemen. In any case the islands are important as they can effectively serve as an important control point for the sea traffic in the Red Sea and they can have important military implications for any country that controls them. Control of the island means control of a vital access route to all the countries that enclose the Red Sea in a button hole like slit in both continents, Africa and Asia as well as the Mediterranean Club countries, in view of their proximity to the Bab Al-Mandab strait and their central location in the Red Sea. All the states on the banks of the Red Sea are Arab states except for Eritrea and a viewing hole for the Israelis at Elat. All the European powers that had colonial stations in the region vied for control of the island, including the Ottoman Turks. The island changed hands from Turkey to Italy to Britain, to the Soviet Union, (during the latter's presence in the People's Democratic Republic of Yemen) and to the Republic of

Yemen and now to the least expected aspirant, Eritrea. Perhaps the least aware of its significance was the Republic of Yemen, which treated the island more as an established legal right than a vital strategic safeguard, which required that the Republic of Yemen maintains control of the islands, and establishes the proper protection arrangements that are required to prevent any aspirant from depriving Yemen from this control, for one reason or another. The Israeli presence in the island for some time was the most puzzling to this writer, not so much because the Israelis saw the strategic importance of the island, but because such control did not raise the irritation of the Arab states along the coastline that borders the Red Sea. The withdrawal of the Israelis was probably arranged during the Gulf War, when the "UN" forces headed by the United States would not have anybody be able to maintain track of navigation activities during the war, who was not involved in the Desert Shield Campaign to kick the Iraqis out of Kuwait.

With the efforts of the United States to bring a peaceful end to the long drawn out Middle East conflict in the Levant area, it would not be surprising to see the Israelis trying to make sure that they regain back a privilege they once enjoyed before all the "normalization arrangements are finalized. With the progress made on the Syrian front, Israel may have become the more so determined to upgrade its strategic position in the area. With Eritrea in need of all the help it can get, and with the generally warm relations that the President of Eritrea seems to enjoy with the Israelis, almost since Eritrean independence, which this observer attributes to the failure of Arab foreign policy in general of not delivering sufficient support to the new Eritrean regime, which was badly in need of as much assistance as possible, from anyone willing to give generously.

The Israelis quickly sensed this shortfall in the Arab foreign policy and obligingly gave the Eritreans much to be grateful for.

There is a definite link between this and what is occurring in the Red Sea and it is testimony to the shortsighted of Arab foreign policy - and a serious one at that. The more serious part is that there is talk of Arab participation in this sudden turn of events, in light of the official visits to certain Arab capitals by the Eritrean President Assayasi Aforkay, just days prior to the "Eritrean" assault on the unprotected Yemen island of Greater Hunaish, although it remains unclear to any sensible Arab, the interest this would serve for the particular Arab states in question and the Arab World at large. Surely it is hoped that personal grudges between Arab rulers will not interfere in their fulfillment of their Arab national responsibility when it comes to matters that are of concern to the entire Arab nation. This latest Eritrean challenge to stability in the Red

Sea region is much more than a dispute over some small islands, fishing rights and sea boundaries. For the Republic of Yemen, it is a question of sovereignty that should not be underestimated, especially by the authorities who should have been able to maintain control of the situation in light of the early warning signs of the eminent danger that was coming from across the Red Sea. In situations like this, preventive measures are expected and alternative action plans should have been immediately drawn up to confront all possible outcomes after the appearance of the first sign. It was clear from the first warning sign that the Eritreans were proceeding into a role, which far exceeded the impression that the country was reflecting to her neighbors.

On the other hand, Israeli involvement was bound to require at least American awareness of the Hunaish Operation, if not an American nod of approval. One should not be surprised if Hunaish turns out to be a far more significant regional event with far more wider international implications than just two neighbors squabbling over salt water rights, both of whom would not be in a position to entertain such a confrontation, especially as the islands in question, at the moment, are not direct vital factors in the economic welfare of the 2 neighbors. More importantly, the Eritrean ability to pursue a task of changing a generally peaceful neighborly relationship into direct warfare carries with it risks and dangers, which, at the moment are not worth facing, if the issue was merely the sovereignty over the islands. In addition, it is almost impossible to believe that Eritrea, alone, is capable of enforcing its will in the islands, with the limited means at its disposal and delicate political situation facing the regime of Assayasi Aforkay, which comes from a lack of national consensus on the propriety of the Afeworkay regime in the first place - a regime which many Eritreans will not hesitate to declare as having been imposed on the people of Eritrea to the dissatisfaction of many Eritreans who participated in the long struggle to be free of Ethiopian control.

For Yemen, there is no question that H. E. Ali Abdullah Saleh will not fail to recognize that Hunaish and the islands near it will not be used for the purposes that have no bearing on the interests of the region in general and in fact represent a dangerous threat to Yemen's future prospects in the oil and gas sectors, and in Aden, which require that Yemen must be able to guarantee free navigational access for its exports of crude and liquefied gas and for the shipping traffic that is expected to be coming and going to Aden, as a duty free duty port. Thus controlling the islands is an essential security factor for Yemen. Perhaps this is what some of Yemen's neighbor's wish to undermine, if they had indeed supported the ridiculous adventure of Eritrea in this most important of international sealanes. **Continued on page 11**

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Paper Presented to the SOAS London Conference, November 25-26, 1995

KEY ISSUES IN THE YEMENI ECONOMY

Dr. Gerd Nonneman,
University of Lancaster, UK.

I. INTRODUCTION

Somewhat oversimplifying matters, it could be said that the main economic problem which Yemen is faced with is politics. This is not to diminish the importance of strictly economic and resource constraints, but to highlight the impact which both domestic and international politics have had and continue to have on Yemen's economic development and prospects.

Examples of these are the various upheavals which the country has gone through in recent years. Unification itself (1990) resulted in price rises and significant economic hardship for consumers in the southern part of the country, which in turn (together with other effects of unification) led to a number of tensions between north and south. The 1990/91 Gulf War and Yemen's position on it directly resulted in a drastic reduction in remittances and aid, as well as a massive increase in unemployment. And the 1994 Civil War - itself in part an indirect result of the effects of the above two upheavals - resulted in serious economic disruption, heavy costs for the military operations themselves and for subsequent reconstruction, the suspension if not evaporation of such investor confidence as there might have been, as well as persistent tensions between north and south, which in turn constitute a potential obstacle to economic success.

The economic effects of the Gulf War on Yemen already demonstrated in particular the country's economic vulnerability to external political factors - and especially its vulnerability to the state of relations with its neighbor Saudi Arabia. This vulnerability was shown not just in the expulsions of labor and the reduction in aid, but also in the difficulties experienced in hydrocarbons exploration in the disputed border region, where Saudi pressure forced a scaling down of operations.

In addition to these 'exceptional' and external circumstances, it must be stressed that the general dynamics of domestic politics also certain constraints on, and in part determine, economic developments and possibilities. Two features of Yemeni politics immediately come to mind here. The first is the limited degree of central government control over some of its territory, and the consequent imperative of political consolidation. The second is patronage politics (and a degree of corruption), in which resources may be allocated on the basis of personal or tribal links rather than on strictly economically sound grounds. Often, of course, this latter type of resource allocation is in fact driven by the first imperative mentioned: that of consolidating state (and regime) power. Arguably, therefore, some of this 'skewed' economic resource allocation is inevitable, given the still insecure level of cohesion and integration of the Yemeni polity.

II. BASIC CHARACTERISTICS OF YEMENI ECONOMY

In what follows, a brief overview provided of the Yemeni economy's basic features. For the purposes of this article, these can be summarized under 10 points. This will provide the background against which, in the following section, the key issues for this economy can be explored.

1. The informal/unrecorded sector and unreliable statistics

Before launching into any comments on performance indicators and other statistics for the Yemeni economy, it is important to draw attention to the fact that the informal sector is quite possibly as large as the recorded sector. Not only does about half of Yemen's economic activity not appear in the statistics, but these statistics are also otherwise less than wholly reliable. The inadequate data-gathering and processing capacity of the Yemeni bureaucracy thus far has meant that published figures are often no more than rough estimates, often only tenuously related to reality. This is true both in north and south, although the situation in former South Yemen differed from the North: formal statistical methods were ostensibly more developed, but they suffered from misguided Soviet-style ideological/political parameters (as well as being subject to the politically-inspired 'massaging' so typical in the bureaucracies of Communist centrally planned economies).

In light of the above, all published statistical data on Yemen (whether Yemeni or other) must be taken with caution, and as rough indications rather than accurate reflections. It is pointless, for instance, to use decimal points in percentage estimates of the growth and composition of GDP. For the same reason, it makes more sense to use rounded figures for the country's financial statistics, than to pay attention to supposedly detailed, more precise figures. The data which will be presented in this paper must be seen in that light.

