

Yasser Arafat, the legacy

Biography of Yasser Arafat

Born: Yasser Arafat was born in Jerusalem-Palestine in 1929.
Education: Engineering degree from King Fuad University, Cairo-Egypt.
1956: Joined the reserve officers of the Egyptian Army and fought against the tripartite aggression on Egypt.
1953- 1968: Joined early in his youth, the Palestine National Movement as represented by the League of Palestinian Students 1944, and chaired it later on.
1968: Formed "Fatah" movement together with other brothers in the fifties and was declared its spokesman
1973: Commander in Chief of the forces of the Palestinian Revolution.
1974: Addressed the General Assembly of the United Nations in New York.
Achievements and Peace awards: -
1979: Joliet Curie Gold Medal-World Peace Council.
1981: Honorary Ph.D. from Jamaat Islamiya in Haidar Abad, India.
1982: Led the heroic battle against the invasion of Lebanon and the battle of steadfastness during the siege of Beirut by the Israeli forces.
Nov.1984 & April 1987: Re-elected Chairman of the Executive Committee of the Palestine Liberation Organization by the 17th, 18th and the 19th sessions of the Palestine National Council
13 Sept. 1988: Addressed the Socialist Group of the European Parliament
15 Nov. 1988: Announced the Declaration of Independence and the establishment of an independent Palestinian State.
13 Dec. 1988: Addressed the UNGA, which convened in Geneva to hear him because the then US Secretary of State denied Chairman Arafat an entry Visa to the US to address the UNGA in New York. Addressed the Security Council in Geneva on February & May 1990 for the same reason.
13-14 Dec. 1989: Launched the Palestinian peace initiative for establishing peace in the Middle East. Following that, on 14 Dec. 1988, the US Administration led by President Reagan decided to open a substantial dialogue with the PLO in Tunis.
30 March 1989: Chosen President of the State of Palestine by Central Council of the PLO and elected as such by the Palestine National Council directly on 15 Nov. 1988.
13 Sep. 1993: Launched and directed the policy of "Peace of the Braves" that culminated in the signing of the Palestinian Israeli Declaration of Principles at the White House, Washington.
12 Oct. 1993: Elected by the Central Council of the PLO to be the President of the Palestinian National Authority (PNA).
31 Oct. 1993: President of Palestine Economic Council for Development and Reconstruction (PECDAR).
July 1994: Awarded Felix Houphouet Boigny peace prize.
Oct. 1994: Received Laureate Nobel Peace Prize.
Nov. 1994: Awarded Prince of Asturias Prize.
28 Sep. 1995: Signed Oslo agreement with the late Israeli Prime Minister, Mr. Rabin, and witnessed by the U.S.A. and Russia.
20 Jan. 1996: Elected as President of the PNA in general election.
23 Oct. 1998: He signed "Wye River" memorandum with the former Israeli Prime Minister, Mr. Netanyahu.
31 Aug. 1999: Awarded an Honorary Ph.D. in Business Administration from the Maastricht University of Holland.
President Arafat is Vice-Chairman of NAM and the permanent Vice-Chairman of the Organization of Islamic Conference.

Yasser Arafat

A lot has been said about Yasser Arafat, particularly in the days after he fell ill in October 2004. Globally, a lot of the material was published about him, but which was mainly negatively portrayed as it was taken from the narrow perspective of the pro-Israeli point of view that assumes that Arafat is a supporter of terrorist who facilitates the killing of innocent Israeli civilians. On the other hand, most of the people of the developing world see him as a hero who had been fighting all his life for the liberation of the Palestinian occupied territory. This contrast cannot easily be identified unless one travels throughout the world and interviews citizens in different countries. It is noteworthy that in the last few years, the sympathy towards Arafat has increased tremendously, particularly in Europe, which Israel now considers anti-Semitic. But to shed more light on this freedom fighter, let us take the historical dimensions of his life into perspective and see how he evolved into becoming a symbol for freedom throughout the world.

The beginning

Being born in Gaza in 1929 to a relatively well-to-do merchant family, Arafat was given the birth name Muhammad, which has since been almost completely sidelined by the nickname Yasser.

Arafat's mother passed away when he was four, leaving the responsibility of raising him to his older sister. Arafat lived as a regular boy who worked hard to attain the maximum educational level possible, but also held on to the conviction of the need to struggle for Palestinian independence. As a teenager, Arafat was involved in assisting Palestinian fighters resisting the Israeli occupation. It has been recorded that the young Gazan helped smuggle weapons to the fighters in the war of 1948. Like many aspiring students from Gaza, he traveled to Egypt to finish his studies. There, he formed the Palestinian Graduate Association. Among other tasks, the group supplied volunteers to the Egyptian front to stand against British, French and Israeli forces during the Suez crisis. He graduated from the civil engineering department of the University of Cairo and sought employment in Kuwait.

Establishment of Fatah

In 1956 he formed an underground organization, later known as Fatah in Kuwait. The group fought for a Palestinian state, carrying out attacks on Israeli targets.

But the young revolutionary was interested in much more than a secure

job. The Fatah movement later came to serve as the Palestinian Liberation Organisation's largest and most popular faction.

He worked towards attracting more attention to his movement and the plight of Palestinian refugees.

One of the earliest recorded outcomes of those efforts was the publishing of the magazine Falestinuna (Our Palestine).

To expand the scope and influence of his revolutionary ideas, he opened an office for his group in Algeria, in 1965.

By then, he was seeking a greater Arab awareness of the Palestinian issue but without allowing any Arab government to have a mandate over the Palestinian struggle with Israel.

He was recognized for leading several attacks against Israel from various Arab territories. He believed that armed resistance was the only option left for a population that had lost its homeland and freedom.

He was determined that Palestinians were the best people to manage the war with Israel.

However, his insistence on maintaining the independent character of the Palestinian struggle has often been a source of conflict between him and various Arab governments.

Black September

In Jordan, that rift culminated in a war between Palestinian resistance factions and the Jordanian army.

Thousands of Palestinian civilians were slaughtered in Jordan's crackdown in what became known as Black September.

Palestinian factions were forced out of Jordan into Lebanon, this time with Arafat elected as the chairman of the PLO's executive committee.

Lebanon, already swamped in a civil strife between its various sects and factions, was hardly ready for another formidable force that, in addition to its political influence, altered the fractious ethnic set-up of the country.

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Eid Mubarak, Happy Holiday

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As the city receives more than half a million visitors for the Eid vacation: Almost a million tourists in Aden

By YT ADEN BUREAU

It has been reported that Aden in this eid vacation may receive up to a million visitors. This is a true milestone in the city's modern tourism history, as local tourism has now become the talk of town and a source of income and wealth for many business owners in this fabulous coastal city. Thanks to efforts by locals and the authorities in the city, particularly the governorate, the city is now slowly standing up as a competing tourist destination in the region.

Incredible boost in tourism

As the case in the last few years, Aden City continued to receive an influx of tourists from all over the country and even from neighbors such as Saudi Arabia and the United Arab Emirates. Those tourists hope to spend the Eid vacation on its beaches, and they usually get what they bargain for.

Most of the tourists seize the opportunity to escape from the sizzling winter weather of Sanaa and other cities and head for the warm golden beaches in the south.

Last year's Eid Al-Fitr witnessed more than seven hundred thousand visitors to Aden. Meanwhile, the people of this hospitable city seize the opportunity by intensifying their trade and commercial activities during this season.

The fact that hotels become fully booked many days before the eid vacation is an indication of the high number of tourists visiting the city in such a short time.

Many investors have seized the opportunity and built apartments and hotels to accommodate the extra number of tourists and do generate huge income during the eid seasons.

But unfortunately, many locals believe that this type of tourism is seasonal, so they hope that investors and the authorities could work on plans to promote shopping and tourism festivals throughout the year to attract tourists continuously similar to Dubai, Qatar, Jeddah and other coastal cities.

Better looks than ever

A number of malls and shopping centers have been inaugurated in Aden in the last few years adding to the many attractions the city has to offer. The new governor of the city, Dr. Yahya Al-Shuaibi has also dedicated much of his time and effort to enhance the infrastructure and facilities of the city and focus on its natural beauty and cleanliness to become a preferred destination for families and foreign tourists.

The city currently has more than 100 hotels, of which two are five star hotels and the number is steadily increasing. With the expected inauguration of the Holiday Inn Hotel in Aden soon, and the anticipated opening of the gigantic shopping center near it, the city is bound to become a major attraction even on the

regional level.

According to Tourism Office Manager in Aden Mr. Ali Naji, survey forms have been distributed to the different hotels to know the number of guests in each one and their requests and suggestions to improve the city further, so as to serve as a database for those who want to reserve rooms or apartments during the peak seasons and know their tastes and styles.

Prostitution: still a problem

Coastal cities have become a major destination during Eids in the last few years. However, the increasing number of wealthy youngsters coming from Yemen and neighboring countries raised the fears of potential increase of prostitution and other unethical acts such as the rise in alcohol consumption. But authorities in the city had confirmed that they are working hard to curb any attempts to convert the city from a family-friendly area to a town full with thugs and prostitutes.

Whether those actions will be affective remains to be seen, especially as the reports on increasing cases of prostitution are still emerging by the day.

New options for tourists

Meanwhile, this does not hinder efforts to provide new services to tourists who come mainly to enjoy the beach and the sunshine of Aden. A few years ago, many services have been offered in the two five-star hotels in Aden, including boat tours and riding jet skis.

Green parks have been emerging and tree plantations have also taken place in different sectors of the city. New corniches and chalets are also being constructed, and new beaches are now open for the public.

Children enjoy their time in Aden because of water sports, public and amusement parks, and even by having tours on camels and horses.

Adenese also celebrate eid

In a time the city gets overwhelmed with too many guests coming from other areas all at once, one cannot ignore the fact that locals in the city also have their moments to enjoy during this special time of the year.

Aden, just like any other Yemeni city, has its own unique rituals, customs and traditions adopted in the Eid days.

Aden's tourism enhancing

At Gold Mohur coast in Tawahi, tourists usually spend fine hours under the sun or swimming and children enjoy laying with beach sand.

One of the families from Maalla area was having a walk near the beach when they expressed their joy for receiving the eid. Ms. Nisreen Fouad said, "Eid brings family members together to rejoice the cheerful moments that signal the end the blessed Ramadhan fasting. We feel that Eid-el-Fiter of this year will be the best of all the Eids because it will witness the inauguration of new recreation grounds

Beaches provide recreation for a large number of tourists especially from the Gulf Area

and public gardens, including the fabulous corniche of Khormaksar (Abyan beach) which will attract visitors from all over the country to enjoy the sea breeze and be inspired by observing its fascinating waves."

Regarding the customs and traditions adopted in Aden Governorate, locals agree that they are quite similar to those of other Yemeni and the Arabs families except of slight differences that are unique to Aden including the way Eid congratulations are exchanged and dining tables are arranged with the neighbors, relatives and friends around them.

Furthermore, the "Henna" that children and kids have painted on them represents a unique characteristic about Aden during eid. This tradition actually attracts many females who enjoy coloring their hands and feet using Henna brushes (Asa').

The owners of camels in Aden also celebrate the eid by painting their camels with Henna, and some even put some ornaments on their necks.

Then those camels are then used as a means of entertainment for children who enjoy rides on carts pulled by those camels through the city's lanes, particularly in the Shiekh Othman district.

Eid of cheerfulness and forgiving others

Mr. Saleh Muhammad al-Wuhaishy talked about the Eid by saying that it is "a time to express cheerfulness and to forgive each other. It is the time to meet others with pure hearts and make fresh starts for friendships. It is also an opportunity to assess ourselves and abandon any hatred that remained in us throughout the last year."

He added, "However, Eids of today are

not like those of the past from the point of traditions. Today, family bonds are weaker, and traditions are given less importance, especially by the young generation. I fear that they could even disappear if things continue this way. The economic hardships and the high cost of living make people become occupied by daily worries."

"We hope that family and neighbor bonds would be preserved and strengthened, and our centuries-long heritage would not be lost."

He the continued, "Aden of today attracts many visitors from the different governorates of Yemen and it also attracts foreign and Arab tourists, who would like to spend the Eid in the city and enjoy the beautiful weather and its fascinating beaches. We hope that the governor would consider enhancing the infrastructures and tourism facilities further to enable it to generate better income for the city's residents."

Eid & the "Zurbeyan" dish

Ms. Emtinan Abubaker al-Sana'ani, who is a resident Aden said she feels glad

to spend Eid in Aden and that she particularly enjoys the special meals of this season. "We usually have liver, hearts and the kidneys for breakfast. As for lunch and dinner, we prepare "Zurbeyan" (Rice with meat plus necessary spices) besides the lot of salads and Shaeria (a kind of local sweet to be taken along with the Zurbeyan) plus other sweets, especially "Halwa" (a local sweets to be taken right after having the Zurbeyan)," she explains.

"On the next day of eid, it is a tradition to arrange visits to different family members and ensure that each one meets each other relative."

Another tradition in Aden that is adopted by families is to visit the graves of their buried relatives and recite the first surat of Qura'an "al-Fatehah"

Eid and children

In Bureiqah "Little Aden" Ms Fatemah al-Afeefy said that "Eid reminds us about our early childhood when we used to have different feelings and traditions. It was much more joyful in the past. I feel sympathy to the children of today who seem to lack a lot of the joy we used to

have especially when we go from door to door asking for Eid money, gifts, sweets or chocolates."

"However, even today, families go to visit their patient relatives in the hospitals and deliver their best Eid wishes and congratulations. Meanwhile, some families convey their eid wishes to their relatives living far away by telephones."

Eid in Aden: A spectacular experience

When looking into what Aden offers, not only in Eid, but at any other time as well, one can only realize the great potential this city can have and the opportunities that could be explored in it.

The city of Aden has a much better location, richer history, more diverse geography than many other larger ports in the Arabian Peninsula, but it is unfortunately, under-exploited.

For those who did spend their eid in Aden and enjoyed the spectacular experience on its beaches would realize this fact and hopefully would help others realize the importance of this city and help it go back to its days of glory.

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Yasser Arafat, the legacy

Meanwhile, Arafat became the first representative of a non-government agency to address the UN General Assembly. With a pistol-holder strapped to his hip in 1974, he said "I have come bearing an olive branch and a freedom fighter's gun. Do not let the olive branch fall from my hand."

In 1978, Israel conducted a small-scale invasion and occupied a small part of Lebanon. In 1982, it carried out a full-scale invasion.

One of the main Israeli objectives was to drive Arafat's fighters out of the country. Israeli forces besieged the Lebanon capital, Beirut, and Arafat's departure was the price for lifting the siege.

The Palestinian leader and his fighters were sent to various Arab countries in an agreement forged with the help of several countries.

According to the agreement, the US would guarantee the safety of Palestinian refugees in Lebanon.

Shortly after the PLO's departure, the slaughter of over 2200 refugees in the Sabra and Shatilla refugee camps took place under the nose of the Israeli occupation forces, and under the direct supervision of Defense minister by then Ariel Sharon, who know serves as the Prime Minister of Israel.

Arafat and the PLO headquarters headed for Tunisia. Other members of the leadership settled in Tunisia as well as Syria while Palestinian fighters found themselves scattered throughout the Middle East.

Peace talks & historic Oslo accords
In November 1988, the PLO's Palestinian National Council declared the independent state of Palestine, with Jerusalem as its capital.

Arafat read the declaration of independence and later publicly rejected "all forms of violence" and met US conditions for dialogue.