2. Weakly integrated economy

Yemen's economy is also characterized by weak national integration. Not only are linkages between North South limited, but the same is also true within the territory of each. Distribution systems remain primitive, and instances of local subsistence economy sit side with external linkages (import/export, smuggling, influx of funds which are in turn used for importing consumer goods). The label 'national economy', therefore, only applies to a limited extent.

3. North-South Differences

An obvious feature consists of the differences between North and South Yemen. In this respect three points in particular may be mentioned. The first is the relatively larger role which the market played in the North as compared with the officially-planned Southern economy. The state in South Yemen aimed at the nationalization of the means of production and Soviet-style targets and central controls over economic activity - albeit that the intensity of this policy varied greatly (relying considerably under Ali Nasser Mohammed, for instance). In the North, the general picture was one more akin to *laissez-faire*. Private agricultural economic and other economic activity was both more important and subject to fewer constraints than in the South - although here too, the extent of government attempts to impose controls on foreign exchange and foreign trade fluctuated. The second point relates to the strikingly different administrative systems and statistical conventions north and south of the inter-Yemeni border. This was a direct result of the ideological differences over the role of state planning and bureaucracy. It also implied types of economic accounting - with different, Soviet-style categories being used in Aden. This has exacerbated the difficulties of unifying economic data and accounting after unification,

as well as of assessing the meaning and reliability of such statistics. The final obvious point which bears highlighting here, is that, even taking into account the difficulty of assessing the value of comparative measurements and estimates, there is no doubt that pre-unification North Yemen grew faster than the South. During the 1980s, average real annual economic growth in North Yemen may be estimated at between 5-10% (with some 14% in 1988 when significant oil exports started). In the South the first half of the 1980s saw very slow real growth (probably averaging between 0-3%). The extent to which such differences might indicate an incompatibility between the two economies, however, needs to be qualified. The fluctuations in the policies of both regimes have already been pointed at. In addition, as Carapico has shown, there were a number of similarities. There was in fact comparable access (or lack thereof) to investment capital. . . . The North's state sector invested more than did the private sector, while the South's socialist policy statements belied the increasing role of domestic and foreign private firms. . . . [b]oth Yemens relied on labor remittances and international assistance. Both Yemens faced austerity when falling oil prices, compounded by a drop in Cold War-generated aid, reduced access to hard currency - until the discovery of oil in the border region in the mid-1980s attracted a third type of international capital from multinational petroleum companies. These forces gradually reduced the differences to the two systems. Some of the further similarities related to the above, were the large share which government services accounted for as a proportion of recorded GDP, and the inability of the central governments to control and/or mobilize much of the remittances brought in privately and spent privately on consumption or investment. While undeniably different economic systems, therefore, there were also more similarities than usually realized, and towards the end of the 1980s these became increasingly important. On the eve of unification, not only was the Southern government embarking on a considerable liberalization of the economy, but the Northern authorities were indicating that the state would retain a guiding role in the economy. Control over oil revenues would of course reinforce the state's relative role in the economy.

4. Population growth

The Yemeni population in 1995 may be estimated at 14-15 million. Averaging at around 3.5% per annum, Yemen's population growth is among the highest in the world. This has a quadruple effect on the economic situation. First, it puts continuing pressure on the employment situation. Second, puts strains on the government's already limited ability to provide adequate services - and inverts resources from productive uses. Thirdly, it puts severe pressure on the country's natural resources, especially through the consumption of water. And fourthly, it means that economic growth, in order to have any impact at all, must run at around an annual 4% or more in real terms - a tall order if the past five years are anything to go by.

5. Expatriate work / Remittances

Traditionally probably 1.8-2 million Yemenis have earned their living by working abroad. It must be stressed, however, that the exact size of this expatriate labor force is unknown (estimates 2.5 million and over also circulate). Remittances from these expatriate workers have long made up about half of Yemen's inward financial flows. For North Yemen alone recorded remittances were worth on average \$1 billion a year in the 1980s (this masks a drop in the end of the oil boom in the Gulf states where many of these workers were based). Much of this revenue (itself often unrecorded) went into the informal economy, and/or towards consumption and personal imports. At the same time, this option relieved some of the pressure on the local Yemeni employment situation. The *de facto* expulsion of some 800,000 Yemenis from Saudi Arabia in 1990/91, as a result of the Yemeni government's stance against the allied operation to evict Iraq from Kuwait, at a stroke reduced both this labor safety-valve and the inflow of remittances by half or more. Net unrequited transfers for all of united Yemen in 1991 were worth \$800 million at the very most.

6. Oil and gas

North Yemen joined the ranks of the oil exporters in 1987, but significant exports only really took off in 1988. Oil exploration in the border zone between North and South was one of the factors making for closer cooperation and eventual unification. Oil exports from the southern part of the country began in 1993. The main producing fields today are in the Marib/Jawf area (concession bloc no. 18, operated by the US firm Hunt together with Exxon), and in the large Wadi Massila concession (bloc 14, operated by Canadian Occidental). Output from both in 1995 ran at about 170-180,000 barrels per day (b/d). Yemeni oil production in this year averaged some 350,000 b/d. Two smaller discoveries have been made. By the end of 1996, the small Jannah bloc (adjacent to the Marib/Jawf bloc) is likely to yield some 25,000 b/d, and the East Shabwa discoveries some 12,000 b/d. The current picture is considerably less generous than earlier estimates and hopes. The estimate of proven recoverable reserves, for instance, has had to be reduced from 5 billion barrels to 2.2 billion barrels.

1990	1991	1992	1993	1994	1995
182,000	197,000	182,000	217,000	335,000	350,000

Greater hopes have recently been invested in the country's gas reserves. Estimated at between 15-20 trillion c.f., mainly in the Marib/Jawf bloc, these might represent a resource worth 2-3 times the value of the country's proven oil reserves. Development of this resource, however, will be very expensive and not at all straightforward - a point we will return to later.

7. Other sectors

As of 1995, hydrocarbons and related activities make up some 20% of recorded economic activity (GDP). This received a boost by the expansion in oil exports in 1994. Of the other components of GDP, it is worth mentioning four in particular: agriculture, fisheries, industry, and government services.

Agriculture continues to employ some 60% of the labor force, and just under a fifth of GDP. While Yemen is comparatively fortunate - by Arabian Peninsula standards - in its quota of rainfall and fertile

land, this is very unevenly distributed. When taking the country as a whole (including the largely arid expanses of former South Yemen), only 2.9% is estimate to be cultivable, and only 2% is actually cultivated. In the northern highlands, terrace agriculture relies on seasonal rainfall and the maintenance of elaborate terraces and irrigation systems. In the lot Tibama continuous irrigation is necessary, putting strain on the country's water resources. In former South Yemen, agriculture is concentrated in the Wadi Hadhramaut. Officially, the country's main crop is sorghum and millet, of which it has an average produced just over 500 million tonnes annually. In reality, the main crop (in terms of value) does not appear in the official statistics at all: the value-added in the production of Qat, the mildly stimulant shrub chewed by most Yemenis, possibly equals twice that of all recorded agricultural production.

Fisheries account for only 2% of GDP, but present a significant potential for Yemen. With its large coastline and fertile fishing grounds in the Gulf of Aden, Yemen has a major resource here ripe for developing. In 1992, 86,500 tons were produced, down from 106,000 tons in 1989.

Industry is limited, accounting for less than 10% of GDP, and employing some 4% of the labor force. The main non-oil subsector is food processing, which accounts for just over half of manufacturing output. In addition, it is worth drawing attention to three further points. The first is to highlight the place of the Aden Refinery. For decades, this has represented the main instance of major modern industry in Yemen. Technical, administrative/managerial and political constraints meant that it often produced at only a fraction of its design capacity of 120,000 b/d, but this was addressed in the late 1980s through greater efficiency, technical modernization, and refining agreements with Iraq and Kuwait. The refinery also allowed Yemen to stop importing its 60-65,000 b/d of domestic requirements. Current production design capacity stands at 170,000 b/d, but this remains theoretical as long as the expansion of storage capacity has not been completed (currently allowing only 120,000 b/d). The Gulf war and its aftermath also meant the end of the refining deals with Iraq and Kuwait.

The second point also relates to Aden - after unification officially the country's economic capital. Ambitious plans for an Aden Free Zone were announced, and a year after unification, the port of Aden was indeed declared a free zone. A master plan was completed by early 1994, and tens of different industrial projects identified by the government which it wished to attract foreign investment into. The effects of the Gulf war, and subsequent fear of instability (confirmed by the 1994 civil war) kept investors away, however.