He then sought a dialogue with both Israel and the United States. Eight years later, he was elected president of the Palestinian National Authority.

That declaration was Arafat's ticket to a kinder US perception of him and the PLO, but hardly served his image among other Palestinian faction leaders, who saw his approach as an insult to the Palestinian

struggle for independence.

In 1989, the Palestinian Central Council declared Arafat president of the Palestinian state.

In 1991, Palestinian negotiators began peace talks in Madrid, under the auspices of the US and Russia.

His words still resonate with the Palestinian people today. Arafat has dreamed of a Palestinian state since he was a young man, and thought fighting Israel would bring freedom and a nation to Palestinians. But decades of bloodshed did not bring either.

Then in 1992, he began serious negotiations with Israel.

Arafat, however, was sponsoring another round of secret peace talks in Norway, which brought about the Oslo accords in 1993.

Arafat and at the time Israeli Prime Minister Yitzhak Rabin signed the Oslo peace accords, establishing a framework for an agreement aimed at bringing peace to the region. This earned him the Nobel Peace Prize in 1994.

The Oslo accords were followed by other peace agreements, starting with the Cairo accords of 1994, which kickstarted Israel's limited withdrawal scheme, beginning with "Gaza-Jericho first".

According to the Oslo accords, Israel would grant the Palestinians limited territorial sovereignty and partial control over civil affairs in the West Bank and Gaza.

It also established the Palestinian Authority (PA) with Arafat as its president.

The Oslo and Madrid agreements were put on paper and at the White House, Arafat and then Israeli Prime Minister Yitzhak Rabin exchanged a historic handshake and sealed an outline for limited Palestinian self-rule in the West Bank and Gaza.

Both Arafat and Rabin were awarded the Nobel peace prize for their efforts.

But the Middle East peace process has been through ups and downs since Rabin's assassination by a right-wing Israeli extremist in 1995. And violence has escalated since Arafat's arch-nemesis Ariel Sharon became Israel's Prime Minister.

However, on the ground, Palestinians noticed little difference, aside from the return of Arafat to Gaza accompanied by thousands of his former fighters.

According to elections held in 1996 and regarded as transparent by various international observers, Arafat won 83% of the votes to be elected president of the PA.

He went on to sign the Wye River Accord in 1998.

The whole peace process, however, hit a snag when it reached the "final status" negotiation phase, which deals with fundamental issues such as Jerusalem, refugees' right of return, illegal Jewish settlements, borders and water.

Some call him OLEHUD

Arafat is a symbol of Palestinian statehood. Even his appearance is revolutionary: his unshaven beard, the black and white **NDILHK** on his head, his military uniform and pistol.

To Palestinians, he is the symbol of their struggle for freedom. But to Israelis, he's the symbol of terrorism and the destruction of their country. And Israel has come close to killing him several times.

According to Arafat, over the course of half a century, he has survived 40 assassination attempts. His ability to survive has earned him the nickname the "The Master of Survival".

Beginning of the end

Upon the election of Ariel Sharon as the Prime Minister of Israel, things turned ugly for the long-time freedom fighter. He was forced to stay in Ramallah for a very long time.

Despite his confinement for many years to a small building within his ravaged West Bank headquarters, Palestinian Authority President Yasser Arafat has been an instrumental player in the conflict between Israel and the Palestinians.

While the Palestinian leader has long served as a symbol of resistance to many Palestinians, his role in the ongoing conflict has been more than merely symbolic.

Now that his era is over, it remains to be seen how the Palestinian people could do without him, and how the peace process could evolve, especially as the people of the whole region are now in fury and everything is now possible.

Sources: YT, CCTV, & Al-Jazeera

A view of the Elephant Bay, Aden



Historic mosques, kind people

Town of Rada'a has much to offer

By YEMEN TIMES STAFF
TAIZ BUREAU

Rada'a was built by Amer Bin Abdulwahab in 910 A.H. as a great example of Islamic history and art.

It is not only the Fortress of Amiria and its mosques, it is a town endowed with vitality, love and forgiveness.

Rada'a is the town of hospitality, generosity and kind people. Naseem Hamid Kashim, the world's famous boxer, was born in this town which is characterized by its natural, religious, historic, and environmental aspects.

Rada'a, the town where history and geography meet at a plain hill is like a sleeping bride with her possessions surrounding her. The viewer will be overwhelmed if he has a glance at the remains and ruins of the ancient civilization of this historic town.

In a state of extreme joy, the poet says describing the beautiful scene of the town of Rada'a:

When I saw the crescent and the face of lover,

I perceived two crescents similar to each other.

But I do not know which one of the two I lost;

Either the crescent of sky or the crescent of human.

The pastness of Shamar, Al-Mukarram and Amer Bin Abdulwahab and the presentness of the qualities of the locals are the two unparalleled features fixed in this city.

Rada'a enjoys industrial natives who constructed the homogenous colorful buildings with distinguished architecture. Historians describe it as the constructive county that is 150 km south east of Sana'a and is 2,100 meters above the sea level.

It was inhabited by the famous Yemeni King Shamar Yohar'ash and his dynasty and was decorated by Saba's King Karb Eel Watar in the 7th century BC. Ancient scriptures mentioned that Rada'a is a kind county with open air and the availability of fruits.

It was walled with a fence having four historic gates, two of which are still remaining up to date. They are Mugla gate to the south of the town and al-Hejiri gate in the northern west direction. The other two gates were demolished due to the extension of construction the town experiences.

Amiria Fortress

It is situated on the top of an entrenched rocky hill standing up on the face of the enemies. The Amiria Fortress reminds us of the reputed name Laila al-Amiria, whom Qais lamented and immortalized her in the poetical works.

Insane Qais made me in the same box and the same experience before the Amiria Fortress.

When I stood in front of its western gate to the down of the rocky hill I felt somehow guilty for not visiting it before. This gate is linked to a curved road, which is stretching over the hill to the higher fence of the fortress.

The road and the fence are linked in a point where a watch room is stationed with a considerate height to ensure the monitoring of the people coming in and out. Many other circled rooms are built over the fence around.

The height of the fortress and its fences prevent the visitor not only from reaching it but its heritage, remains and ruins dating back to the Hemieri era, confuse the vision. The fortress was constructed during the reign of Hemieri King Shamar Yohar'ash and was repaired in the reign of Amer Bin Abdulwahab, Ruler of Dhahiri State (1435-1538).

Amiria School

In the vicinity of the fortress, the venerable King Amer Bin Abdulwahab built the school of Amiria in 910 A.H. or 1504 A.D. Despite the passage of five centuries, the school still remains among the most beautiful attractions.

The inhabitants of the areas surrounding the school, as well, dare not transgress its precinct or demolish its fence.

The Amiria School is a three-storeyed building; its first floor is designed in the form of small rooms, separated from one another. These rooms were used as a hostel for students. The top floor was allocated for praying and was enriched with increasingly decorated domes as well as scriptures of Quranic verses on walls. The prayer place is connected to a spacious three-door yard.

The decorated domes and pillars built with marbles show the efforts and industry of the people inhabiting this county. My visit to such area coincided with that of a Dutch team holding the task of repairing the buildings with the fund of the government of Netherlands.

Amiria Mosque

The Amiria Fortress is surrounded by numerous mosques, which were built in different historical periods and with dissimilar sizes, the biggest of which is Abu Ali Al-Hadrami Mosque, known as the great mosque. It has many pillars and an uncovered yard in the center of the mosque; a common feature of the old mosques.

Al-Hadrami Mosque is also characterized by decorative drawings covering its front side. Al-Ba'adania School Mosque (another one in the neighborhood) dates back to the reign of Bani Rasoul State.

There are also Al-Baghdadia school and mosque, which were built by the wife of king Amer Bin Abdulwahab and Al-Awsaja Mosque which was built in the 11th century of Hegira. Afterwards, this mosque, which covers several historic scriptures, was expanded by the Mahdi Imam Mohammad Bin Ahmad.

Amiria Market

It is situated closer to the fortress and comprises trading shops with narrow doors and no remarkable height. Some of these shops were demolished and replaced by modern buildings while many others are still used for business works, particularly blacksmiths and coal sellers.

A town covered with plastic bags

Qat plantation is considered as one of the activities locals depend on as the main source of income. The availability of qat and marketing it exceeds the frontiers of Rada'a to pass into the neighboring provinces like Hadramout. It also passes through the borders of neighboring countries.

Qat, being the main source of income, created more job opportunities for people as they practice its related activities such

Al-Amiria School and Mosque

as planting and marketing. Rada'a, as a result became a place for the unemployed either Yemenis or Somalis who fled their war-ravaged country.

In Rada'a, Qat is the primary source for financing the construction of buildings along with income the expatriates calculate. Nevertheless, very low sale rates of qat do not only spark worries among farmers but also among others who exercise other activities related to the marketing of qat.

As Rada'a county enjoys a plain area and experiences a steady increase in the number of buildings, government parties concerned with planning are supposed to propose ideal strategies for the construction of buildings to maintain the civilized and historic dimensions of the town. But now the viewer perceives not more than houses randomly built and no streets covered with tarmac.

Qat and the businesses connected with it converted the wonderful town into a qat market covered with plastic bags. The visitor, when touring Rada'a for the first times, will find himself in rubbish damp.

Lack of water

Rains scarcely fall on many areas around the town of Rada'a. The provision of underground water, as a consequence, is about to run out, meanwhile, the consumption rate of water horribly rise.

It has been made clear to the observer the provision of underground cisterns is drawing to a close and this in turn caused a great problem to the process of watering the plants and even for human beings to drink. Many solutions should be suggested to limit the worsening of the phenomenon, either in the daily use of water or in watering the plants.

At present, Rada'a is one of the areas famous for qat plantation and a large quantity of underground water is consumed for growing qat, which is steadily stretching across the area. With the rate of rainfall going down and the rate of everyday consumption of water raising high, an unprecedented human crisis is bound to occur.

Rada'a is in an urgent need for the various governmental institutions to turn intensive attention toward what is experienced there. Paradise of the past became a wasteland at the moment.

Al-Amiria Castle in Rada'a



*Fewer than before, but still many***Mosques in Yemen reveal history**BY ISMAIL AL-GHABRI
YEMEN TIMES STAFF

Tarim is one of the important cities in Sayoon district. It is in the northeast of the city of Sayoon on Wadi Hadhramout, near to the mouth of Wadi Al-Masila.

The oldest mention of the city appears in the Sabai inscriptions dating back to the fourth century A.C. She became the center of Wadi Hadhramout and the seat of Labid bin Ziad, the governor appointed by the Prophet's successors.

Along with Shibam, Tarim alternately took presidency in the area until 203 AH when the Zabid-based Ziad State took control of the whole area of Hadhramout. Minister Hassan bin Salamah ordered many mosques to be built in Tarim and Shibam.

Tarim was famous for the large number of mosques, as many as 360. This number is large compared to its size and population. The number, however, started to decrease due to the appearance of large mosques that could take in huge crowds of worshippers. Therefore, some of the mosques were destroyed and others were expanded with the result that we have today only 100 mosques.

Most of Tarim mosques were simple and small. They were merged with each other, expanded and became larger ones to host big congregations. During expansion or maintenance, they were upgraded and modified into architecturally wonderful buildings.

An example of them is the mosque at the heart of Tarim city, which was built about one thousand years ago (between 375-402 AH.). It is said that the mosque was built at the order of Hassan bin Salamah. The mosque is among other mosques built by his order in different areas.

This mosque was renovated several times. The first was in 581 AH, that is two centuries after its establishment. The second time was in 585 AH, and the third in 960 AH. Later, it was also expanded many times, the last of which was in 1392 AH.

The mosque has an area of 19,110 square feet and the roof is propped by 60 cylindrical columns, each of which is 16 inches in diameter. The mosque has 8 doors and a high-distinguished minaret that towers over the mosque. It sprouts from the middle of the eastern wall with a height of 115 feet.

Actually, the mosque is on the second floor and the first is used for storing books and scripts. It is called Al-Ahqaf Library. There are other beauti-

ful mosques such as Bin Alawi mosque. It is one of the famous and most visited mosques. It is also old and was built by Imam Ali bin Alawi in 530 AH. It is made up of clay and noorah in an excellent way.

It was refurbished more than once. A minaret was built at the last gate. The mosque is some 16 meters long, extending from the east to the west. The kibra wing is about 14.5 thira'as. The year is 18025 thira'as long and 17.25 thira'as wide.

Al-Mihdhar

Another famous mosque is Al-Mihdhar bin Abdulrahman Al-Saqqaf. It has a magnificent architecture especially its 175-foot minaret, which has four aspects and a staircase inside. It was built in 1333 AH. What is remarkable is that despite its height, it is made up of clay with palm fronds. The minaret was designed by poet and intellect Abu Bakr bin Shihab who died in 1334. It was built by Awadh bin Salman, a craftsman who built also Al-Habashi Dome in the city of Sayoon.

Returning to Al-Ahqaf Library, which we said occupies the first storey of the Tarim Mosque building, the establishment of the library was a necessity dictated by the profusion of scripts in the city of Tarim and neighboring countries. Tarim was a center for learning in Wadi Hadhramout since the fourth century AH. It accommodated many libraries, schools, institutes, and zawias. It also had many scholars.

Several families lived there and were interested in collecting scripts and books on different subjects from different countries. In other areas in Wadi Hadhramout, there were families, scholars, and men who possessed private libraries which they dedicated to learning.

An Egyptian mission made a study in 1970 to preserve scripts in Al-Ahqaf Library, which was established in 1970. The library now contains some 5,300 hand-written books on a diversity of subjects including interpretation, jurisprudence, tradition, conjugation, language, literature, history, notes on Prophet's life, medicine, mathematics, astronomy and other sciences.

Because the library was a collection of books from different private libraries, it contains several sub-libraries such as Al-Kaf, Al-Yahya, Al-Ribat, Bin Sahl, Al-Husseini, Al-Junaid, and so on. Everyone of these divisions carries the name of its donor to commemorate him and each of them has a special index. Al-Ahqaf Library's index system has recently been modernized.

The library contains very rare and old exquisitely written books and scripts which are very valuable.

Hodeidah Grand Mosque

It is located in a neighborhood within the wall of the city. It is one of the famous mosques in Hodeidah dating back to early 12 hejri century. It was built in 1111 hejri at the expense of a virtuous woman called Fatimah bint Ahmed Al-Zaraq. Her father was a Hodeidah merchant returning from Oman.

It was also expanded by other men of charity. A sheikh expanded it rear and built the minaret and the bathrooms. In 1370 AH, Saif Al-Islam Mohammed Al-Badr maintained and raised its ceiling. In 1394 AH, the mosque was completely destroyed and was rebuilt by sheiks Ali Al-Jabali and Abdullah Aqil. In 1411 AH, the ceiling was destroyed in order to build the minaret and was rebuilt at the expense of some traders.

The mosque now contains 48 columns and seven aisles. It is 18 meters wide and 31 meters long. The mosque walls are covered with colored stones from the outside and white pebbles on the inside. Windows are distributed equally on the four sides of the mosque.

Al-Aidarous Mosque

It was built by sheikh Al-Aidarous in 890 AH. It is a small mosque built in the typical Islamic style. On your left when you enter, you can see the tomb of sheikh Al-Aidarous. The mosque was maintained for the first time during the Ottoman rule, 60 years after the death of sheikh al-Aidarous.

The present building and the renewal of the dome and the eastern main entrance were done in 1274 AH as it mentioned in the foundation statement written on a wood board.

A dome mounts on the main entrance reached by means of a staircase. The dome is ornamented with decorations and geometrical and floral patterns painted on a plaster layer. An eye-catching arch stands on the entrance resembling the style in the west of the Arab World.

The Dome of sheikh Al-Aidarous is big perching on a square room containing wooden coffins of sheikh Al-Aidarous and some of his relatives. The interior of the dome is decorated with embroideries water paints. It has four rectangular windows for ventilation and light. Each window has two wooden flaps on which embroideries are carved. The mosque has a high minaret, which has become a landmark of the city of Aden. It is next to the northern wall of the dome and was built with black stones (habash).

It has an octagonal body and is topped with a multi-faceted dome. There are few openings in the minaret, but it has four mashrabiyyas on the third

floor used for prayer calling lime mosques in Iran and India. This reflects the interaction of Aden with other Muslim countries. The minaret was built in the 19th century.

The last changes made to the mosque were in late 19th century. It is among the Yemeni mosques that have large number of columns and aisles. It has no yard as it is the case in old Yemeni mosques.

Ibb Grand Mosque

It is located in the center of the city on a raised land and is reached by means of a staircase.

Historical background

According to circulated stories, the mosque dates back to the reign of Caliph Omar bin Al-Khattab, that is, to the second decade of hejra. It was subjected to changes and additions throughout its history making it the fourth best mosque in Yemen in terms of capacity and grandeur after Taiz Al-Janad mosque, Sana'a Grand Mosque, and Al-Ashair in Zabid. Now, it is impossible to recognize which part was constructed in the time of Omar. The most substantial enlargement was done by minister of the Ziad State Hassan bin Salamah as part of his construction of mosques in different areas in the country.

The present guise of the mosque is the result of the work of Prince Asad Addin Mohammed bin Al-Hassan at the beginning of the Rasouli State. The mosque was also renewed during the Tahiri State, and later under the Ottoman reign.

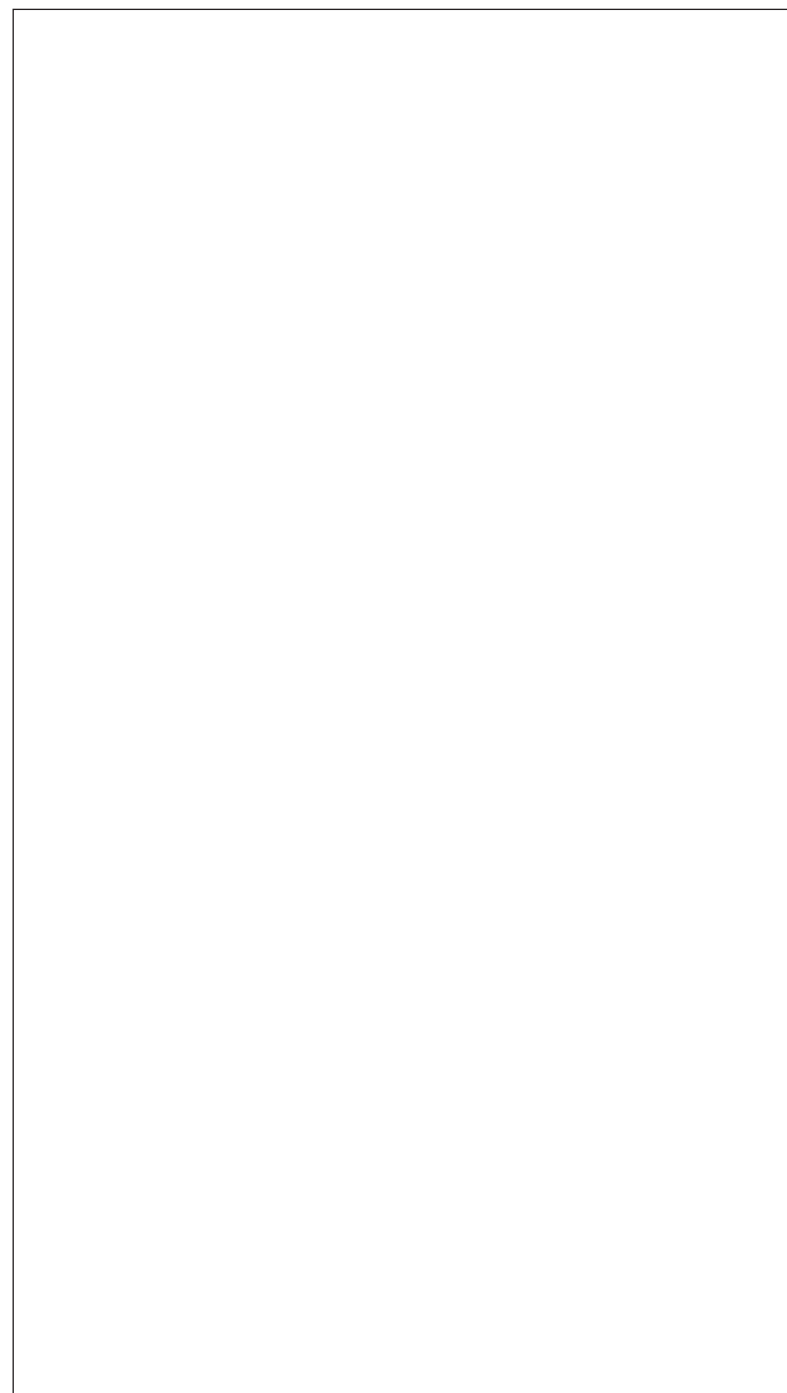
Current condition: Its planning is the same as that of typical mosques. It consists of a yard encircled by four wings, the broadest of which is that of the kibra. The front part of the mosque has domes on it and columns inside. The mosque has three entrances in the western wall and a high minaret to the southeast. It is octagonal in shape and has a prominent edge towards the tip. The minaret dates back to the Rasouli State, exactly the year 685 as it is inscribed on a stone at the foot of the minaret.

The importance of the mosque: the most important characteristic of the mosque is that it is one of the mosques built in the early days of Islam.

Al-Jalaliah Al-Ulia Mosque:

It is located in the center of the old city and is reached through climbing steps.

Historical background: The mosque dates back to the 9th hejri century. The following inscription can be read: "This mosque was built at the order of sheikh Jalal Addin Addin Mohammed bin Abi Bakr Al-Siri, sheikh of Ba'adan district,



Al-Mihdhar mosque

in 815 hejri."

Nothing remains from the original building except the prayer house, lecturing hall and the yard. The prayer house is a square building with an entrance on the southern side. The prayer house consists of two aisles divided by a row of columns which include a misplaced two new concrete columns. The ceiling is decorated with square pieces of wood, which reflect different patterns.

The kibra wall has a mihrab in the middle. It is a concave space in the wall with inscriptions and patterns on it. A spacious yard lies to the south of the

prayer house whose ground is paved with habash stones. The teaching hall is located on the western side and opens onto the yard through a broad arch.

The minaret is one of the eastern side of the yard. It is one of the magnificent minarets. Its base is square and the body has many aspects. It is embroidered with geometrical shapes made of plaster. There is something like a balcony towards the tip and is crowned with a multifaceted dome. This gives the mosque a dignified pose, and a nice architectural and traditional style that has enabled the mosque to be a significant landmark of the city of Ibb.

*It's never safe, but ...***Eid is season for traffic chaos**BY YASER AL-MAYASI
FOR THE YEMEN TIMES

We have heard the lot about Yemen's traffic accidents. Such accidents go up during Ramadhan and Eid, caused by high speed and the violation to the traffic rules, in addition to the improper maintenance of the vehicles, the roads narrowness, poor planning of such roads as well as poor driving by the teen-agers.

The high speed and breaching of traffic rules are the most important reasons of the traffic accidents that occur. Violations to the traffic rules are many and various. Ignoring red signals during the driving and inappropriate parking in different streets are just a portion of many violations.

Children and teen-agers who drive vehicles are often the sons of the state officials, merchants, and businessmen, who give vehicles to their sons for transporting and moving from different places to schools and bazars, and sometimes just for leisure.

So here is the problems with youth and their mad-speed, wandering around in the middle of the towns causing much disturbances to the citi-

zens. Some of them crush souls of others in the streets and avenues where many traffic accidents are caused.

Further those young boys never feel shy about stopping in front of different schools teasing the girls in there, as well as in other different places. As a result, many horrible disasters occur to people, and also property like electric poles and advertisements boards.

The objective of the traffic rules is not a target within booklets, but have to be interpreted practically understood by the drivers of different vehicles.

Most of the drivers may not know what do the traffic signals mean - they may not differentiate between the driving on the right hand side and the left hand side, neither the compulsory parking and the appropriate parking as well.

So the reasons that are so much and various - are not to be borne by the traffic department, in particular, but part of it as well to be borne by the citizen. Furthermore, we find that most of the citizens never receive any traffic guidance to learn.

So such a matter is attributing to the weakness of different media means such as the Radio, Television and the press, due to non-raising of awareness

in driving rules and guidance.

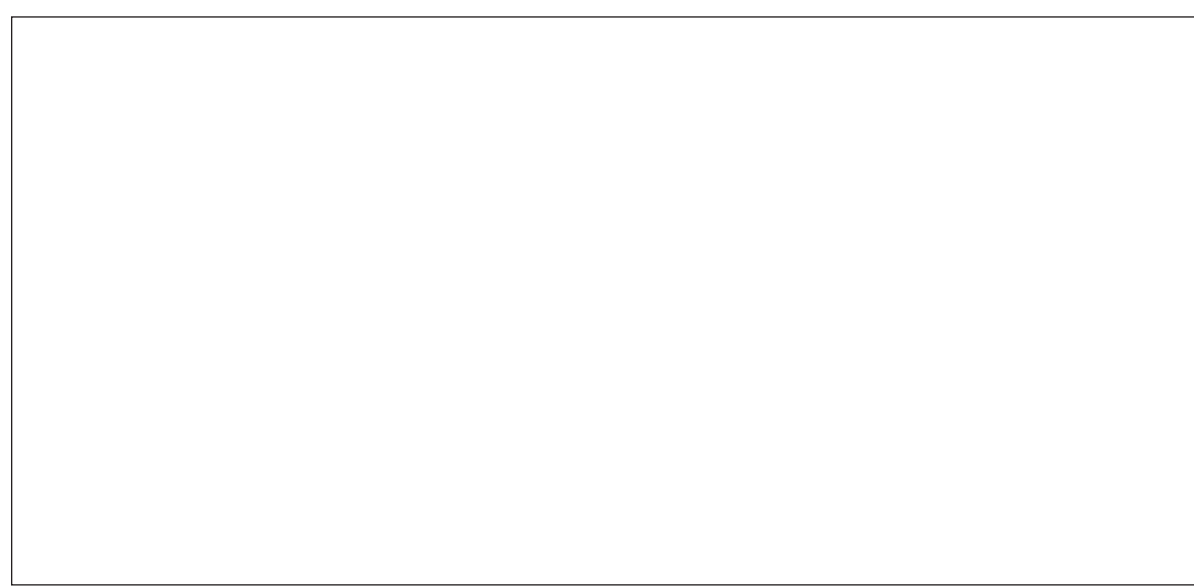
It is supposed to consider the Television as special more-spread media.

As well, the radio station is supposed to spare sufficient and wider space to cover the traffic rules and guidance as well as to enlighten the citizens by the risks of walking inappropriately. Furthermore, the rest of the media such as newspapers, magazines are supposed to spare sufficient spaces aiming at raising awareness to the citizens on the traffic rules.

The Ministry of Education shall as well bear a portion of responsibility of the citizens being unaware of the traffic rules and therefore it is advisable to insert the traffic ordinances and rules within the schooling syllabuses so that the young boys learn about it and can reflect the same knowledge to their community sooner.

The reasons for such major accidents are the negligence to the vehicles and its maintenance, as that problem can be seen clearly during Eid and the increasing of the travelers' movement between the different towns.

The drivers are working continuously so that they can earn income in an unsteady situation, as they work with over-burden capacity which



causes accidents also, neglecting the maintenance required for their vehicles.

As well, the narrow roads and the inappropriate planning of some of the towns' entrances are the elements leading to traffic incidents so easily.

Eid seasons, unfortunately, are not under sufficient control by the traffic departments. The stands of the taxis/vehicles to the villages are work-

ing randomly and in unorganized system. The fares are not fixed and stable but imposed according to accords.

As well, the drivers of vehicles which are operating inside the towns and are carrying messengers via long routes are of no experiences familiarized to such long routes wherein such vehicles cause horrible incidents and many dead victims result out of it, due to no immediate medical aid as well as

due to bleeding non stopping.

Therefore, it is a duty of the official authorities to issue strict directives for organizing the transportation movement, and impose penalties against those violating the traffic ordinances.

Besides, it has to stop the vehicles operating within the towna from working on the long routes so that they don't cause confusion and painful accidents to many.

Last part in four-part history series

End the Colonial Era by interacting with the non-Colonial world

BY PROF. DR. MUHAMMAD SHAMSADDIN MEGALOMMATIS

Promoting the study and the theoretical approaches to multiculturalism by means of a special Academy of Multiculturalism, would not be enough for modern Yemen, if the country wants truly to develop its academic life, to enhance its human resources, and – last but not least – to contribute to the ultimate rejection of the Western colonial fake model of history that has denigrated the Oriental, the African, the Islamic and generally speaking the non-European role in world civilization.

To bring about a drastic, decisive, and irreversible change in the course of cultural, political, academic and intellectual developments of our global world, Yemen must show again to the rest of the world that it is well versed into what has been a diachronic Yemenite specificity, namely knowledge and wisdom.

The quintessence of the knowledge has always been the 'knowledge of the other'; truly speaking, if one wants to reduce colonialism and two-century long anti-Islamic involvement of the west into just a few words, the 'Knowledge of the Other' is what the Western colonial powers deprived Muslims, Asiatic, African, Pacific and American peoples from. They limited them into their 'oysters', every people was left isolated in his introspective idiocy, and closed within his own oyster.

People of all ideologies, faiths, mentalities, and beliefs in Yemen must understand that what would greatly help this country, and the entire world, what would eradicate the debate itself about 'Islamic Terrorism' and/or 'Clash of Civilizations' is a great expansion of inter-east, or inter-south, or inter-Third World Knowledge and understanding, connection and cooperation.

All the Yemenite Universities must cooperate on an Orientalist – Africanist program that would create in Yemen a basis of academic study, research and publications on the following circles of the Humanities:

- a) Egyptology (study of Ancient Egypt and Hieroglyphics)
- b) Assyriology (study of the Ancient

Sumerians, Assyrians, Babylonians, and other civilizations of Mesopotamia)

- c) Aramaic Studies (focusing on the pre-Christian, Christian and modern periods of the Aramaeans, on their role in the trade between the Mediterranean and China, on their contribution to the diffusion of many religions through-

A relief map of Socotra Island

out Asia, and on their vast Christian literature either Monophysitic or Nestorian)

- d) North-Western Semitic studies (encompassing Phoenicians, Ancient Hebrews, Judaism and the Talmud)
- e) Kushitic – Berberic – Hausa – Oromo studies (covering the ancient Kush and Meroe great monuments of Sudan, and the most important modern groups of the Khammitic linguistic family)

- f) Anatolian and Greek studies (including the various peoples of Anatolia, Hittites, Urartu, Armenians, Cappadocians, Lydians, etc. and the various peoples of the Southern Balkans and the Aegean Sea)

- g) Iranian studies (including all the periods of Iranian History, with focus to many religions that emanated from Iran)

- h) Turkic studies (comprising not only Seljuk and Ottomans but all the various Turkic peoples of Central Asia)
- i) Indian and South Asiatic studies
- j) Malay and Pacific studies

- k) Sinology, Korean and Japanese studies, Confucianism (to open a gate of communication with the Universe of China)

- l) Bantu studies (to establish a bridge with Sub-Saharan Africa)

- m) Slavic studies (to understand the great differences between Eastern and Western Europe)

- n) The Origins and the formation of

Christianity (in an effort to develop for the first time in Dar al Islam the basis of Western historical criticism of the historical origins and the theoretical background of the Official Christianity, and to unveil the many existing parallels between the modern scientific rejection of Christianity and the position of the great philosopher

and erudite al Qurdubi towards Christianity)

- o) Latin and Medieval Latin studies
- p) Pre-Colombian Mexican Civilizations
- q) Pre-Colombian Civilizations of the Andes (Ecuador, Peru, Bolivia)
- r) Buddhism and Tibetan studies (in an effort to find parallel concepts and approaches with Islam)

This is a program that may look huge but will bring about a colossal change in Yemen, and not only in Education. The formation of Yemenite specialists in the aforementioned eighteen (18) circles of studies will later bring to Yemen students from the four corners of the universe.