Thirdly, the increasing share of the private sector in industry deserves highlighting. Economic liberalization has been especially striking in former South Yemen - given its starting point in an avowedly Marxist centrally planned economy. By 1990, the private sector officially already accounted for 27% of industrial production, but by 1992, this had risen to 42%. This probably understates the private sector's given the caveats presented under point (1) above.

Government services, finally, clearly also deserve some comment. They made up about a quarter of GDP in 1992. On the one hand, this reflects the weakness of the other sectors in Yemen's developing economy. On the other, it also follows from the nature of the polity: whether before or after unification, an ethos of a providing government remained present, combined with the central authorities' determination to spread the state's access to, and control over, territory and society. In the aftermath of the Gulf War and the expulsion of, initially, up to 1 million Yemenis from Saudi Arabia, the demand for government services further increased, to cope with the returnees' needs and to absorb the impact of the drastically worsened unemployment situation.

8. Economic Growth

The first point to note about the pattern of economic growth in Yemen has already been put forward above, viz. the difference between North and South before unification: since the 1980s, the North grew much faster than the South. The second is that economic growth has often proceeded in fits and starts. Such hiccups were caused by civil wars (most recently 1986 and 1994), natural disasters (floods, earthquakes), fluctuating oil prices, and external events such as the 1990/91 Gulf War.

An indicative estimate of Yemen's 1994 formal GDP is \$7.5 billion, implying a per capita figure of about \$500. For an indication of the 'real' picture concerning the standard of life in the country, this figure probably needs to be doubled (That is to say, The level of Yemeni daily life on average is closer to that enjoyed by countries with a \$1,000 per capita income). The \$7.5 bn estimate for the formal, recorded economy is lower than many other published figures, but those are generally based on unrealistic exchange rates and on overly optimistic growth rates since 1990.

The author's estimates for Real GDP growth since unification are given in Table 4. The contraction in 1994 is explained by the effects of the civil war. That it is not larger is the result of the expansion in the oil sector. The Ministry of Planning's own estimate gives a 1.3% contraction overall, masking a 7% contraction in non-oil GDP. These figures must be seen in the context of a population growth figure of some 3.5% per capita GDP has, therefore, in fact been declining in real terms even in the best years (1993 and 1995).

Real GDP growth indicative estimates 1990-1995

1990	1991	1992	1993	1994	1995
-3%	-5%	-2%	3%	-1%	2%(?)

9. Trade / Balance of Payments

Yemen has traditionally suffered from large trade deficits and large current account deficits. This has remained true even after oil exports took off in 1988 (See table above), although since then oil has come to account for 85-90% of the value of exports. Imports and the deficits on services have on average increased too, thus canceling out the rise in export revenue, while remittances and aid - which were already being reduced in the late 1980s - fell sharply in the wake of the Gulf War. Since 1991, this situation has resulted in annual current account deficits in the \$1-\$1.5 billion range.

When adding the capital account to this, the overall balance of payments deficit has been well above \$1 billion a year (indeed well over \$2 billion in 1992). This situation is plainly untenable. There are no data available on Yemen's international reserves since 1992 - but they must be extremely low.

The largest single category of imports has been food & beverages. Recorded imports in this category were worth some \$600 million in 1991. This shows that, although agriculture forms an important part of the economy, it has not been able to supply the country's needs. In part this is due to resource constraints (soil, water), in part to the resources devoted to Qat cultivation, and in part to the changing consumption patterns which grew along with remittances.



YOUR 1996 CALENDAR

January

SAT	SUN	MON	TUE	WED	THU	FRI
		1 New Year's Day	2	3	4	5
6	7	8	9	10	11	12
13	14	15	16	17	18	19
20	21	22	23	24	25	26
27	28	29	30	31		

February

SAT	SUN	MON	TUE	WED	THU	FRI
					1	2
3	4	5	6	7	8	9
10	11	12	13	14	15	16
17	18	19	20	21	22	23
24	25	26 1st day of Eid Al Fitr	27 2nd day of Eid Al Fitr	28 3rd day of Eid Al Fitr	29	

May

SAT	SUN	MON	TUE	WED	THU	FRI
				1 Labor Day	2	3
4	5	6	7	8	9	10
11	12	13	14	15	16	17
18	19	20	21	22 Unification Day	23	24
25	26	27	28	29	30	31

June

SAT	SUN	MON	TUE	WED	THU	FRI
1	2	3	4	5	6	7
8	9	10	11	12	13	14
15	16	17	18	19	20	21
22	23	24	25	26	27	28
29	30					

September

SAT	SUN	MON	TUE	WED	THU	FRI
	1	2	3	4	5	6
7	8	9	10	11	12	13
14	15	16	17	18	19	20
21	22	23	24	25	26 September Revolution	27
28	29	30				

October

SAT	SUN	MON	TUE	WED	THU	FRI
			1	2	3	4
5	6	7	8	9	10	11
12	13	14 October Revolution	15	16	17	18
19	20	21	22	23	24	25
26	27	28	29	30	31	



R FROM YEMEN TIMES

March

SAT	SUN	MON	TUE	WED	THU	FRI
30	31					1
2	3	4	5	6	7	8
9	10	11	12	13	14	15
16	17	18	19	20	21	22
23	24	25	26	27	28	29

April

SAT	SUN	MON	TUE	WED	THU	FRI
		1	2	3	4	5
6	7	8	9	10	11	12
13	14	15	16	17	18	19
20	21	22	23	24	25	26
27	28	29	30			
1st day of Eid Al Adha		2nd day of Eid Al Adha		3rd day of Eid Al Adha		

July

SAT	SUN	MON	TUE	WED	THU	FRI
		1	2	3	4	5
6	7	8	9	10	11	12
13	14	15	16	17	18	19
20	21	22	23	24	25	26
27	28	29	30	31		

August

SAT	SUN	MON	TUE	WED	THU	FRI
31					1	2
3	4	5	6	7	8	9
10	11	12	13	14	15	16
17	18	19	20	21	22	23
24	25	26	27	28	29	30

November

SAT	SUN	MON	TUE	WED	THU	FRI
30 Independent day						1
2	3	4	5	6	7	8
9	10	11	12	13	14	15
16	17	18	19	20	21	22
23	24	25	26	27	28	29

December

SAT	SUN	MON	TUE	WED	THU	FRI
	1	2	3	4	5	6
7	8	9	10	11	12	13
14	15	16	17	18	19	20
21	22	23	24	25	26	27 Day Islam came to Yemen
28	29	30	31			

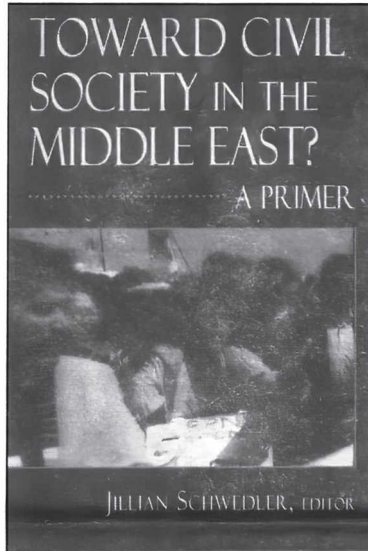
Book Review

Toward Civil Society in the Middle East? ... A Primer,
Edited by Jillian Schwedler,
Lynne Rienner Publishers, Boulder,
Colorado, 1995.

"Toward Civil Society in the Middle East?" is a book of 121 pages of easy reading. It attempts to put in proper perspective the present transformation of the Middle East towards modern democracy. It portrays the evidently varying degrees of change as the Middle East, like most of the world is caught in this transformation.

Beyond the panoramic analysis of the region, the book presents case studies, often authored by natives, of the change process in Algeria, Egypt, Iran, Iraq, Israel, Jordan, Kuwait, Lebanon, Palestine, Sudan, Syria, Tunisia, Turkey, and Yemen. The book concludes with nine main arguments:

1. Middle Eastern governments are often marked by ineffectualness and declining legitimacy, and the already awesome burdens that they confront are growing.
2. Access to a variety of "rents" has allowed many governments to lower the stakes of politics and buy off dissent.
3. The end of the Cold War, major progress toward the resolution of the Arab-Israeli conflict, and weak oil prices have reduced rents and therefore decreased the resources available to governments.
4. Although economic and political reform seems imperative, the authoritarian state remains in control and is reluctant to cede power or even open up government.
5. Even when political reformers emerge, they must confront the legacy of authoritarianism: stunted civil societies.
6. Indeed, government policies have tended to privilege populist Islamist forces, sometimes by design, but often as a side effect of the suppression of potential opponents among the secular opposition.
7. Governments must choose between strategies of reform and inclusion (sharing power with opponents), on the one hand, or strategies of exclusion and repression, on the other.
8. The study argues that the imperative of reform is overdetermined, and that strategies of exclusion and campaigns of repression are losing games in the long run.



9. Barring unlikely economic windfall, most Middle Eastern governments will have little choice but to pursue incremental but purposeful reform. The book, which is a product of the Civil Society in the Middle East Project, is important reading material for scholars and political scientists. It is also different in its approach, especially when compared to the skewed approach in the literature on the region in the past. Augustus Richard Norton in his Foreword notes: "This little book offers a clearer lens, one far less prone to distortion... this primer offers a different perspective on the Middle East, one that examines society in juxtaposition explicitly to the state, and implicitly to the fate of authoritarianism. In a region where freedom is often circumscribed and hollow, where governments are endemically suspicious of independent forms of association, civil society cannot be described as robust. This does not mean that civil society is absent."

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Continued from page 1:

Yemen & Eritrea...

The first indicator regarding ownership of islands is proximity. The Hunaish Archipelago lies in the southern part of the Red Sea, and it is closer to Yemen than it is to Eritrea. Although geographic proximity by itself is not a decisive factor in ownership of islands, it is a traditional yardstick.

A second factor which indicates the identity of islands is history. Throughout the distant and recent history, the archipelago has been associated with Yemen or whoever ruled Yemen. Thus, the Yemenis controlled it, then the Ottoman Turks did, and then the British, and finally Yemen.

A third factor which indicates ownership of islands is uncontested control over them. For as long as any one can remember, the Hunaish Archipelago has been under the uncontested control of the Yemeni government - whether the former YAR or former PDRY.

"We were surprised by these developments, and we are shocked at the Eritrean attitude," said Dr. Abdul-Karim Al-Iryani, Yemen's Foreign Minister. He indicated that he has a big pile of old and new maps, all of which show that the archipelago belongs to Yemen. "Even the two maps produced by the newly-born Eritrea show that the islands

belong to Yemen," he added. "The Republic of Yemen had offered and continues to offer a complete demarcation of the Red Sea borders of Yemen and Eritrea, and to work out the territorial and economic waters of the two sides. They (The Eritreans) continue to dodge such offers, even now. They insist they are not ready for a full-fledged border negotiation, and they insist to limit the talks on the archipelago," he indicated. Meanwhile, Yemen has embarked on an extensive campaign within the region to explain its viewpoint regarding the recent incidents. Several senior government officials have been visiting numerous capitals carrying letters from President Ali Abdullah Saleh.

At the same time, Yemen is keeping an open mind regarding the peaceful conclusion of the conflict. Officials have welcomed the Ethiopian initiative, and are talking to whoever is willing to get involved and help in finding a negotiated settlement to the problem. The next week will be critical in the direction the conflict will take.

By: Abdulaziz Al-Saqqaf,
Chief Editor,
Yemen Times.



Israel and Syria: Hopeful Signs

Israel and Syria are picking up the pieces again, in an effort to make a breakthrough in the peace talks. The two sides, with lots of American nudging and encouragement, are slowly coming together.

The Israeli side has shown significant flexibility, notably in relinquishing the Golan Heights. Israeli Prime Minister Shimon Peres even talked of the willingness of Israel to give up its nuclear capabilities, if it were to get a "real" peace.

Syria from its side has also shown tremendous flexibility. It agrees to demilitarize the Golan Heights and to entertain ideas regarding security arrangements for Israel.

The two sides are going to meet at high levels over the next months. However, it is not likely that an agreement can be reached before the Israel elections in the later part of 1996. Still the mood continues to improve and confidence building is increasing on both sides.

The Good Neighbor Policy of Yemen Faces a Tough Test (cont'd from page 6)

This observer would not hesitate to claim that the dangers of the Red Sea islands are far more serious than the Saudi Yemeni disputes over their common border, which this writer believes the Saudis would not in their right mind consider as an issue that the Yemenis should be pressured by while facing up to the Eritrean challenge. Saudi national interests would dictate full support for Yemen's position on Hunaish accordingly. For the President of Yemen, he can count on strong popular support, which has never

failed to come when matters of national importance are at stake. The important thing for now is to get the island or islands back quickly before the Eritreans and their "friends", whoever they are, are able to fortify their hold on Yemeni territory they illegally occupied and create a fait accompli that will surely weaken Yemen's ability to convince its trading partners and prospective investors that its shipping lines are protected and secure. Yemen must get rid of the Eritrean menace - and now

without any further hesitation, so that the Eritreans learn how to behave as good neighbors and the international community, friend or foe, understand that Yemen's national sovereignty will not be subject to any limitations even if such violation may be deemed as essential in the drive towards assuring the success of peace and normalization in the Middle East, as perhaps Israel might have wrongfully convinced the American Administration to believe.

On this issue the Yemeni people will not accept defeat for any reason, and the rulers will be faced with a lot of difficulty in convincing their people that they did, their best to avoid, and to restore Yemen's rights and to confirm that action speaks louder than words. Thanks for the warm Christmas tidings, Mr. Afe-

workay. You may have stretched you luck too far this time. The ball is now in the hands of our leaders and the Yemeni people are ready to oblige with their full support, if they see the seriousness and determination from these leaders confirming that they truly understand where the national interests of Yemen lie. It is about time that this happens.

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Presse

Promouvoir l'indépendance et le pluralisme des médias arabes : tel est le but du séminaire régional organisé par l'ONU et l'UNESCO du 7 au 11 janvier à Sana'a. Quelque 70 journalistes et professionnels de 21 pays prendront part à ce séminaire qui bénéficie de contributions de l'Union Européenne, de la France, du Danemark et des fondations Ford et Rockefeller. Les participants examineront la situation des médias arabes, et pourraient adopter une déclaration pour l'indépendance et le pluralisme de la presse arabe.

en bref

BACCALURÉAT — Il avait échoué au bac, et le voilà classé meilleur bachelier du pays. Un lycéen égyptien a obtenu de la justice la note de 100 sur 100. Pourquoi ? Après un échec qu'il refusait, il avait demandé une seconde correction de ses copies, mais celles-ci avaient été perdues. La justice lui a donné son bac et la meilleure note.

FLÛTE — Le mufti d'Égypte a interdit les comédies musicales. "Le théâtre avec des scènes naturalistes ou religieuses est autorisé, mais les pièces avec des flûtes, des tambourins et des chansons sont interdites", a affirmé le brave homme. Il a également demandé à la télévision de ne plus diffuser de sport féminin. L'islam l'interdit aussi.

USURE — Le même mufti, dans un autre ordre d'idée, a affirmé que les intérêts bancaires sont, eux, "licites". Selon lui, ils ne peuvent pas être "assimilés à l'usure prohibée par l'islam. L'usure, c'est l'exploitation d'un homme dans le besoin, or ce n'est pas le cas des intérêts bancaires". Pour le mufti d'Égypte, les banques islamiques "font beaucoup d'erreurs en raison d'une utilisation incorrecte de la terminologie".

APOSTASIE — Il ne fait pas bon vouloir devenir chrétien, quand on est musulman. Un Koweïtien de 44 ans l'apprend à ses dépens, qui vit depuis plus de deux semaines dans la clandestinité, depuis que la presse a eu vent de sa conversion au christianisme. Quelques extrémistes ont déjà appelé à son assassinat, mais la procédure est plus longue : "Hussein Ali ne peut être considéré comme apostat du seul fait qu'il s'est dit chrétien, il faut d'abord qu'il soit entendu par un tribunal islamique", selon un dignitaire religieux musulman. "Le tribunal lui demandera de proclamer la profession de foi musulmane, et s'il refuse, il devra expliquer ses raisons. Ensuite, il faudra lui expliquer pourquoi ses arguments sont faux", ce qui ne fait aucun doute, "après quoi un délai lui sera donné pour se repentir". Il ne sera tué qu'après ces étapes.

GRÈVES — Le coût officiel des grèves de décembre en France : 5,8 à 7,8 milliards de francs (1,2 à 1,6 M de \$).

Contact : François Pettidémange, Yemen Times.
Tél : 268.661/2. Fax : 268.663.
P.O. Box : 2579, Sana'a, Yemen.

Le conflit territorial Erythrée - Yémen sur l'île de la Grande Hanish

L'île aux trésors ?

Du pétrole (?), des pétroliers, du commerce maritime. Des Israéliens, des Saoudiens, des Américains. Pantins, fils, ficelles, et marionnettistes. Les raisons d'un conflit.