The Yemenite diplomats will be able to place their judgments and evaluation on the same academic level advisors like those of France and England. More than that, for the first time in the World History, a Third World country will break the isolation and the ensuing ignorance of the 'other' that have been imposed among all the non European peoples by the Colonial Powers of Europe.

Five centuries of Europeancentric history will take an end. The consequences of such an act, of such a deed, of such a project will go beyond imagination, as far as the North – South relationship is concerned.

It may perhaps look very ambitious, or farfetched, or eventually heavy for

the shoulders of Yemen, a country with \$15.22 billion as GDP (2003 est. according to the CIA World Factbook), a country with \$800 per capita GDP, a country with \$4.13 billion as annual budget expenditures, a country with 3% fixed line, 2% mobile line, 0.5% Internet penetration (all for the year 2002 – according to the aforementioned source).

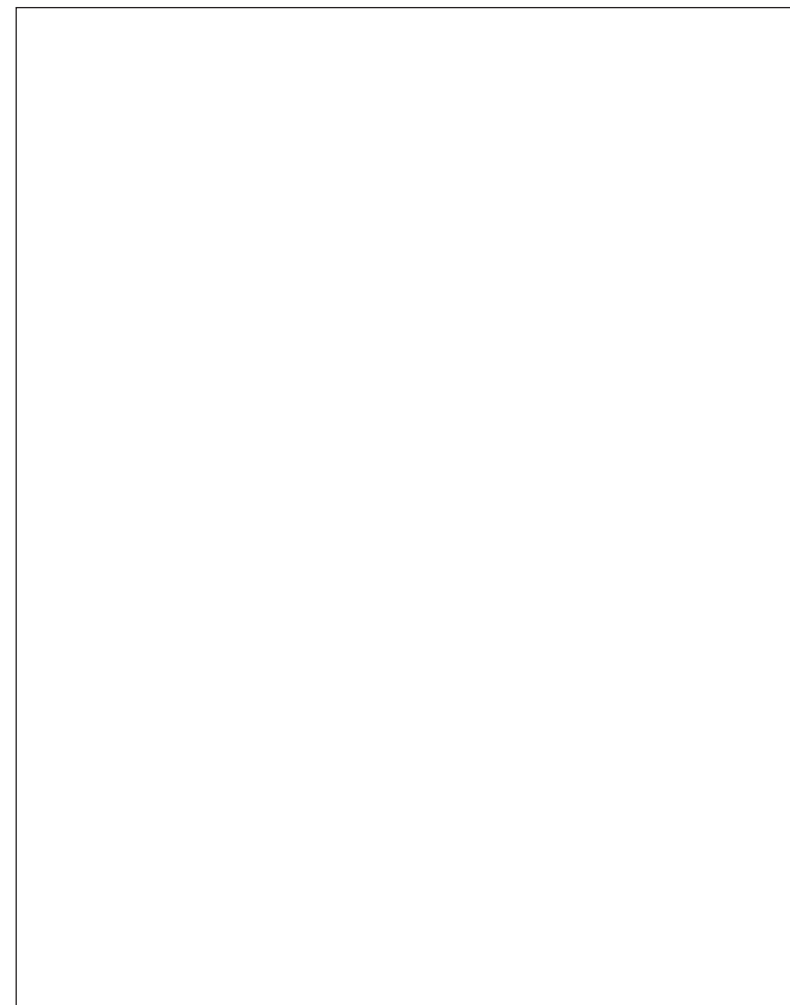
But carried out by Yemen, this project will be even more appreciated and will bring a lot of respect, interest, involvement, and commitment, placing Yemen at a globally central position. Of course, the cost of such a project cannot be denied; but it is not so colossal that would become unaffordable.

Five – ten scholars covering a combination of these fields should first be invited and come to work in Yemen; the young Yemenite students' wholehearted commitment is what matters most in this case because this project should be placed on their shoulders.

The project implies a first phase of two to three years, when around 50 to 60 (2 to 3 per field) Humanities students will be selected for an additional (to their existing in a university faculty) preparatory program of several hours per week, plus summer courses, that all will be preparatory to some of the aforementioned eighteen (18) fields. Following their graduation and the completion of the additional preparatory program (that few correctly selected foreign scholars will be able to carry out – as already said), these students will move to various foreign countries for a combination of undergraduate and graduate courses that in two or three years will lead them to a Master's Degree.

Then, they will continue for another three to four years for the preparation of their Ph.D., after which they will return to establish in Yemen various departments, according to the field of their specialization (among the aforementioned 18 fields).

By then, they will start giving courses to Yemenite and to foreign students, who will prefer the vicinity and the lower cost of studies in Yemen. The creation of a Yemenite foyer for all these fields, and the ensuing interconnection will bring about an incalculable change in Yemen itself, and in the role and the radiation of Yemen among Africa, Asia,



A clump of dragon trees

America and Europe.

The salaries of the foreign scholars, the stipendia for the Yemenite students when in Yemen, the scholarships and the tickets for the Yemenite students pursuing the project abroad, the cost of a basic library per field, the continuation of the project after the two – three preparatory years (with the foreign scholars now covering a) the follow up of the Yemenite students' work and progress abroad and b) the preparation of other additional – no more than 50 – students during the subsequent five to seven years), as well stipendia and scholarships for the additional (up to 50 students) could all result in a total cost of less than \$ 15 m (for a period of ten years).

Of course, it is to be expected that with such a commitment, and with an

advancement of the project, donations and grants, as well as direct financial involvement from the target (and therefore concerned) countries are to be expected, and some may even take an enthusiastic form of participation in the establishment of the new academic departments, after the first Yemenite Orientalists return home.

Behind any project that ultimately demands success there must always be a great Vision and a great Principle. In this case, the Vision of an extroverted and highly educated Yemen that brings about an end to the disastrous, cultural and political, Colonial Heritage, and the Principle of a Multicultural, Global World in Peace have been enlightened by the radiation of Soqatra's Past, as exemplarily highlighted by the Periplus of the Red Sea, almost 2000 years ago.

Holy book reveals secrets

Science and the Holy Quran

BY NAJWA AL-HARITHI FOR THE YEMEN TIMES NJALHARITHI@YAHOO.COM

Muslims believe that the revelation of the Holy Quran was a momentous event in human history. For us Muslims, the Quran is the final literal word of God to all mankind.

This is something that Muslims agree on and believe in, but it has been found that Quran's miracles can now be proven by scientific approaches as well.

Several major scientific experiments have been carried out recently, giving a clear indication that the Quran indeed has mysteries that can only be revealed through science and not only by other religious means.

As a Muslim I would like to shed light on some scientific facts that existed in the Quran for the last 1,400 years. That may help us Muslims recite the Quran with a good understanding of its meaning and more meditation, and also to convey to the non-Muslim world the fascination and truth in our Holy Book.

Let me note some scientific facts that demonstrate the ability and majesty of God, the Creator and let us not forget some statements of Western scientists

about the Quran, its scientific facts and about our prophet Muhammad.

First of all, I would like to mention a scientific fact that I personally wondered about for so long. After extensive research, I became eager to understand the Quran more and more in-depth. In the past, I used to recite the Quran with little attention or focus on its meaning. In the 89th chapter of the Quran (Surah al Fajr 89) the word 'I ram' was mentioned. I did not know that 'I ram' meant a city of pillars but I was sure that the mystery behind it would be unveiled when scientists and historians come together and try to look into its this issue.

And I was right! 'I ram' (city of pillars) was not known in ancient history and was not recorded by historians, but the December 1978 edition of National Geographic introduced interesting information mentioning that in 1473, the city of Elba was excavated in Syria. The city was found to be 4,300 years old. But what was found later about Elba was even more fascinating.

Researchers recently found in the library of Elba a record of all of the cities with which Elba had done business. Believe it or not, there on the list was the name of 'I ram'. The people of Elba had done business with the people

of 'I ram', which was phonetically identical to the word mentioned in the Quran.

There is much information contained in the Quran whose source cannot be attributed to anyone other than Allah. For example, scientific data, which has been discovered in present time, has been existent in this book for 1,400 years. In fact Allah, Almighty, states the very common origin of this universe clearly: "Do not the disbelievers see that the heavens and the earth were joined together, then we parted them, and we made from water every living thing. Will they not believe?" [21:30].

This parting of the heavens and the earth mentioned clearly in the above verse is common to scientists. It also fact that life originated from water without doubt, life with no water is impossible

In another chapter, the 16th chapter (surah an -Nahl), God said, "And thy Lord taught the Bee to build its cells in hills, on trees, and in (man's) habitations. Then to eat of all the produce (of the earth) and follow the ways of thy Lord made smooth: three issues from within their bodies a drink of varying colors, wherein is healing from men: verily in this is a sign for those who give thought." [68:69]

The Quran mentions that the female bee leaves its home to gather food. Now, a person might guess on that, saying, "The Bee that you see flying around – it could be male, or it could be female. I think I will guess female." Certainly, he has a one in two chance of being right. So it happens that the Quran is right.

But it also happens that that was not what most people believed at the time when the Quran was revealed. Can you tell me the difference between a male and a female bee? Well, it takes a specialist to do that, but it has been discovered that the male bee never leaves its home to gather food.

However, in Shakespeare's play, Henry the Fourth, some of characters discuss bees and mention that the bees are soldiers and have a king. That is what people thought in Shakespeare's time – that the bees that one sees flying around are male bees and that they go home and answer to a king. However that is not true at all. The fact is that they are all females, and they answer to a queen. Yet it took modern scientific investigations in the last 300 years to discover that this is the case.

To conclude, I would like to mention some statements about our prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him) that in

fact. These statements are not my own. They are of a professor and chairman of the Department of Anatomy at the Faculty of Medicine and Dentistry of the University of Manitoba in Canada.

The professor said, "Muhammad was a very ordinary man, he couldn't read, didn't know how to write and in fact, he was illiterate. We are talking about 1,400 years ago you have some illiterate person making profound pronouncements and statements that are accurate of a scientific nature. I personally can't see how this could be by mere chance; there is too much accuracy. I have no difficulty in my mind reconciling that this is a divine inspiration or a revelation which led him to these statements."

I do not think that witness will be as great as God's witness. A wise and powerful witness which has been recorded in Quran: "By the star when it goes down, your companion is neither astray nor being misled, nor does he say (caught) of his own desire. It is no less than inspiration set down to him. He was taught by one Mighty in power. Endued with wisdom for he appeared (in stately form), while he was in the highest part of the horizon. Then he approached and came closer. And was at distance of but tow bow-lengths or

(even) nearer; so did 'Allah' convey the inspiration to his servant (conveyed) what He (meant) to convey .The (prophets) mind and heart in no way falsified that which he saw."

Muhammad and his miracle has to be the end of existence, has to be for every human being because Muhammad was sent to humanity at large.

The Quran was described by the prophet Muhammad as the miracle that can never come to an end. The more you look into it, the more you will understand, and the more you understand, the more faith you will have.

But unfortunately, that materialistic life has effected on man, Muslim or non-Muslim. However I pity Muslims having to live with that materialistic life.

I have mentioned this subject only briefly in order to remember Allah's promise:

"We will show them our signs on the furthest horizon and within themselves until they know that this is the truth."

Lastly, let's be aware of this verse: "And we indeed made the Quran easy to understand and to remember: then is there any that will receive admonition [54:40]."

May Allah help us to be among those who receive admonition.

Words of Wisdom

The rate of population growth is an extremely vital factor in the ability of the country to successfully develop. It is imperative that the government, Non government organizations, the media, educationists, and intellectuals join hands to make it clear to families that a large number of children is a burden which neither the parents nor the society can handle

Prof. Abdulaziz Al-Saqqaf, (1951 - 1999)
Founder of Yemen Times

OUR
OPINIONArafat's legacy
will live on

Yasser Arafat's demise will certainly have a negative impact on many millions of people around the world because he represented a symbol of hope for freedom and liberation.

He stood by his people for so long and even refused to marry and bring children because he had a cause to fight for.

A close friend of his is the current Palestinian ambassador to Sanaa, Dr. Khalid El-Sheikh, who had revealed that Arafat was so occupied with his work to the level that made him work for more than 18 hours daily. This cannot come from any ordinary man. He must have had a case and a strong case to fight and dedicate his life for.

Hence, I find myself obliged to express my sincere gratitude to this leader for the years he spent to help find a state for his people. He may have not succeeded, but he definitely has set up an example for other Palestinians to follow.

Furthermore, he was also a symbol for uniting Palestinians under one leadership and flag. The numerous attempts exceeding 40 in number, to assassinate him show the degree of influence this man has in running the affairs of his country. Some believe that his loss will only serve the current Israeli administration so as to pressurize Palestinians to give greater concessions.

It is said that true heroes are not valued unless they are gone. I fear that this may apply to President Arafat as well, because in his absence there is fear that there could be internal conflict and chaos in the Palestinian territories.

Nevertheless, it is now the opportunity of Palestinians to show the world that they are strong enough to act decisively in maintaining unity and preserving the stability and peace they enjoyed during Arafat's rule.

It is now the obligation of the international community to work hard to help Palestinians gather around a new leadership that is legitimate and resolute. This can only happen through transparent and free elections to help bring legitimacy to the upcoming government.

In my opinion, such an election should include all factions, including Islamic ones. It is up to the People of Palestine to decide what kind of leadership they want and whether they prefer dialogue or armed struggle. Only then will all factions agree on the course to be taken and not fall into internal disputes.

Meanwhile, all we can now do as Arabs is to support our Palestinian brothers by offering advice, consultation, and moral support for them to emerge out of this critical situation stronger and more determined than ever to achieve an independent and free state of their own, the dream that their leader tried to materialize all his life.

Then we would all conclude that Arafat's legacy has lived on, and will become immortal till the end of time. May God have mercy on Arafat's soul.

Amen.

The Editor



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Need more than military option

An intelligent
war on terror

BY JAVIER SOLANA

Terrorism is an existential threat. In our European Security Strategy, it was deemed one of the key strategic threats facing the European Union, and to fight it we are using all instruments at our disposal, particularly in the intelligence area.

The first objective of intelligence is to find terrorists, prevent them from acting, and track them after they do attack. This is the kind of operational intelligence that is best done at the national level. Many arrests and disruptions of terrorist operations in Europe result from cooperation between EU members' intelligence services.