Sana'a. — Pour que deux pays parmi les plus pauvres du monde se disputent une petite île apparemment déserte, pour qu'un si petit conflit suscite autant de réactions, pour que le monde entier dise son inquiétude, il faut de bonnes raisons. Le problème étant de déchiffrer les déclarations, de déceler les motifs cachés, d'analyser les intérêts extérieurs, et de comprendre les subtilités géopolitiques.

A moins que la seule raison du conflit soit tout simplement le pétrole. Du côté yéménite, des recherches ont bien été menées en mer Rouge par le français Total, il y a plusieurs années. Mais elles n'ont rien donné et le permis a été rendu. Plus intéressant en revanche, sur l'autre rive, un permis vient tout juste d'être délivré par l'Erythrée à la société américaine Anadarko. D'importantes prospections auraient commencé, et dans les milieux pétroliers yéménites, on ne serait pas étonné par d'importantes découvertes — et la discrétion des Etats-Unis sur le conflit est à ce titre sinon révélatrice, au moins troublante. En cas de présence de pétrole à proximité de la Grande Hanish, l'île permettrait soit d'étendre la zone économique exclusive, et peut-être d'englober le gisement, soit de fournir une base à proximité de ce gisement, avec tout l'intérêt logistique que cela représente.

Autre attrait de ces îles pouvant provoquer une convoitise : la richesse de la mer. Les ressources en pêche y sont des plus prometteuses pour des pays pauvres comme le Yémen et l'Erythrée. Posséder une des îles principales permettrait au pays concerné d'élargir sa zone de pêche, donc ses ressources.

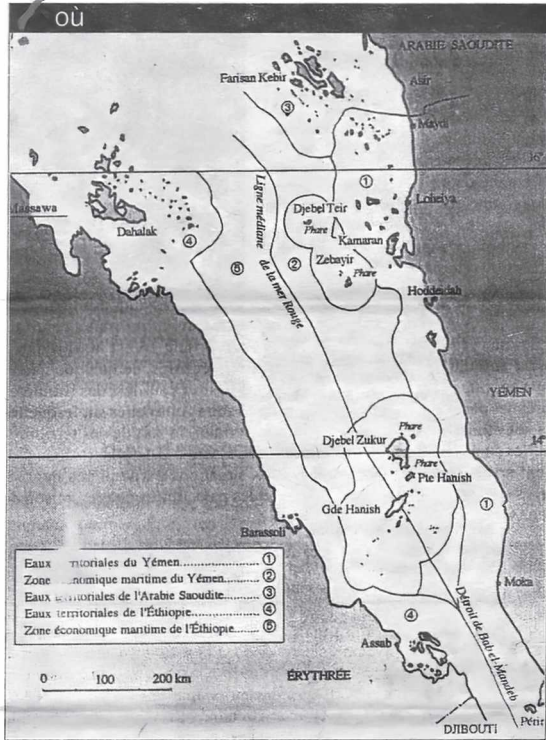
Enfin le tourisme joue également un rôle dans cette histoire, ne serait-ce que celui de déclencheur de la crise. Raison invoquée originellement par l'Erythrée pour justifier son intervention : un promoteur yéménite avait commencé à construire un complexe touristique sur la Grande

Hanish, marquant de fait une appartenance au Yémen de l'archipel, officiellement sans nationalité. C'est ce qui avait provoqué il y a quelques semaines une première intervention de l'Erythrée sur l'île, puis l'envoi d'une garnison de 180 hommes par Sana'a, avant la dernière offensive du pays africain et la prise de l'île, la semaine dernière.

Pétrole, ressources maritimes, tourisme... Ces hypothèses ne sont sans doute qu'une infime partie des raisons du conflit. Cela fait bien longtemps en effet que la situation stratégique de ces îles intéresse les pays de la région, comme l'a rappelé l'ambassadeur du Yémen au Caire : la Grande Hanish a "été utilisée par l'ancien président égyptien Gamal Abdel Nasser en 1967 pour fermer le détroit de Bab el-Mandab, au sud de la mer Rouge, et par son successeur Anouar al-Sadate lors de la guerre israélo-arabe de 1973". "Des troupes militaires égyptiennes y avaient été stationnées pour empêcher toute aide militaire à Israël par la mer Rouge".

Israël, justement. Les Yéménites, et les Arabes en général n'ont pas manqué d'accuser l'Etat hébreu : selon des responsables de Sana'a, Israël aurait livré des armes et des vedettes à Asmara en échange de la prise d'une île de la mer Rouge afin d'y installer une base militaire. Le chef de la puissante diplomatie égyptienne lui-même a évoqué un possible rôle de l'Etat juif. "Je ne peux pas confirmer de manière certaine ces accusations, a-t-il déclaré, mais il y a une logique dans les choses et il existe des hypothèses politiques car cette affaire a des dimensions géostratégiques". Israël a qualifié ces accusations d'"absurdes".

La rumeur ne date pourtant pas d'hier. Dans un article de la revue *Défense Nationale*, le Contre-amiral Henri Labrousse consacre plusieurs paragraphes à l'intérêt que porte Israël à ces îles stratégiques. « Il est certain, écrit Henri Labrousse, qu'Israël, dont les navires, en 1973, ne pouvaient franchir le canal de



Archipel volcanique, Hanish est formé de trois îles principales : Jebel Zogar (120 km²), la Grande Hanish (68 km²), et la Petite Hanish (7 km²). Il contrôle l'accès au détroit de Bab-el-Mandab, entre la mer Rouge et le golfe d'Aden. Le Yémen et l'Erythrée se disputent militairement la Grande Hanish. Mais les revendications portent sur les trois îles de l'archipel.

Suez, voulait développer son commerce extérieur et son ravitaillement en pétrole en pratiquant une politique de présence en mer Rouge, basée avant tout sur de bons rapports

avec l'Éthiopie, seule puissance non islamique dans ce "lac arabe", ou avec l'Erythrée aujourd'hui, pays constitué à 50% de chrétiens : "L'Erythrée est un pays ami qui

occupe une position stratégique de première importance en ce qui concerne la liberté de circulation en mer Rouge et face au Soudan fondamentaliste", a déclaré cette semaine un ministre israélien. Dans un rapport publié jeudi au Caire, et soulignant l'importance des Hanish pour la "sécurité arabe", la Ligue arabe a appelé avoir exhorté les pays arabes dès 1970 à "déployer des efforts auprès de l'Éthiopie pour empêcher l'accroissement de l'influence israélienne dans les îles de la mer Rouge".

Il est probable toutefois qu'Israël ait d'autres préoccupations en ce moment, ne serait-ce qu'avec la Syrie, et n'ait pas spécialement envie de provoquer un conflit international pour une petite île de la mer Rouge. L'Etat juif représente une cible traditionnelle et facile.

Un autre tireur de ficelles est peut-être à chercher plus près du Yémen. Comment ne pas remarquer que l'intervention érythréenne a eu lieu précisément le jour de la réunion à Ryad du haut comité saoudo-yéménite sur le tracé de la frontière commune ? On connaît les prétentions du Royaume saoudien concernant le tracé frontalier au Nord-Est du Yémen. Des troupes de Ryad grignotent régulièrement des petits morceaux de frontière, sans que le Yémen ait jamais les moyens de réagir. Occuper l'armée de Sana'a sur d'autres fronts est l'un des intérêts saoudiens. Un autre est d'affaiblir Sana'a en vue de négociations à venir, concernant cette fois les îles de Farisan Kebrir, plus au Nord, où les deux voisins ne sont pas encore tombés d'accord.

A moins que la raison soit tout simplement, comme sait si bien le faire Ryad, de destabiliser le Yémen, à une période délicate de son histoire économique. On connaît le travail de l'Arabie Saoudite pour tenter de troubler son voisin depuis son soutien à Saddam Hussein, et depuis que la liberté s'installe chez ce voisin gênant, où les femmes ont encore le droit de conduire et les journaux de paraître.

Il faut toutefois noter que le Royaume saoudien, lui non plus, n'a probablement aucun intérêt à voir se développer un conflit dans la mer Rouge : des pétroliers géants y passent, à destination de l'Asie du Sud-Est, et la circulation maritime commerciale y est très importante. "Le commerce entre le Proche et l'Extrême Orient ne peut prospérer que si la stabilité règne en mer Rouge", s'est inquiété un journal saoudien, appelant les deux parties à régler pacifiquement le conflit.

C'est un trait commun aux déclarations, arabes ou africaines, sur le sujet : toutes demandent un règlement pacifique, afin, comme dit si bien Bagdad, d'éviter l'implication du "complot américano-sioniste". Ou d'éviter, tout simplement, une nouvelle guerre type guerre du Golfe. Pétrole, Arabie Saoudite, Israël, Etats-Unis...

François Pettidémange

Droit

Discuter et partager

Yémen et Éthiopie, puis Erythrée, n'ont jamais su régler le problème. Seule solution : négocier.

EXTRAITS — En avril 95, Henri Labrousse écrivait* : « Jusqu'à présent, l'Éthiopie, et ensuite l'Erythrée, et le Yémen, malgré quelques contacts concernant l'ouverture de négociations, n'ont jamais abordé le problème de la nationalité de l'archipel. À la signature de la Convention sur le droit de la mer, le 10 décembre 1982, le Yémen a fait la déclaration suivante : (83) "La république arabe du Yémen confirme sa souveraineté nationale sur toutes les îles de la mer Rouge et de l'océan Indien qui dépendent d'elle depuis l'époque où le Yémen et les pays arabes étaient sous domination turque".

Cette déclaration entraîne une protestation de l'Éthiopie qui, le 8 novembre 1986, adressa une lettre à l'ONU où on pouvait lire : "Le §3 de la déclaration du Yémen contient une revendication de souveraineté sur des îles non déterminées de la mer Rouge et de l'océan Indien, et, de toute évidence, ne relève pas des dispositions de la Convention. (...) Le gouvernement provisoire militaire de

l'Éthiopie socialiste tient (...) à bien marquer que le §3 de la déclaration de la république arabe du Yémen ne saurait en aucune façon affecter la souveraineté de l'Éthiopie sur toutes les îles de la mer Rouge formant partie de son territoire national".

La ratification de la Convention sur le droit de la mer et sa mise en vigueur, intervenues le 16 novembre 1994, rendent officielle la zone économique exclusive de 200 milles marins. Comme la mer Rouge n'a jamais plus de 200 milles marins de large, il faut commencer par tracer une ligne médiane provisoire entre les pays riverains se faisant face. Dans ce cas, cette ligne ne concernerait que les îles Hanish (...), partagées entre les deux zones économiques des deux pays ; mais pour tracer cette ligne médiane provisoire, il faudrait, au préalable, que les deux pays acceptent d'ouvrir des négociations et abandonnent provisoirement leurs revendications sur la totalité des îles de l'archipel. En outre, si un accord se faisait sur une ligne médiane provisoire, il faudrait que la

délimitation définitive des zones économiques entre les deux pays aboutisse à une solution équitable pour le partage des ressources énergétiques, minérales, biologiques et non biologiques. Il ne faut pas oublier que la ligne médiane provisoire n'est qu'un moyen de parvenir à l'équité : c'est une simple base de négociations. »

Et Henri Labrousse terminait son chapitre par cette mise en garde préliminaire : « Il faut espérer que le Yémen et l'Erythrée ouvriront sans trop tarder ces négociations pour trouver une solution satisfaisante à ce problème que les institutions internationales ont été incapables de résoudre depuis la fin de la Première guerre mondiale. Les richesses de la mer qui entoure l'archipel ne peuvent rester sans propriétaire légitime sous peine de provoquer des conflits inévitables ; leur partage entre les Etats riverains est indispensable. »

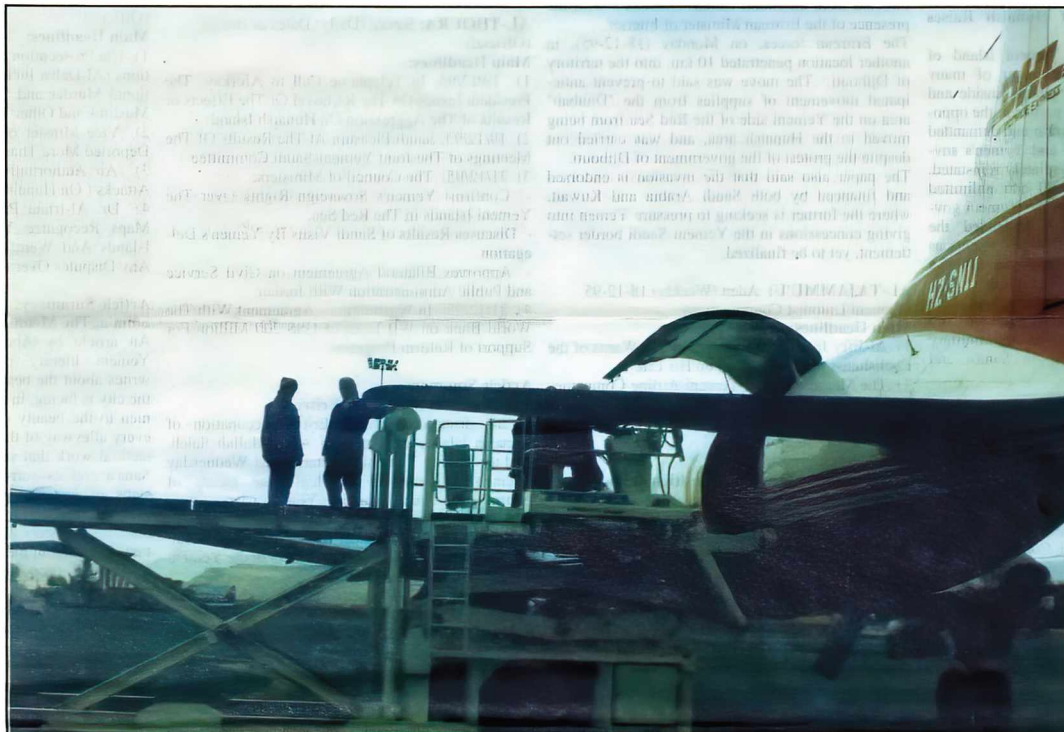
*Article "Un foyer de tension en mer Rouge : l'archipel des Zebayir et des Hanish", dans la revue *Défense Nationale*.

historique

Ancienne possession ottomane, l'archipel des Hanish n'a jamais été attribué à personne par les conventions internationales. Asmara affirme que l'histoire reconnaît sa souveraineté sur cet archipel de 200 km² "depuis l'empire ottoman et sous les occupations italienne, britannique et éthiopienne" de l'Erythrée. Et le Yémen assure également avoir hérité de l'empire ottoman cet archipel. En fait, aucun traité ou convention, malgré de nombreuses tentatives, n'a jamais établi sa nationalité après la dissolution de l'empire ottoman. La Grande-Bretagne, pour laquelle la protection de la route des Indes était prioritaire, s'opposait fermement à la cession de ces îles à l'Italie, présente en mer Rouge avec sa colonie de l'Erythrée. Quant au Yémen, il se posait comme successeur légitime de l'empire ottoman. L'Éthiopie a revendiqué l'archipel dès la fin de la Seconde guerre mondiale. Elle se fonda notamment sur un protocole italo-britannique de 1938 autorisant la présence provisoire de fonctionnaires italiens sur ces îles pour protéger les pêcheurs basés en Erythrée, alors colonie italienne. Le gouvernement britannique resta longtemps responsable de l'entretien de deux phares construits par la France sur ces îles pour la sécurité de la navigation. Mais ces deux phares sont éteints, et le seul qui fonctionne, au sud-est de Jebel Zogar, a été construit par le Yémen, marquant ainsi sa revendication sur le territoire.

**Un foyer de tension en mer Rouge : l'archipel des Zebayir et des Hanish".

DHL Flies Its First Plane to Yemen



DHL: Delivering Your Consignment No Matter Its Size or Weight

A vibrant Hussein Al-Sayyadi, Country Manager of DHL Yemen, explains it all:

"At 9:00 a.m. on the 17th of December, Sunday, I received a call from Dubai saying that they have a 1790 kilogram shipment which is part of a new oil drilling rig going to Dowell Schlumberger in Sanaa. They said they wanted to bring in a conveyer. That means flying in a DHL plane, a first for Yemen. They needed permission for landing from the Yemeni authorities.

"By 10:30 a.m. on Monday, we had the permission, thanks to the assistance of Omar M. Omar, GM of Universal Travel & Tourism. Dubai was amazed at the speed with which the Yemeni authorities responded to the request.

"At 3:30 p.m. on Tuesday, the plane touched down exactly on time. Within two hours, shipment was cleared and the plane was off on its return flight.

"This is the beginning of a new experience. We have shown we can do it. At the spin of a coin, we at DHL can put together the necessary arrangements to bring in any shipment to any Yemeni airport.

"I want to use this opportunity to thank the officials of Civil Aviation, Sanaa International Airport, Yemenia, and others for responding positively and swiftly."