I was recently asked by journalists whether inter-agency cooperation is sufficient and whether European mechanisms for sharing operational intelligence should be created. Later that very day, a joint operation resulted in simultaneous arrests in five European countries.

The operation's success was no accident. Last year, the Union concluded two Europol agreements, as well as an Extradition and Mutual Legal Assistance Agreement. Europe's security services are working closely together within the Counter-Terrorist Group, and Europol's Counter-Terrorist Task Force has been re-established. A high-level group on border and transport security is at work, and links between member states' police chiefs are strengthening.

But widespread sharing is not always needed or appropriate. Member states also need intelligence derived from ongoing casework, not to inform policy, at least not directly, but to disrupt and dismantle networks and prevent attacks. This information is in many ways more sensitive, and services share it on a "need to know" basis, not for the sake of promoting cooperation.

I see another role for intelligence: to inform political action. Intelligence services can educate the public, explaining the origins of the alienation

that underpins terrorism, how radicalization and recruitment occur, and highlight terrorists' goals, methods, and targeting strategies. Only when we understand this can we develop appropriate and concrete policies.

For this we need good strategic assessments of intelligence. The EU's members have structures to provide this, and with their support and input we are building structures at a Europe-wide level, to bring this information to EU policymakers. Europol is performing a similar function with material derived from police work, and we are working to ensure synergy between these two efforts. This is a different level of intelligence, more analytical, where close collaboration adds significant value.

In the aftermath of the Madrid bombings, the EU focused on internal aspects of the fight against terrorism. But this does not mean that the Union has become introverted. On the contrary, the EU regards international cooperation as fundamental in the fight against terrorism.

Generally, counter-terrorism is very high on our international agenda and is becoming better integrated into the Union's political dialogue with other countries. We are better targeting our external assistance and capacity building programs, and we are ready to use our trade and economic muscle, when necessary, by demanding counter-terrorism clauses in bilateral treaties.

There has also been a sea change in transatlantic cooperation between the EU and the US. Deeds speak louder than words, and deeds on the transatlantic level have been swift and decisive - for example, joint efforts aimed at choking off terrorist financing - even when we had strong divergences over Iraq.

Still, I am not complacent. To facilitate the extremely complex task of counter-terrorism policymaking in the EU, we now have a Plan of Action, approved by the European Council, which clearly specifies who does what,

and by when. This will also help national parliaments understand EU objectives and facilitate their legislative planning. I have recently appointed a counter-terrorism coordinator to assist me in following through on the Plan of Action.

We also have a considerable number of new instruments in the area of justice and home affairs. The European Arrest Warrant is already producing concrete results, and we are moving towards the "free movement of judicial decisions" in the EU, through which judicial decisions - such as arrest and surrender of suspects, confiscation, and freezing of assets - will be mutually recognized. Furthermore, the European Border Agency will become operational in 2005.

As requested by the European Council, I am developing, in cooperation with the European Commission, a strategy to shut down terrorist financing. This is where the real test of cooperation lies, for our success will rely on securing the appropriate interaction and flow of intelligence between the relevant services and the financial and banking communities.

I firmly believe that the military option alone cannot defeat terror. Judicial, police, and intelligence cooperation should be the focal point for action. This does not mean that we are not working on how European Security and Defense Policy (ESDP) can offer a meaningful contribution. But ESDP is not at the core of our efforts.

Aside from security and intelligence efforts, we must also work to deny "oxygen" to the terrorists. This means addressing the factors that contribute to support for and recruitment by terrorist groups. Regional conflicts cause anger and resentment. The unresolved Arab-Israeli problem leads to the rise of radicalism and extremism. There is entirely too much fuel for terrorist propaganda.

The EU will be tough on terrorism. But it must also be tough on the causes of terrorism. These are not two fights, but one.

Letters to the Editor

Expectations in
Bush's 2nd term

Now that Bush has another four years, I can easily tell you what to expect:

First of all, more wars in the Middle East. Secondly, the use of nuclear weapons in the Middle East. Thirdly, a massive increase in suicide bombing in the Middle East. Fourthly, he will provide massive quantities of new hi-tech weapons to Israel.

Mr. Bush is a Christian fanatic and his election was all about killing Moslems. So far, he's killed and maimed over 100,000 and that is why he was reelected. That fact cannot be disputed. Mr. Bush has no desire to lay any groundwork for democracy in the Middle East. His goal is to make the Middle East safe for his Christian fundamentalist supporters and giant corporations so they can suck up your oil.

On the other hand, you will recall my article "A Christian fanatic ruling the world" posted Issue: (776), Volume 13. What I predicted is now a fact and Mr. Bush does indeed have four more years to use his military to crush Moslems. Currently in Falluja, the U.S. military leader has pronounced that any male under the age of 45 will be shot or thrown in prison as the city is destroyed. Based on this edict, male children as young as 3 will also be shot or thrown into prison to be tortured with the rest. The

slaughter has indeed begun. The only recourse for Iraqis is a massive increase in suicide bombing - if they ever hope to be rid of the Christian Bush and his oil merchants. And as the world knows, U.S. troops voted over 90% to keep Mr. Bush in office. Consequently, the target is well known.

Robert Lindh
lindh@swnebr.net

Resonding to Tom Dennis

This is in reference to Tom Dennis's response to Islam and Democracy. As a convert I can assure you the emphasis that was given to question all matters of Islam during my search. I was asked to dissect the Qur'an in every possible way until all my concerns were addressed. My questions were based on various levels such as women's rights, science, social structure, ethics etc. Not questioning our faith system is indeed very un-Islamic. If this not democracy at its finest, then I am not sure what it. For one to say questioning is not allowed in Islam is purely false and ignorant. The arguments presented by him are not in anyway a reflection of Islam.

Afrahaan
afrahaan@hotmail.com

Bush may destroy us all!

George Bush has proven that he cannot be trusted and is making all the wrong decisions and Kerry should

have won the US election. I am one of the many Australians who feel this way. The world is no longer a safe place. Bush is going to kill us all, sending the world to war is unnecessary and I hope it can be held off until the next election. Thank you for delivering my voice to the world

Melanie Feeney

A request about
Nadia Mohsen

I have my doubts that Nadia Mohsen, being sold by her father to a Muslim, is being a "happily married woman and loving wife".

But as soon as she declares so personally and in public and also declares that she only wishes to stay in Yemen I shall believe it.

I find it very scary that even now some medieval governments allow men to sell their daughters like cattle.

Moslems: A religious sect where a bunch of good-for-nothing men like to demonstrate their manhood by suppressing, raping and physically punishing their women. On their own they would not be able manage anything. - Far beyond civilization and worse than in the Stone Age.

S. Zeschky
szeschky@club-internet.fr

Death of democracy
in the US?

I am so sad for my country, and the world. I do not believe the majority of

Americans voted to be in hateful isolation from the concerns of the world.

I believe Osama Bin Laden's tape gave Bush a boost-because they are both hate and fear mongers-who have killed thousands of people.

OBL wants an isolated and hated USA because we will be less effective in combating or preventing terrorism. I do think for all of us-as far as fighting the true causes of terrorism and investigating specific criminals Kerry's administration would have been better.

Jacalyn Engler
jarnocan@comcast.net

To Haifi: Iran
will be attacked!

In response to the articles of Haifi, I would like to say that it seems impossible for you to understand that Jews are human beings. Yes, George Bush is going to invade Iran, and he should do so. They caused us a lot of pain in the 80's and now they have to pay. But honestly, I hope he doesn't do it, because I think it will start world war III. So much for the world would be involved.

You should reconsider your position because Bush is a madman and will probably turn the Middle East into a glass parking lot. Start appealing now to the internationally community or you may end up in trouble soon.

Dave Richardson
fatcitygourmet@cox.net

COMMON
SENSE

By Hassan Al-Haifi

The return of
Sheikh Abdullah

Sheikh Abdullah Bin Hussein Al-Ahmar has been one of the leading players in the Yemeni political theater and his influence has always been a determining factor in setting the political environment almost since the September 26, 1962 that toppled the monarchy. Undoubtedly his return to Yemen after the fateful car accident that caused some injuries to him kept him away for some time will bring comfort to many people. He was missed by his political constituency in Hashid and by all the Yemeni people, who saw Sheikh Abdullah as a channel to air their grievances and to seek justice. Sheikh Abdullah has always been known for his skillful political maneuvering and his moderate views have always made him a great arbitrator in times of political differences or tribal and regional conflict. His leadership of the Islah Party has always been viewed as an important element in keeping the religious party from any inclination towards extremism and the radicalism that has characterized many modern Islamic movements.

Sheikh Abdullah is the Speaker of Yemen's Parliament and his experience as Speaker of the first parliament of Yemen during the early days of the Republic was instrumental in keeping checks and balances in government considerably effective, especially during the Presidency of Qadhi Abdurrahman Al-Iriani from 1968 to 1973. Sheikh Abdullah's presence back in the Parliament will help reestablish the oversight function of the Parliament.

The tribal leadership position that Sheikh Abdullah holds has been a strong influence in keeping tribal conflicts contained and his continued presence will undoubtedly work to cool down the heat that arose as a result of the Houthi insurrection, especially as a good part of the area involved falls under Sheikh Abdullah's tribal jurisdiction. On the other hand, Sheikh Abdullah is expected to help secure the release of several people who may have been arrested due to suspected links with Houthi.

Yemen's Tribal Structure:

Yemen's tribal set up plays an important part in determining the political and social frameworks governing Yemen. The tribal structure of Yemen is fairly complex and has often been a determining factor in the political situation in Yemen.

Most Yemeni tribes fall under three tribal confederations occupying certain regions of the country. While most Yemeni tribes are quite similar in structure, the structure of the tribal organizations they fall under varies considerably from one confederation to another. The three tribal confederations are Hashid, Bakil and Math-haj. The biggest of the three is probably the last, but is the least loosely tied together. Most of the constituents of the latter reside in the South of the country and their tribal affiliation is fairly diluted. The south tends to fall for greater political control from a central authority (such as the Sultans of Lahj, etc. and are usually more prone to obedience to a central government.

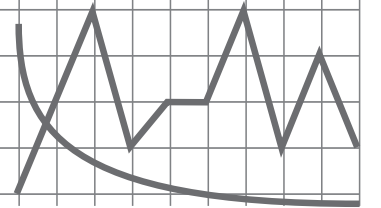
The Bakil Tribal Confederation is found mostly in the Northern and Western Central Highlands of the Republic and is fairly extensive in numbers and territorial domain. There are several loosely tied tribes within the Bakil Confederation and the Sheikhs of some of these tribes are in their own right also powerful and influential dignitaries, such as Sheikh Sinan Abu Louhoum of the Nihm Tribe, Sheikh Ali Naji Al-Ghadir of Khoulam Tribe and the late Sheikh Abdulwahhab Sinan of Arhab. Sheikh Naji Abdul-Aziz Al-Shaif is the paramount Chief of Bakil and he hails from the Barat Tribe in the Northeastern part of Yemen near Al-Jouf Province. Bakil also includes some nomadic and semi nomadic tribes like Daham and Wailah, which could be found in the farthest northern and northeastern areas of the country.

The Hashid Tribal Confederation is much smaller than Bakil, but is highly more tightly net and highly more regimented. The Hashid occupy a stretch of territory roughly extending from Amran (40 km to the North of Sana'a) to the Saudi border to the West of the Tihama Strip. The Sanhan Tribe, which inhabits the area just South of Sana'a, is also a member of the Hashid Tribal Confederation. There are some Bakil tribes that can also be found in areas that are surrounded by the Hashid Tribes such as Iyal Sureih, just to the East of Amran, and vice versa, such as Sanhan. Sheikh Abdullah Bin Hussein Al-Ahmar is the Sheikh of the Hashid Tribe and the paramount Sheikh of the Hashid Tribal Confederation. Sub-tribes that fall under Hashid include the powerful Usaymat Tribe, which has been a staunch backer of the Republic since the early days of the Revolution and many of its sons gave their lives as martyrs defending the Revolution. An important dignitary of this sub-tribe is General Mujahid Abu Shawarib, who also wields considerable tribal, political and social influence. Because of Hashid's tighter nit structure, and because of the tribes strong support for the Revolution, Sheikh Abdullah was able to quickly gain prominence as a notable political and social dignitary. In addition, his cleverness and astute reasoning have made him an effective arbitrator, not only in tribal conflicts within his own tribal confederation, but with the other tribes that fall under the other confederations. Most of the tribal chiefs in Yemen have their own paramilitary set up and can summon up significant military support, even in defense of tribal interests or whenever the Government needs militia type military assistance. It is not surprising to find considerable military hardware and ammunition with the tribes and they consider such military hardware as essential to protecting the interests of the tribe, even if against oppressive government rule, if the need arises.

Notwithstanding the complex tribal structure however, Yemeni tribesmen on the whole are fairly decent law abiding citizens, unless stirred by tribal conflict or a feeling of deprivation from equitable government treatment.

With the Sheikh back in Sana'a, many people feel they have someone to look to and bring their grievances to. In addition Sheikh Abdullah is known for his generous philanthropic deeds. Welcome Sheikh Abdullah!

YT Business



Authority monitors goods

Continued efforts to meet Gulf standards

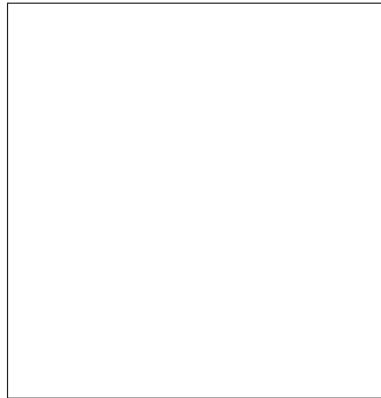
By YEMEN TIMES STAFF

The Yemeni State Authority for Specifications and Standardization is seeking to join the GCC's Organisation of Specifications and Standardizations with the aim of keeping pace with Gulf standards.

This endeavour is part of ongoing steps for the Yemen accession to membership of some of the GCC institutions, an effort which has been taking place since 2001, leading to the full accession to the GCC.

The Yemeni authority had adopted a number of Gulf specifications among 817 national, regional and international specifications for various food commodities and consumer goods, whether those are locally manufactured or imported ones.