Mr. Dominic Carrington, Anadrill General Manager - Schlumberger, says he is delighted with the service. "We are pleased with DHL's services in Yemen. We are especially pleased with the prompt delivery of the urgently required drilling equipment," he said.



AL-AYYAM: Aden (Weekly) 20-12-95
(Independent)

Main Headlines:

- 1) The Military Police detain a Citizen on the Accusation of Speaking Badly Against the President
- 2) Who Is the Real Accused in the Aden Explosions?
- 3) Presentation of Some of the Dissident Leaders of the Yemeni Socialist Party
- 4) A Navy Colonel Had Presented a Study On the Yemeni Islands More Than Three Years Ago.

Article Summary:

The Eritrean Occupation of Hunaish Raises Public Outcry

The sudden takeover of the Yemeni island of Greater Hunaish has raised the anger of many Yemenis, as individuals and as groups, inside and outside of Yemen. The political parties in the opposition also denounced the aggression and demanded that the aggression be repulsed and Yemen's sovereignty over the island be immediately reinstated, in addition to affirming their full and unlimited support of the official position of the Yemeni government. Moreover the latter demanded the Yemeni people be advised of all developments as they arise. On the other hand, there was talk of a committee to be set up to control the military situation and to prevent it from getting out of hand. The committee is to be composed of Yemeni and Eritrean representatives as well as the military attaches of both US embassies in Sana'a and Eritrea.

AL-WAHDAWI: Sana'a (Weekly) 19-12-95
(Nasserite Unionist Party)

Main Headlines:

- 1) The Second Phase of Economic Reforms In January: The Nutrition's Subsidy Decreases and a New Wave of High Prices
- 2) The Relationship Between the People's General Congress Party and the Yemeni Congregation for Reform: Differences Are Increasing, Expectations of a Repetition of the Egyptian Type of Elections (Here)
- 3) Saudi Arabia Stalls the work of the Joint Committees.

Article Summary:

An Israeli Officer Commanded the (Hunaish) Operation and Kuwait Participated in the Financing
The paper disclosed that according to diplomatic

Yemeni Press in a Week

by: *Hassan Al-Haifi*

sources an Israeli high ranking officer lead the Eritrean military attack on Greater Hunaish island last Friday (15-11-95) and the operation was directed from an island called "Dahlak" with the presence of the Eritrean Minister of Interior. The Eritrean forces, on Monday (18-12-95), in another location penetrated 10 km. into the territory of Djibouti. The move was said to prevent anticipated movement of supplies from the "Dhubab" area on the Yemeni side of the Red Sea from being moved to the Hunaish area, and was carried out despite the protest of the government of Djibouti. The paper also said that the invasion is endorsed and financed by both Saudi Arabia and Kuwait, where the former is seeking to pressure Yemen into giving concessions in the Yemeni-Saudi border settlement, yet to be finalized.

AL-TAJAMMU'U: Aden (Weekly) 18-12-95
(Yemeni Unionist Congregation)

Main Headlines:

- 1) Al-Jifri Justifies the Secession and Warns of the Foolishness of the Attempts on His Life
- 2) The Merger of the 2 Yemeni Airline Companies is Again Postponed
- 3) Taz: The Judge Is Wanted By Justice (For Killing a Merchant)

Article Summary:

Sheikh Al-Ahmar and The Position of Speaker of the Parliament
The opening editorial of the paper questions the constitutional implications of the Speaker of the House of Representatives, Abdullah Bin Hussein Al-Ahmar, leading a delegation to participate in the Joint Yemeni-Saudi Higher Committee. Such may contradict the principle of separation of powers, since the Speaker will be regarded as performing executive functions accordingly. This results in a rather embarrassing situation for the Saudis who do not have a parliament or even a constitution. If the Parliament speaker is there in the capacity of Chairman of the YCG (Islah) Party then the embarrassment is that there are no political parties in Saudi Arabia. It would have been more appropriate

or Al-Ahmar to volunteer his assistance on a personal basis, but not as head of negotiating delegation.

AL-THOURA: Sana'a (Daily) Dates as shown
(Official)

Main Headlines:

- 1) 19/12/95: In Telephone Call to Aforkay: The President Insists On The Removal Of The Effects or Results Of The Aggression On Hunaish Island
- 2) 19/12/95: Saudi Pleasure At The Results Of The Meetings Of The Joint Yemeni-Saudi Committee
- 3) 21/12/95: The Council of Ministers:
 - Confirms Yemen's Sovereign Rights Over The Yemeni Islands In The Red Sea.
 - Discusses Results of Saudi Visits By Yemen's Delegation
 - Approves Bilateral Agreement on Civil Service and Public Administration With Jordan.
- 4) 21/12/95: In Washington - Agreement With The World Bank on WB Loan of US\$ 200 Million For Support of Reform Programs

Article Summary:

The President Speaks On Eritrea

In his discussion of the Eritrea occupation of Hunaish Island, the President Ali Abdullah Saleh, said to leading Yemeni dignitaries last Wednesday "Yemen will use all the legitimate means of returning the Greater Hunaish Yemeni island. Other highlights of what the President said to a representative cross section of the Yemeni political, social, tribal, and other elite members in the Yemeni society also included:

- "Yemen was the source of support and assistance for the Eritrean revolt".
- "We cannot blame any other state, we blame the Eritrean authorities who carried out the aggression".
- "We accepted the cease fire realizing the historical responsibility and due to a number of realities".
- "We proposed 3 points to solve the problem: the return of the guests with the Eritrean side (prisoners), withdrawal from the island and the beginning

of talks".

- "In the beginning of the year, a German firm wanted to invest in a tourism project in the island. A permit was granted to it and work began on it in mid 1995. In November we were surprised to find that a notice has been given to the investors and the army garrison protecting the island to leave the island immediately."

- "It the Ethiopians had known that they had rights, to the islands they would have not allowed the Eritreans to use it as a base against them. The Ethiopians wished to avoid trouble with Yemen".

AL-WAHDAH: Sana'a (Weekly) 20-12-95
(Official)

Main Headlines:

- 1) The Prosecution Prepares a Long List of Accusations (Al-Dali'a Incident Trial) Among Them Intentional Murder and Spilling The Blood Of Faithful Muslims and Other Terrorist Acts
- 2) Vice Minister of Interior Al-Misry: "We Have Deported More Than 4000 Illegal Aliens"
- 3) An Authoritative Source Denies Yemeni Air Attacks (On Hunaish)
- 4) Dr. Al-Iriani Press Conference: "The Eritrean Maps Recognize Yemen's Sovereignty Over Its Islands And Were Clear As To The Absence Of Any Disputes Over The Islands"

Article Summary:

Sana'a, The Memory of Arab Cities

An article by Abdulla Al-Haifi, a well known Yemeni literary personality and commentator writes about the beauty of Sana'a and the challenge the city is facing, in lieu of the destructive nature of men to the beauty of history which is reflected in every alleyway of the city and its picturesque architectural work that seeks to destroy the harmony of Sana'a and its surroundings and by ugly modern slabs of concrete randomly constructed without taste or respect for the magnificent work of the Sana'ani ancestors who gave it the beautiful gardens that abounded in the city, which have now reduced to a small proportion of their original size and greenery. Sana'a, whose cleanliness and order has been neglected and where the garbage has become a common sight to behold at every turn of its winding streets, is crying for sympathy and help from the rape of the city and the painful erasure of its past partnership with beauty and charm, which glowed with each rising sun: "We tattoo our arms: Peace to you, Oh Sana'a, which we inscribe with the water of our eyes. You are indeed the beloved memory of Arab cities (trying to stay alive).

Letters to the Editor Letters to the Editor Letters to the Editor Letters to the Editor

**Face to Face
With President Saleh**

Last night, I met President Ali Abdullah. It was a thrilling night. I'll never forget that great night. Indeed, it was a remarkable night in my life. My friends, please be with me to let you know what happened during that wonderful meeting. "Hello! Have a seat my son!", the President said. I was so excited. "Hello! It is a great honor to meet Your Excellency". I said. His excellency said "I heard that you want to discuss some important issues with me" I'll be glad if you say them now".

I swallowed my saliva and scratched my head, then I said "Well! My issues can be summarized in these questions:

- 1- What's your plan of Fiscal and Monetary Reforms in Yemen?
- 2- When will the project of the Aden Free Zone see light?
- 3- Why don't you visit the countryside of Yemen, where people live in a very poor conditions, as if the September 26th and 14th October Revolution only takes part in the main cities? Please come, see, listen and help those who are waiting for your help.
- 4- My fourth and last issue is an advice:

A- Don't be angry from those who criticize. They want to improve Yemen. So please listen to them and try to be patient with them. B- Open your arms and your heart to our brothers in Saudi Arabia and Kuwait and try to be the harbinger of Arab Unity. Finally, can you please say your comment?"