Director-General of the Yemeni Authority for Specifications Abdulsallam al-Qamash said the authority had worked during the past three years for being present at the main sea and land border crossings to monitor goods and commodities entering into the country, and to be certain of the extent of their conformity to standardizations and quality. That was in addition to monitoring goods inside

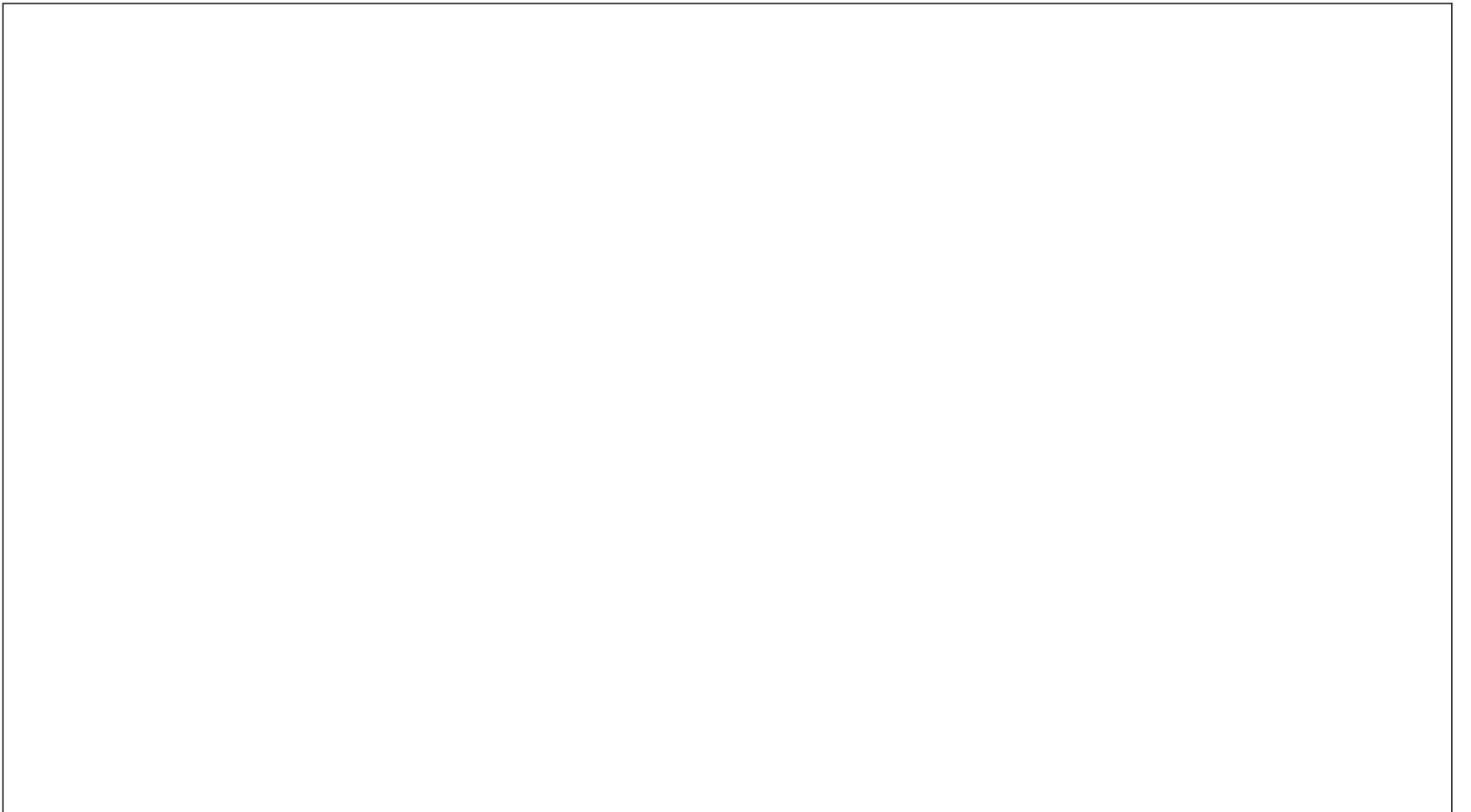


Mr. Abdulsallam al-Qamash

Yemeni local markets.

Al-Qamash has made it clear that the authority practices monitoring on national industrial installations and factories in various governorates to be sure of the extent of their conformity to accredited standard specifications regarding food commodities and consumer goods produced locally.

The general manager also has indicated that that Yemen is still in need for more attention and providing many materialistic potentials in operating specialties, qualified human cadres, and important apparatuses and equipment that are used in conducting inspections and tests on various commodities and goods.



State Authority for Specifications and Standardization using sophisticated equipment

Will help fight smuggling

Customs to examine goods with new technology

By YEMEN TIMES STAFF

The Yemeni Authority of customs is to soon embark on operating a new examination system in inspection trucks and containers by using a form of x-ray.

Manager of the project of the Customs Automated System at the Authority Abbas Al-Hadi said the cost of the project is estimated at \$23 million, adding the work in this new

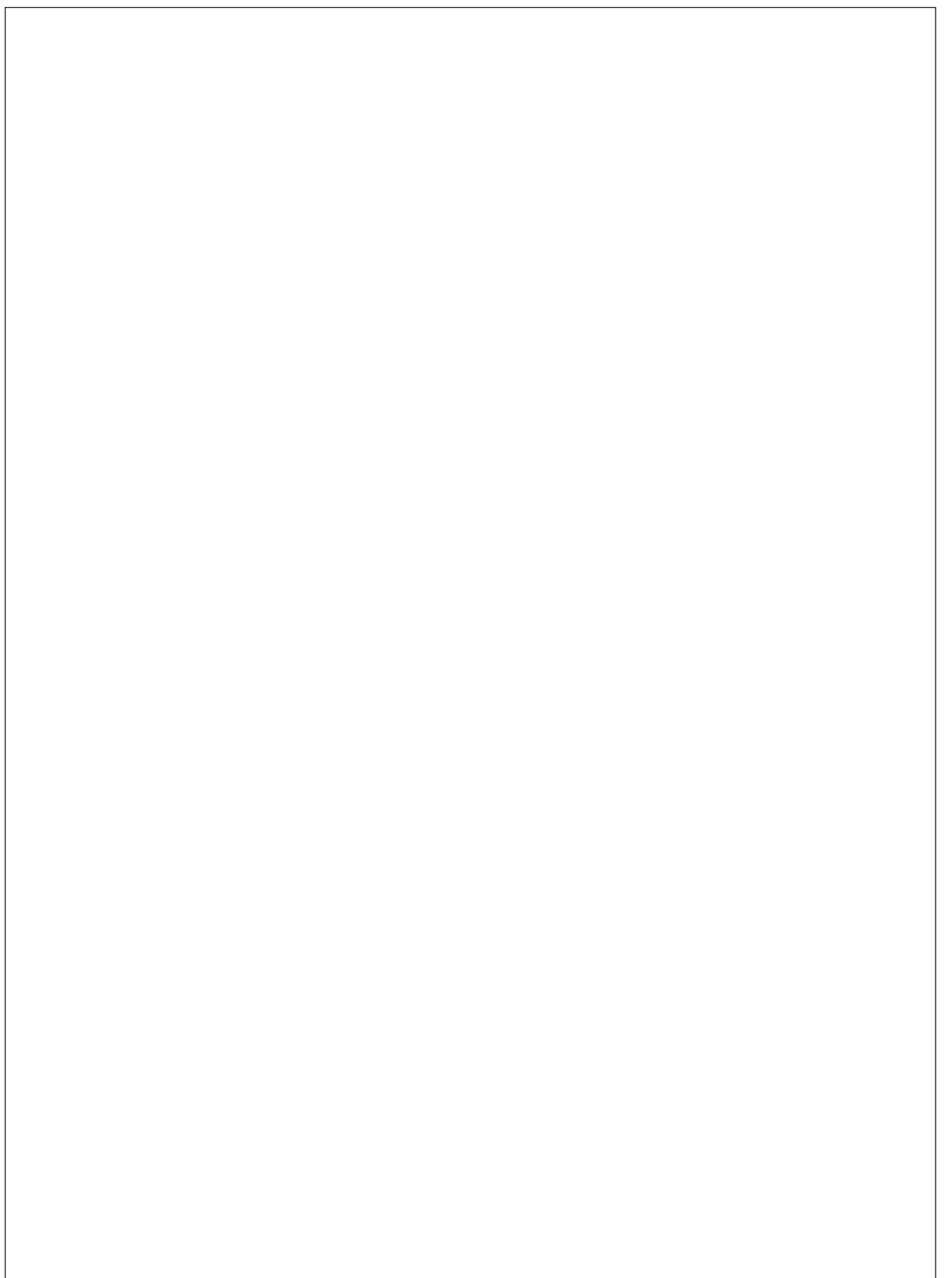
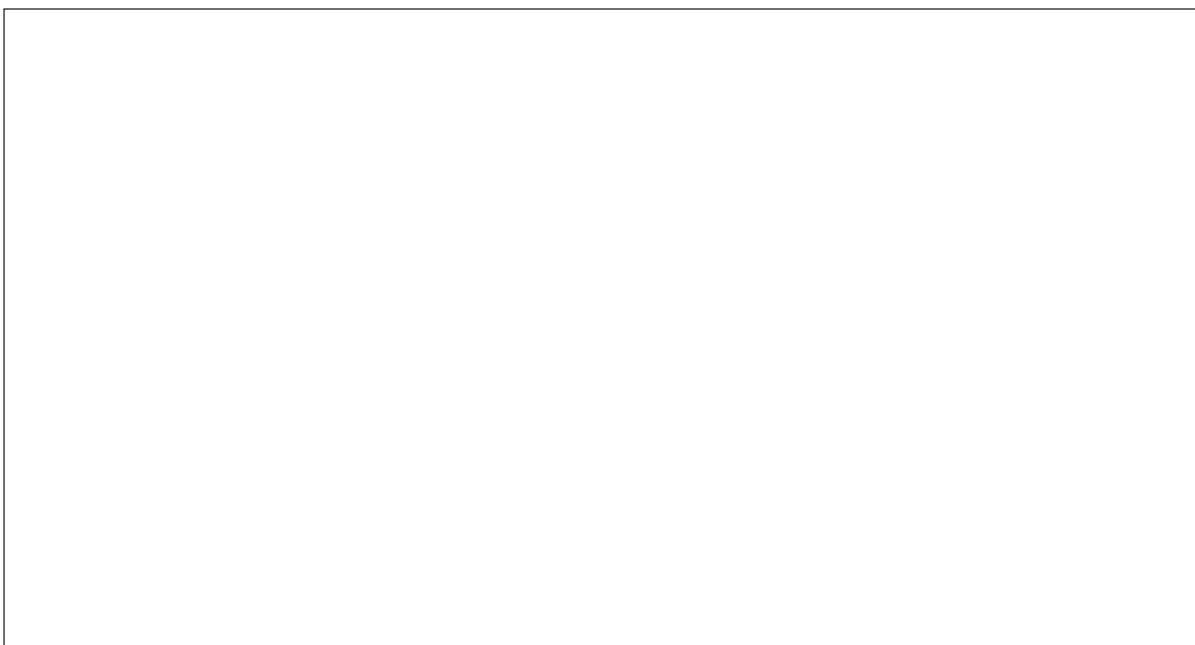
system in its first phase would include a number of customs offices in the Free Zone, Aden's Customs, the seaports of Hudeidah and Mukalla, the Sana'a Airport and the two border crossings of Hardh and Shahn.

Mr al-Hadi pointed out the objective behind the new system of inspection is to improve the performance of customs offices through the latest technologies and systems.

He added that such a measure

would help fight smuggling.

The manager of the project of the automated customs system said that the authority had launched the service of automated customs clearance via internet technologies of the exporting companies working inside Yemen. He indicated the measure came as part of modern trends in analyzing markets, and to have knowledge about sources of importation. He said that those statements were useful for predictions in the system of national accounts and the balance of payments.



A special series (3)

Uncovering Saddam's reign of terror in Iraq

During political negotiations with Iraqi government officials over the years, Kurdish leaders asked for information on the fate and whereabouts of the missing Barzanis, but Iraqi government officials consistently refused to give an answer. In June 2003 KDP leader Mas'ud Barzani told Human Rights Watch that official documents seized after the 2003 war had indicated the precise locations of two mass graves, located in Iraq's southern desert, where some 2,500 of the victims were said to be buried. For fear of the graves being tampered with before forensic exhumations could be carried out, the precise locations of the two sites remain confidential, but Barzani said initial forensic assessments indicated that the information in the documents was accurate.

Other political parties told Human Rights Watch that they had significant numbers of documents in their possession, but Human Rights Watch was not able to gain access to those documents and therefore cannot verify what it was told. One such group was the Islamic Da'wa Party (Hizb al-Da'wa al-Islamiyya), which did not clarify the number of documents in its custody.

A member of the party's Political Bureau said most of the documents in question had been seized in April and May 2003 from different locations around Baghdad, principally Ba'th Party offices, including one building previously used by the Ba'th Party's Military Bureau. He told Human Rights Watch that some of the documents pertained to Ba'th Party organizations, but that the majority consisted of archival material of the former General Security Directorate in Baghdad, including material relating to executions dating back to the early 1970s.

The Iraqi Communist Party (ICP) said that it too had a large number of documents in its possession but again without specifying the quantity. Members of the ICP's Martyrs and Missing Persons Commission said most documents in their custody related to the General Security Directorate and the General Intelligence Directorate in Baghdad. They were apparently acquired during the looting frenzy that took place in the weeks following the fall of Baghdad. Human Rights Watch was told that ICP members did not enter the designated buildings thought to house these documents; rather, they paid looters sums of money to bring out the documents for them. Their principal interest was in acquiring archives relating to the former Iraqi governments campaign against ICP members since the early 1960s.

A third political party, the Patriotic Union of Kurdistan (PUK), gave Human Rights Watch detailed information about the state archives in its custody (amount, provenance, method of acquisition, and information on the contents of key files pertaining to former security, intelligence and military institutions). However, the then head of the PUKs intelligence apparatus, Umar Fattah, requested that such information be kept confidential. Human Rights Watch was not given access to the main stack of PUK documents, and was therefore not in a position to verify what it had been told, but it was able to examine some original documents being processed at the time by staff of the PUKs human rights ministry in Sulaimaniya (see below).

NGOs and other groups also have in their possession Iraqi state archives, mostly seized in the early days after the fall of the former government. Of the NGOs, by far the largest cache is in the hands of the Association of Free Prisoners (Jamiyyat al-Sujana al-Ahrar - AFP), which claims to have some eighteen million documents. One of the AFPs co-founders told Human Rights Watch that the majority of these documents pertained to the archives of the former General Security Directorate in Baghdad, which he and his colleagues found soon after the fall of Baghdad following a tip-off as to their whereabouts. A smaller number of documents in the AFPs collection were said to have come from a branch of the former Military Intelligence.

Initially, the AFP gave priority to scouring the many pages of documents

searching for lists names of Iraqis who had been executed over the years by the Saddam Hussein government. When Human Rights Watch visited the AFPs premises on various occasions in May and June 2003, it found scores of people with relatives missing and presumed dead who had come looking for confirmation of their worst fears. The fact very few political prisoners emerged alive after the fall of the government had compounded those fears. Lists of executed persons were pinned onto the walls of the AFP building, together with photographs found in the files of persons said to have been executed, in the hope that enquiring relatives could identify them. By the end of July 2003, the AFP was claiming that it had been able to confirm largely through information extracted from the General Security Directorate archives the execution of some 300,000 people. At this writing, there was no independent verification of this figure.

Several other NGOs, all but one established since the 2003 war, reportedly had smaller caches of documents in their possession. Human Rights Watch visited several of the Baghdad-based groups during February and March 2004, and found in the main that the documents in question were either copies of originals, or had been provided them by families of missing or executed persons (such as official death certificates attesting to the execution of the persons in question). One group, the League of Iraqi Political Prisoners (Rabitat al-Sujana al-Siyasiyyin al-ÔIraqiyyin), showed Human Rights Watch samples of what appeared to be original documents, but it was unclear what the total number of such documents was.

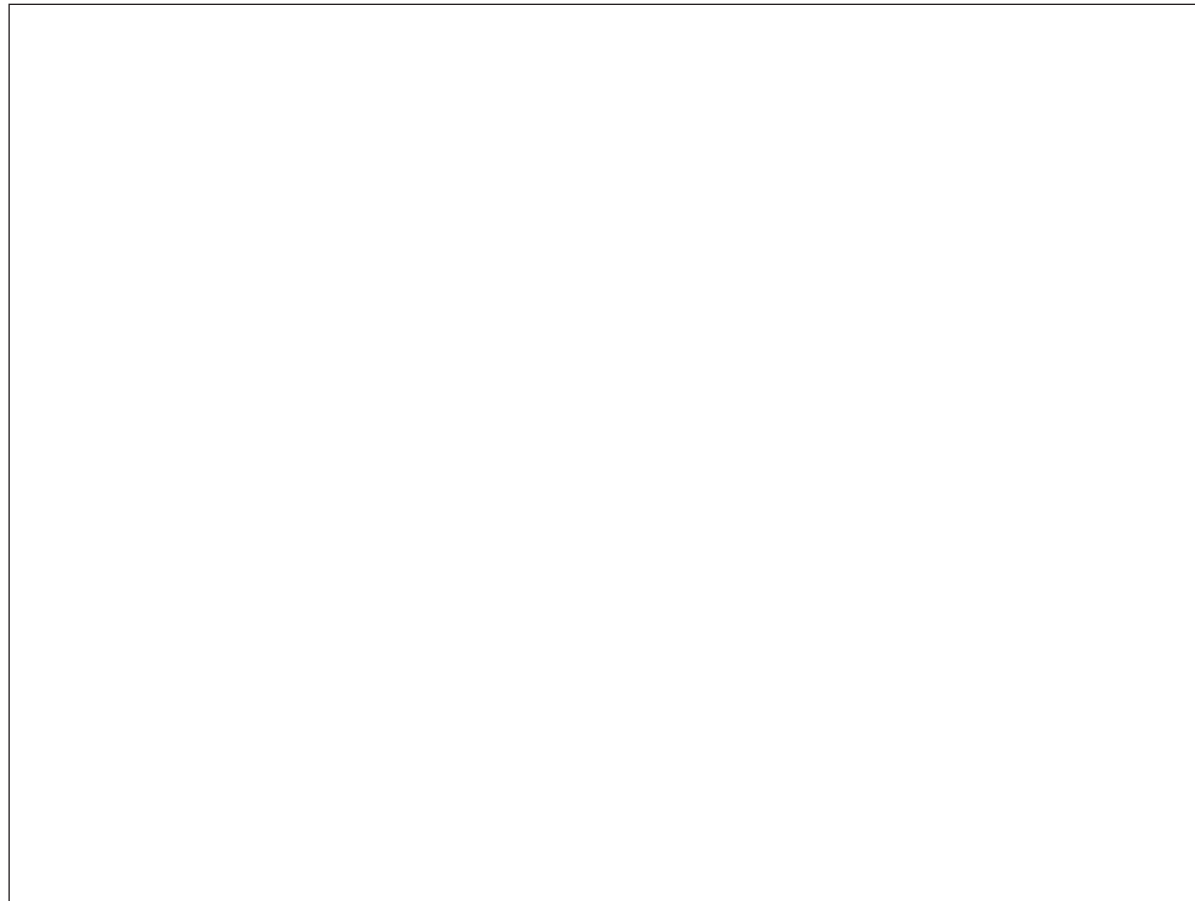
According to the groups director, most of the documents were seized from a building used by the former Iraqi Air Force Intelligence in Baghdad. One other NGO is known to possess significant archives, the Iraq Memory Foundation (Muassasat al-Dhakira al-ÔIraqiyya - IMF), a Baghdad-based group founded by Kanan Makiya. It currently has in its custody archives of the Ba'th Party's Regional Command, an estimated 2.5 million pages of documents, in addition to other materials.

By and large, access to Iraqi state archives in the hands of political parties and NGOs alike has remained relatively restricted their representatives say their collections were being kept in secure locations elsewhere. As such, it was difficult to assess the number and type of documents, their provenance, the extent to which the chain of custody had been preserved, the conditions in which they have been kept, and the manner in which they have been handled, organized and classified.

What Human Rights Watch did see and learn, however, gave rise to serious concern about the integrity of many of these documents in terms of their potential evidentiary value in trial proceedings. The complete failure to take any steps to prevent or minimize the extensive looting and wanton destruction of government buildings in those crucial early days in April 2003 led to the widespread removal of state archives from government buildings by unknown individuals or groups, and which are now virtually impossible to trace. Foreign journalists covering the unfolding events in Iraq, who were frequently among the first at the scene, reportedly removed samples of documents which were then taken out of the country.

Realization of the potential value of the archives itself gave rise to a thriving trade in the sale and purchase of documents early on, a practice which reportedly still continues. The representatives of three Iraqi political parties admitted to Human Rights Watch that they had purchased documents. In some cases on the open market, in other cases when approached by individuals hoping to make a quick sale. One estimated that the number of documents bought through individual sales accounted for as much as forty percent of his party's total collection.

Under these conditions, the likelihood of faked or forged material being injected into the documentation pool becomes very high. None of the political party



Relatives with remains of loved ones recovered at mass grave. Taxis in background are on hand to take the families home once they are ready to leave. (c) 2003 Peter Bouckaert/Human Rights Watch

The complete failure to take any steps to prevent or minimize the extensive looting and wanton destruction of government buildings in those crucial early days in April 2003 led to the widespread removal of state archives from government buildings by unknown individuals or groups

representatives involved in the purchase of documents had an adequate response when asked about methods they employed to check the authenticity of documents they acquired in this manner. Hassan Mneimneh, the IMF's Documentation Director, told Human Rights Watch that it was essentially the unvetted sale of documents, and what you got was purely a question of pot luck. In July last year the going rate was \$100 per kilo, but nowadays you could pay up to \$1,500 to \$2,500 for a few pages of documents. He warned that as long as stocks of documents remained accessible, accompanied by market demand, the trade would continue and thereby further affecting the integrity of the state archives in terms of provenance, authenticity and chain of custody.

Handling of Documents

Of equal concern has been the way in which many documents have been handled. Neither political parties nor NGOs have had the requisite expertise, and in many cases the resources and tools, to handle documents in the manner most likely to ensure their evidentiary value for future trials. According to Mneimneh, documents have been wrongfully processed, reshuffled, written on, and inadvertently destroyed (such as through fire) simply because those handling them have not followed correct procedures.

During its visit to the offices of the Association of Free Prisoners in August 2003, Human Rights Watch was shown into a garage space where thousands upon thousands of documents were piled up on top of each other in haphazard fashion, mountain-like, reaching almost to the ceiling. The floor was strewn with other documents such that anyone walking into the room would necessarily step over them. Papers from individual files had come become loose, others were torn or otherwise destroyed, and photographic materials had also become detached from their original files.

The director of the League of Iraqi Political Prisoners told Human Rights Watch that at the beginning we were naive because we used to give original files to individuals or families who came to ask for information on missing relatives, then we realized that we were absolutely wrong and stopped giving out files. On the contrary, our policy now is

trying to obtain as many documents from the families themselves.

At the human rights ministry in Sulaimaniya, Human Rights Watch observed the team of workers who were in the process of sorting and categorizing documents pertaining to the former Iraqi governments Arabization policy. Though it was a well-intentioned effort to extract relevant information from them, original files were being dismantled without having been scanned, and certain papers extracted from them and re-filed under separate categories devised by the documentation team. The original files containing these documents were discarded. Ministry staff assured Human Rights Watch that there was method to their system, and that they kept detailed records of what papers had been removed from the files, enabling them to reinsert them at a later date.

The lack of necessary expertise in the processing of documents was nevertheless acknowledged. Salah Rashid, the PUKs human rights minister, told Human Rights Watch: The problem is that we are not a scientific institution capable of the study and analysis of documents. I have spoken to the German foreign ministry about assistance in this regard, but they said they were not prepared to work with the Americans. The solution is for us to send Kurds to Germany for training there.

During discussions held with representatives of political parties as to how documents in their custody were being managed, Human Rights Watch was also told that there was a certain amount of exchange of files taking place between them. This applied in particular to documents containing information about arrests and executions of political activists belonging to the various political parties. The extent to which there was method to those types of exchanges, including the supervision of the document transfers and the keeping of detailed records in order to preserve the chain of custody, remains unclear.

Among the groups holding significant state archives in their custody, only the Iraq Memory Foundation appeared to have the requisite experience and expertise for their management, based on its staffs previous work on both Iraqi state archives seized during the 1991 uprising in Iraqi Kurdistan and those relating to

Iraqs 1990-1991 occupation of Kuwait. Human Rights Watch visited the site where the IMF's archives were being kept, and was told that all the documents found on the original site had been removed under supervision, kept in their original condition, and filed in the same order in which they had been found. There were strict instructions that their contents remain untouched, the intention being that they would only need to be handled once during the scanning process. By February 2004, the documents had been in IMF custody for some six months, but no work had been done on them due to lack of resources.

The IMF told Human Rights Watch it had repeatedly appealed to both U.S. and CPA officials for funding to support their work, but despite early expressions of interest no such support came through. In August 2003, the IMF publicly called for the formation of a document collection task force in collaboration with the CPA to determine status and agree on approaches, the unification of norms and standards in document processing, and a centralization of document tagging and scanning efforts. It proposed its management services and the sharing of its expertise in this field, particularly as regards the preservation of archives, the establishment of protocols for document selection, and the devising of classification schemes along lines similar to work already done on the North Iraq Dataset and the Kuwait Dataset. The CPA declined to join forces with the IMF and elected to set up an alternative institution with functions and goals akin to those of the IMF to memorialize the victims of the former Iraqi governments repressive policies.

As with the state archives currently in the custody of the U.S.-led Iraq Survey Group based in Qatar, little is known of the work already undertaken by the CPA, before it was formally dissolved on June 28, 2004, on the processing of documents in its custody in Baghdad. In July 2003, CPA officials told Human Rights Watch of plans to establish a Bureau of Missing Persons that they would initially manage and then hand over to the Iraqis.

The function of the Bureau would be to establish a database of missing persons from information received from a wide variety of sources, including state archives and physical evidence.

Approaches to the International Commission on Missing Persons (ICMP) to assist in establishing the Bureau was met with a lukewarm response, according to CPA officials, which then requested the International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC) to play a lead role in this regard. There were also plans to set up a Central Evidence Warehouse that would house both documentary and physical evidence relating to serious past crimes of the Saddam Hussein government.

The following month, in August 2003, the CPA told Human Rights Watch that discussions with the IGC were held regarding the creation of a National Archive where the documents would be housed long-term, with the establishment of a consortium of local NGOs and foundations to take a lead role in managing it. The CPA said they had also proposed seeking the assistance of international experts to assist Iraqis in the process of evidence gathering and analysis, there being virtually no investigative capacity in the country.

Role of the CPA

Six months later, in February 2004, only limited progress had been made on these fronts. The CPA told Human Rights Watch that it was still working on developing a bureau of missing persons with the [Iraqi] Ministry of Human Rights, which is now charged with this responsibility. A warehouse had been found to house the documentary and physical evidence but funding it remained a problem. No further progress had been made regarding the creation of a National Archive.

However, in apparent recognition of the potential value of state archives being held in non-U.S. hands, namely Iraqi political parties and local NGOs, the CPA had by this time increased its efforts to ensure that these archives be housed under one roof, and was working towards making the Iraqi human rights ministry act as the central repository. The CPA told Human Rights Watch that the IGC would be issuing a request for the documents, and although it has not been put in writing, a request has already been made by the human rights minister.

Human Rights Watch obtained a copy of a letter addressed to the IGC, dated December 30, 2003, and signed by the then Human Rights Minister, Abd al-Baset Turki Said. In it, the minister underscores the importance of gathering state archives within a legal framework and requests the IGC to consider the enactment of an order requiring NGOs and other groups known to possess sizeable state archives to hand them over to his ministry or face criminal penalties for non-compliance.

A draft Order was attached to the ministers letter for the IGCs consideration, Article 3 of which provided for imprisonment not exceeding seven years and not less than five years, and of fines not exceeding ten million Iraqi dinars and not less than five million Iraqi dinars for persons who refuse to hand over state archives or who participate in or incite such action, and that the more severe penalty will apply if such actions result in the loss or destruction of the documents.

Copies of this letter were sent out to the relevant NGOs, whose representatives told Human Rights Watch they had either made strong protests about it or had decided to ignore it. Some objected to the choice of the human rights ministry as the central repository, while others did not want to participate in such a scheme under the aegis of the CPA, and preferred to wait until a sovereign Iraqi government was in place. Officials of political parties with their own state archives collections told Human Rights Watch that they had not received such a letter and were not aware of its contents. The CPA, for its part, acknowledged that this had probably not been the most effective approach to have taken, but that they would continue to push for a law regulating the possession and use of state archives, and which may still provide for criminal penalties for non-compliance. At this writing, no such law had been enacted.

To be continued next issue

Multilateralism good for all

By JOSEPH STIGLITZ

The pundits have now weighed in mightily in interpreting the American presidential election. Did the outcome – together with Republican gains in the Congress – represent an endorsement of Bush's positions? Has the American electorate swung to the right? Are Americans now more concerned about "values?"

Like price in economics, a single electoral choice compresses a lot of information. It is a summary of whether, taking everything into account, a citizen prefers one candidate to another. A host of surveys is required to figure out what it really means, for the United States – and for the world.

This much is clear, however: there is little confidence in Bush's economic policies. The typical American family knows that it is worse off today than it was four years ago, and appears unconvinced that the tax cuts targeted at upper-income Americans brought the benefits heralded by the Bush administration.

But while Bush was not held back four years ago by the lack of a popular mandate in pushing his agenda, he may be emboldened by the seeming ringing endorsement to push even harder – such as making the tax cuts permanent and partially privatizing social security. If

adopted, these measures will further compound America's fiscal mess.

To the rest of the world, these are America's problems. Yes, the soaring deficits may contribute somewhat to international financial instability. Real interest rates may rise, as America borrows more and more. If declining confidence in US fiscal policy leads to a weaker dollar, Europe and Asia may find it more difficult to export, and if the deficits prove a drag on the American economy, global growth may stall.

But for much of the rest of the world, the real concern is American unilateralism. An interconnected world needs cooperation and collective action. Historically, the US has exercised enormous leadership in a world committed to the proposition that no state should dictate collective decisions. Unfortunately, over the past four years, America's president has lost the credibility necessary to exercise that leadership. Even if the 59 million votes cast for Bush represented a ringing endorsement of his Iraq policy, it would not restore America's international credibility.

I believe most Americans reject Bush's unilateralism no less than his administration's economic policies. Before the invasion of Iraq, they wanted America to go to the UN, and today they recognize that America alone cannot maintain order in the Middle East. Even if Iraq is to bear more of the cost of its

own reconstruction, there will have to be debt forgiveness, and this too requires international cooperation.

Those who voted for Bush may not be as outraged by American involvement in torture, or the misleading information about Iraq's weapons of mass destruction and connections with Al Qaeda, as those abroad. But they do not want America alone to shoulder the burdens of international peace, and they are gradually coming to the realization that leadership and cooperation do not come automatically, simply because America is the only superpower.

Some worry whether Bush will use his electoral mandate to engage in more ventures. As he himself put it, "I earned capital in the campaign ... and now I intend to spend it." Had the Iraq venture been more successful, these worries would have been justified. There is little secret that there were discussions concerning Iran.

But the doctrine of preemptive war has been badly tarnished, and I remain hopeful that Congress and the American people have learned a painful lesson. Peace will not quickly be restored to Iraq, and it is hard to conceive of opening up a major new front, when America can hardly manage what it has already undertaken.

Others will, of course, have to continue to bear the costs of the mistaken and mismanaged adventure in Iraq.

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Instability in the Middle East will continue to limit oil supplies, discouraging the expansion of production. High oil prices will dampen global growth in the remainder of 2004 and into 2005. In the short run, the only response is more conservation, and America's allies should put pressure on America to conserve. (Another reason stems from recent reports concerning the rapid melting of the polar ice cap, which seem to reconfirm worries about global warming.)