The President is very happy. I can guess his feeling through his eyes.

He said "Well! Indeed my comment can be summarized in the following points:

But unfortunately, instead of hearing the president's voice, I heard my grandmother saying, "Hay Ali, Wake up! You are late. It's time for school!" Alas, folks. It was just a dream, a dream....

**Ali Gawf Ali Bary
Al-Dahi, Hodeidah.**

**Trying To Laugh When Tears
Are In The Eyes.**

It is noticed totally these days the huge number of crazy people on the street from different ages and levels.

But what really upsets you, is that this view is becoming to be ordinary, and it is natural to see a man in his thirties throwing his scarf into the air then running to catch it in a public square! Or to see a person wearing more than 20 clothes and moving in an illogical way! Let alone, the number of people speaking to themselves while walking on the streets. It is truly our luck that we are "Muslims" and it is necessary for a mad woman to stay at home because, if not, God knows what deep problems may happen, especially since I've learned that the number of crazy females is bigger than the number of crazy males? But why?

What ever happened to the "Happy Yemen" that transferred it's people into insane!! Is it the high prices or the low standard of living? Or is it the family and social problems in their different minds? Or maybe it is in the recent developments on the

political stage that turned some people crazy! I really don't know. You see, as I know these circumstances are not new to us. As we - thank God - seem to possess a very high talent in adopting with the worst situations, starting from exchanging the car with boots or "sneakers",

ending with the phrase: "leave it to God", meaning God will solve it). There is no doubt, that there are other reasons which need to be dealt with. And it is suspected that our enemy, Israel, is the cause behind this dire mental straits, where it has sprayed our country with some chemical materials, in

order to destroy our balance of our minds, aware of the "bright mind" we have, and that very soon the Yemeni may well terminate as a whole in a short time. Therefore, Israel wanted to destroy us - push us to madness, and get rid of that powerful youth who can't stand having a spare time doing nothing!

After all, what ever the reasons are, the best we can do is to laugh - even if on ourselves - a thought of the tears in the eyes, forget about the problems and "leave it to God,!"

Nadia Al-Saqqaq

**Taj Ausan Hotel
(Hodeidah)**



This is the first hotel in Hodeidah of this class, having 60 rooms and 9 suites. The hotel complex is built in an area of 5000 square meters, which also contains the recreational area and parking lot. The hotel is distinguished by the fact that it is conveniently located in an area considered to be the main entrance to the city of Hodeidah, overlooking Sana'a Street and Airport Road. The hotel is has been recently refurbished and airconditioned and well illuminated. The hotel also has a conference room, a comfortable restaurant, a cafeteria, a barber shop and ladies' coiffure. Hotel Ausan is equipped with a radio transmission unit, centralized video film transmission, and international and local telephone lines. For businessmen, the hotel offers a full range of modern secretarial services, such as typing and fax message transmittal. The hotel's dining facilities offer a full range of western and oriental meals. The rooms are fully furnished with the latest comfortable amenities, including air conditioning, telephones, etc.

Sana'a St., P. O. Box: 3712, Hodeidah, ROY. Tel: 03-212570-5. Fax: 03-212577.



Taj Ausan Hotel

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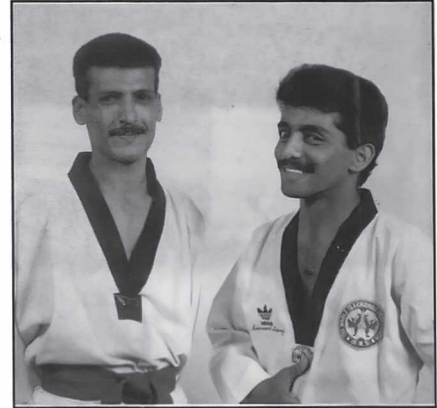
Taiz Taekwondo Makes Headway

"All trainers needed in taekwondo exercises were distributed to the schools, sports clubs and centers in Taiz," explained Mr. Mohammed Al-Tolagi, Chairman of the Taekwondo Federation. The Taiz branch of Taekwondo Federation is planning a day of events to honor Mr. Mohammed Ishaq, founder of the sport in Taiz. On the occasion, outstanding athletes will be honored, including:

1. Tareq Qayed Ali, Black belt.
2. Alaa Moh'd Abdulkarim, Black belt,
3. Taha Ahmed Al-Reyashi, Black belt,
4. Essam Al-Redaa, Red belt.

The Taiz taekwondo sport has developed roots and has become a popular sport among the public. In addition, some of the coaches and referees have gained international stature. Among these are Mohammed Ishaq, who received the B1 nomination as international referee in 1993, and Kemal Awadh, in 1995.

By: Murad Al-Sabbani.



Continued from page 1:

Thugs Beat Up Al-Saqqaf

Why would anybody beat up an old man, let alone a learned man like Professor Al-Saqqaf, was the question everybody was asking. The Yemen Times spoke to Mohammed Al-Sourmi, Vice Chairman of the PSO, and asked him to explain this. "We did not do it. We cannot do something like this. We ask Dr. Al-Saqqaf to give us description of the people who did it and we will be in their pursuit," he said.

But Abubakar Al-Saqqaf is certain it is the job of the PSO. "Look, nobody has these electric batons except the government. Two of the three attackers were in uniform. And the two cars they used were the same two cars of the January attack. Besides, who has an interest in stopping me write?" he asks.

The incident left a horrible impression among the intellectuals of Yemen. "This is in bad taste. How can any decent person authorize this kind of behavior?"

Several intellectuals, politicians, lawyers, journalists and diplomats, including the US ambassador have visited Dr. Saqqaf at his home.



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All candidates must be **YEMENI NATIONALS**

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Attn: Personnel Department
P. O. Box 481, Sana'a
Republic of Yemen

ANNOUNCEMENT

The TEMPORARY SUPPORT OFFICE SHABWAH, for the DIRECTORATE-GENERAL INTERNATIONAL COOPERATION of the MINISTRY OF FOREIGN AFFAIRS OF THE NETHERLANDS, in cooperation with the GOVERNORATE OF SHABWAH announces a tender for the execution of mechanical, electrical and civil works for the direct improvement of the water supply systems in Ataq, Nissab and Bayhan in the governorate of Shabwah.

The works mainly comprise the supply and installation of mechanical and electrical deep-well and booster pumps, engines and generators and the lifting, overhaul and installation of Lister-Petter and IGEA diesel engines and Grundfos pumps. The civil works are limited to the roofing of reservoirs and the upgrading of the buildings of the booster station.

The contract agreement with the successful bidder will, among others, include:

- payments to the contractor in US dollars
- primary insurance of 1% of the bid
- final insurance consisting of an irreversible bank guarantee of 5% of the contract sum
- tender documents can be obtained by the contractors invited to bid at the Governors office in Ataq for the price of YR 5000

The contract payments shall be fully financed by the Directorate-General International Cooperation of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Netherlands. The language of tender documents, bids, contracts and correspondence during execution will be in English.

Contractors interested in entering this tender are invited to apply to the Temporary Support Office (TSO), located in the office of the Governor of Shabwah in Ataq. Applicants are requested to bring the necessary documents introducing their companies. These documents should include:

- tax card
- a list of reference projects including 2 projects showing experience in similar projects and the importation of equipment
- a scheme showing the organization of the company and the numbers of personnel per division/section
- an overview of the companies turnover in the last 3 years
- the intention to employ sub-contractors if any

Deadline for application is two weeks from the date of this announcement

For more information, please contact:
Mr Harm Dijkstra or Mr. Adhel Tamari at the Governors Office in Ataq
Phone/fax: 02-552328/15



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**Boutros Ghali
in Sanaa
this Week**



UN Secretary-General Boutros Boutros Ghali, arrives in Sanaa on December 27th on a two-day visit to Yemen, in response to a formal invitation by the Government of Yemen. Dr. Ghali's visit has been scheduled some time ago, but the timing is decided to enable the UN to play a constructive role in resolving the Yemeni-Eritrean conflict concerning the Hunaish Archipelago in the Red Sea.

Dr. Ghali, 73, is an old on Yemen. He had actually written a book on Yemen. A lawyer, jurist, and a well-published author, Dr. Ghali is one of the foremost Arab and international scholar.

But the UN official's visit to Yemen is not purely pleasure. He will discuss the recent Yemeni-Eritrean dispute, and will contribute to a solution. One possibility is a UN-sponsored supervision of the withdrawal of the forces of the two countries from the archipelago, and then manning it by UN people.

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