Presidents do make a difference, but every president operates within constraints. The good news is that the constraints that Bush and the American government will face in the next four years will almost surely limit the damage they will cause. The rhetoric and posturing, the lack of commitment to human rights or democratic processes, may be – and

should be – upsetting, but there will be far more bark than bite.

While America may continue on a path of unilateralism, other countries' stance will make a difference. Some suggest that the US constitution provided fewer constraints on the president in the conduct of foreign policy, because the requisite checks and balances were to be provided by the powers of the time – Britain and France. Today, with the US as the only superpower, it is even more important for countries to stand up and express their views – and to stick by them even when pressured.

Some worry that this will worsen relations with the US. But long-term relationships are based on friendship and respect; coherent, well-argued positions will earn that respect. Today, many Americans, especially the young, feel

far more respect for the countries that recognized the lack of evidence of Iraqi weapons of mass destruction than for those whose leaders repeated the American distortions.

It may be unfortunate that Realpolitik is the order of the day, but it is, so others must learn to play the same game. Standing up for multilateralism and international rule of law may not only be the morally right thing to do; it is also in the interests of America's allies and, ultimately, America itself.

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The growing web in Iraq

Exiting from Democracy?

By RALF DAHRENDORF

Both President George W. Bush and Prime Minister Tony Blair urgently need a plausible exit strategy from Iraq. That they want to get out, now that their reasons for the war have so dramatically collapsed and domestic support is fading, is beyond doubt. But neither wants to leave in ignominy, with their last man dramatically lifted of an embassy rooftop by helicopter.

Both Bush and Blair want to leave Iraq, if not with a victory, then at least with some sense of "mission accomplished." Judging from their recent statements, the scenario that they are concocting is simple. In January, there will be elections in Iraq. The resulting government will then ask the occupation troops to leave, say, within a year. Withdrawal will begin next spring.

While that scenario is simple, reality is not. The first nagging question is this: will there actually be elections next January? Prime Minister Iyad Allawi assures the world that there will be, and President Bush echoes his words. More neutral observers – and indeed, the daily news bulletins about bombings and hostage taking and "insurgents" – cast doubt on that prospect.

The probability of Iraqi elections being held this coming January must be lower than 50%, and we can be certain that these will not be free and fair elections throughout the entire country. Indeed, Iraq no longer deserves to be described as a united country. It has now joined the growing list of the world's failed states and can at best be described as a potential federation of three states plus the unruly city of Baghdad.

Without elections, the Coalition is in trouble. What other exit strategy can it

devise? Above all, however, Iraq is in trouble. What other way forward is there for that unhappy former country? The answer need not be all despair. It may be that rethinking strategy in the light of new facts will open a way forward.

After all, it might be the case that national elections in a place groping for a democratic future are not the best first step on the road to a liberal order. This is notably the case where entrenched groups – Kurds, Shiites, Sunnis – compete for central power. Elections, in such a case, may not even be wise at all – indeed, they may prove to be counterproductive.

History suggests that elections do not create democracies. They confirm that the conditions for a democratic order are present. Thus, they are not the first step in the process of democratisation, but the last step in a preparatory phase in which at least two conditions have been created.

The first condition is a settled territorial arrangement. In "tribal" societies, this is not easy to bring about. Bosnia's experience reveals why this is so. However much one may favor multi-ethnic nation-states, once such a construction has failed, it is imperative to listen to popular sentiment. Viable units will emerge that are less than ideal but at least capable of creating legitimate government – meaning a government that is both effective and acceptable. It would be disastrous to destroy the emergent Iraqi-Kurdish entity in the name of an abstract and no-longer-existent greater Iraq.

Anyone who experienced occupied Germany after World War II, as I did, remembers that the first postwar elections held there were local and regional. In fact, they established what are now the Länder of the Federal Republic of Germany.

The second condition that must be satisfied before elections can be credi-

ble is security. Initially, this may be an issue for the military. But peace and quiet based on tanks and the threat of air strikes cannot be enough. Security requires not just troops, but laws and their enforcement.

What one might call "the liberal order" requires at least two institutional ingredients. One is democracy, including elections and governments held to account by parliaments and ultimately the people. The other is the rule of law. Lord Ashdown, the High Representative of a coalition of countries in Bosnia-Herzegovina, has set a good example of how the rule of law can be established. It requires persons of great courage to become judges, and strong authorities to enforce their judgments. But it can be done.

In a Muslim country, such a strategy would, moreover, provide protection against hijacking of the law by religious fanatics. It would establish what might be called the "Turkish solution."

Turkey's Prime Minister Recep Tayyip Erdogan has taken up this very challenge, first set by his great predecessor Kemal Atatürk nearly a century ago. Perhaps what Iraq needs most is not a ballot box, but an Atatürk.

Such a strategy would be less simple than merely holding highly imperfect elections. It would make the exit of occupation forces more complex and perhaps more drawn-out. It would, however, have a more lasting impact on democratic development than a dubious process by which a limited number of people go to the polls to elect an ineffectual central government. Such a strategy might even lead to an outcome about which those who want Iraq to join a free world can genuinely say: mission accomplished.

Ralf Dahrendorf, author of numerous acclaimed books and a former European Commissioner from Germany, is a member of the British House of Lords.

Russia's Incompetent War on Terror

By ALEXANDER GOLTS

In response to the recent wave of terrorist attacks, Vladimir Putin has demanded that even more power be vested in him. As leading Russian military expert Alexander Golts argues, the problem in Russia is not a lack of central power, but of power exercised incompetently and without individual initiative.

The slaughter by terrorists of hundreds of Russian children in Beslan was final proof – if more was needed – of the utter incompetence of Russia's military and security services. In Beslan, camouflaged men representing four ministries fussed uselessly, with no clear leader or goals, losing precious minutes when the violence erupted. Meanwhile, Nikolai Patrushev, the director of the Federal Security Service (FSB, the former KGB) and Rashid Nurgaliev, the head of the Ministry of Internal Affairs (MVD), both sent to Beslan by President Vladimir Putin, were invisible as the tragedy unfolded.

So once again Russians must face how ineffective their military is. Indeed, none of Russia's power structures, including the military, the FSB, and the MVD, are capable of performing effective anti-terrorist operations.

Most Russians reached this conclusion long before the Beslan attack. In 2002, after terrorists took 800 theatergoers hostage, Putin ordered that an anti-terrorist component be added to Russia's military strategic plan. Some military analysts saw this as the beginning, at long last, of serious reforms, as the army was capable only of executing military operations in Russia's traditional way, i.e., using overwhelming force, as in WWII.

Russia's traditional army cannot fight terrorists effectively because it disdains the ability of soldiers to work in small groups, and does not encourage individual initiative on the part of officers. All are simply expected to execute orders scrupulously.

But it is individual training and the ability to make split-second decisions

in a fluid situation that are required in anti-terrorist operations. Incidentally, when one such anti-terrorist operation was suggested in the Pankisi Gorge in Georgia, Putin decided against it, understanding that instead of eliminating terrorists it would likely turn into a full blown traditional war.

From the outset, the Defense Ministry was skeptical of Putin's order to include anti-terrorism on the military agenda. It suggested, instead, that the army should play a secondary role in anti-terrorist operations.

The Army's hostility to reform is deeply ingrained. Today, Russia's army has no professional institution for training non-commissioned officers. The Defense Ministry simply names sergeants from senior conscripts, which means that sergeants are not very different from their subordinates in either age or training.

The internal conditions of the "power" ministries – the FSB and the MVD, which bear the main responsibility for antiterrorist operations – are

equally grim. Now the Kremlin wants to merge the FSB and MVD into one Ministry of State Security, thereby creating a single anti-terrorist center. Putin has already decided to create an operational center of 13 groups in the Northern Caucasus region to coordinate the actions of the Defense and Emergencies Ministries.

But there is little reason to believe that this proposed bureaucratic monster will provide better security than the existing FSB and MVD forces. The only positive result that may emerge from such a structural change could be that the number of anti-terrorist formations will grow. Yet even that is uncertain: before Beslan, the response to terrorist attacks in Ingushetia and Chechnya consisted of efforts to form additional traditional military divisions.

It is now obvious that overwhelming numbers don't provide an advantage in fighting terrorism, because it is the terrorists who have the initiative. They plan when and where to strike.

Confronting them effectively will require root-and-branch change in order to inspire Russian security officials to take the initiative. For example, Russian security structures have no information about the underground work of the terrorist organizations, which are spread across the entire Russian Federation. There is no credible intelligence penetration of these organizations. This must change if Russia is to prevent future Beslans.

But fighting terrorists requires an entirely different kind of spying from "uncovering" traditional "spies," or neutralizing unpopular oligarchs such as Mikhail Khodorkovsky. To meet today's threats, troops must be able to take individual responsibility and initiative, and need to be trained to react resourcefully and at a moment's notice.

These qualities simply don't exist in Russia's Sovietized military organizations, with their rigid hierarchies and culture of blind conformity. The entire military philosophy in Russia must be changed. But neither Russia's president

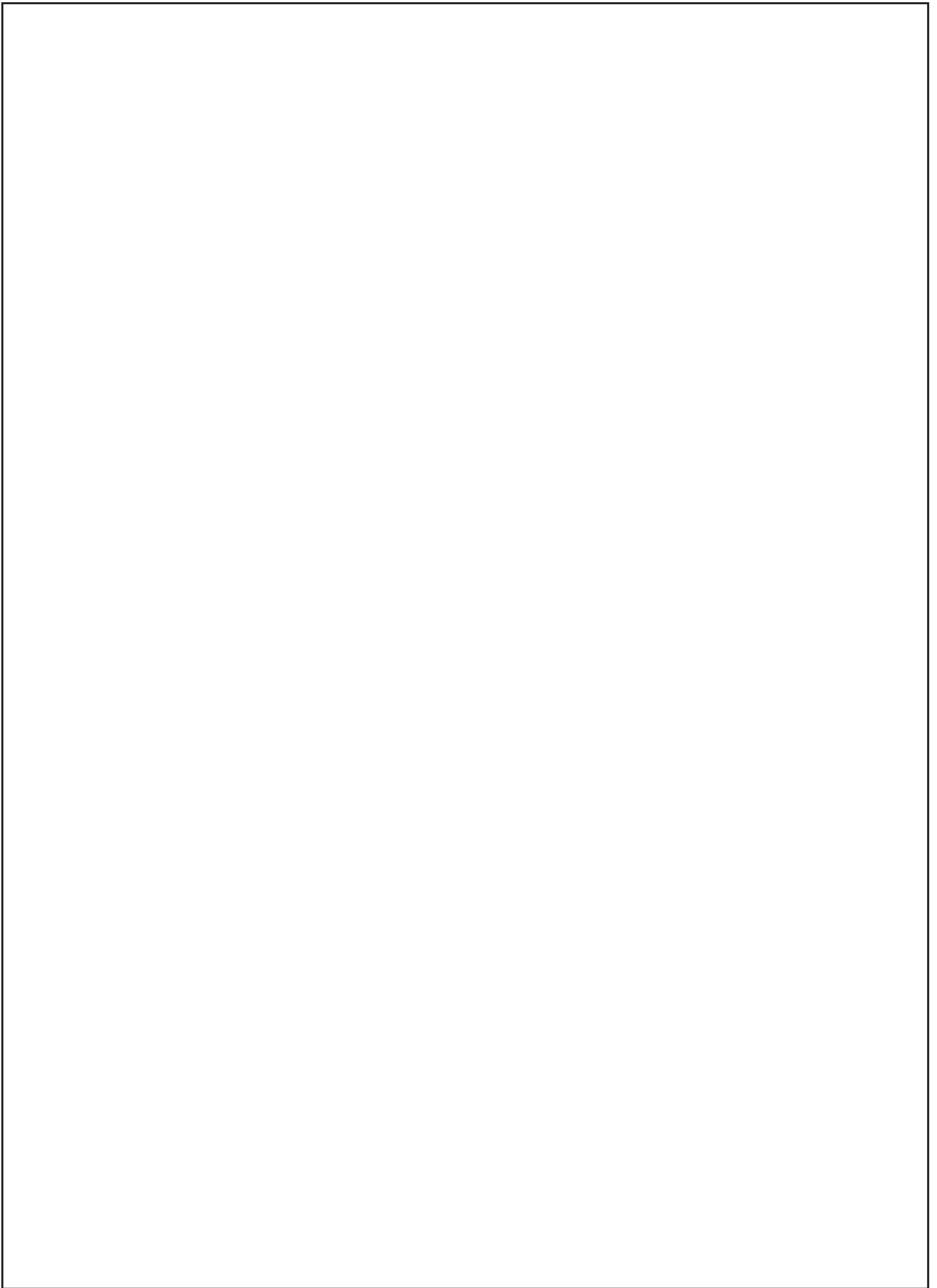
nor its power ministries seem ready for this.

Instead of confronting today's new and very real enemy, they would rather confront the old, traditional one – the West. After the Beslan tragedy, Putin offered an exotic explanation of terrorism: the terrorists, he claimed, are instruments in the hands of those who still fear Russia as a nuclear power.

This is nonsense on stilts, though it obviously sounds pleasing to generals in the power ministries, because the only war they know how to wage is with "world imperialism." They are useless at fighting today's new terrorist enemy. Without major reform of all security and military forces – reforms that provide incentives for individual officers to show initiative and take responsibility – Russia's war on terror will remain one-sided: the terrorists will be doing all the attacking.

Alexander Golts is a Russian military analyst and deputy editor of *Ezhenedelny Zhurnal*.

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Birds need Yemen's resources, but ...

Environmentalists warn that birds are dying

Yasser al-Mayasi
Yemen Times Staff

In its latest report, the Environment Protection General Authority warns of the extinction of 11 kinds of birds in Yemen such as white-eyed gull and the Arabian bustard.

Experts say that some kinds of birds disappearing, especially the bald ibis that need the swamps of Taiz to live.

The report also showed that dryness of the such areas are responsible.

The disappearance of these birds

s rock partridge (L.) and Yemen linnet

of the Yemeni environment indicates things like cutting of trees is a factor. The authority also showed that the pollution caused by oil spills is extremely harmful.

Tourist activities in Yemeni ports also hurt the sea environment of birds because WLUH no consideration for maintaining the environment.

Yemen is considered as a station

in the way of the ELUGYburneys performed during spring and autumn when they travel from northern homes such as Russia, to the warmer places in the south of Africa.

Studies done by the Yemeni Association for Wild Life Protection show that there are 54 main areas that have water resources, plants and animals. Scientists and

researchers in this field report that there are 400 kinds of birds available in Yemen in the whole year: 19 of them are inhabitants, 17 are of the inhabiting birds of prey and 15 pass through Yemen during their journey while some spend the winter in Yemen.

There are many of these rare birds that live in Socotra, which has more than 363 kinds, forming 61 families and

177 classes.

The experts said that the availability of this great number of birds is due to many factors, such as the biodiversity of nature and variety of the geographical regions including the desert and marine environment.

The strategic location of Yemen near African and Asia, and being in the south of the Peninsula, make it attractive to the traveling birds.

Hunting birds, especially in Tihama where the majority of birds are found, is also now considered a main threat.

It is known that Yemen has assigned a five-year agreement with UAE in Abu Dhabi in 2004 on the artificial breeding Asian bustard inhabiting Yemen, with the aim to protect them from

Arabian woodpecker

