

Year 2004 in review:

A turbulent year in Yemen's recent history

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The year 2004 had witnessed many significant incidents that will have long-term implications for many years to come. Most of those incidents resulted in negative consequences, causing frustration and disappointment for optimists who had thought that the post-2003 era would be brighter.

The two most dominant issues that gave the year 2004 its gloomy look are the rebellion of Sheikh Hussein Badreddin Al-Houthi in Sa'adah and the unprecedented legal battles waged by the government against the free press. Observers as the two that dominated the scene and would continue to be debated and speculated for years to come have marked the two issues.

A rebellion in Saadah

Yemen woke up with bizarre news on the eve of 19 June to find that the government announced officially the launch of a military assault against a 'rebel' leader named Hussein Badraddeen Al-Houthi. According to official sources at the time, the decision to launch the war was made after Al-Houthi refused to surrender to the authorities and killed three security men and declared his armed 'rebellion' against the state.

An 80-day conflict continued afterwards resulting in thousands of casualties with the number of dead still not confirmed and disputed until date. Independent confirmation of death was impossible due to restrictions imposed by the authorities. Nevertheless, the overall devastation to the area and to the government's budget was enormous. Thousands were seen fleeing their homes and thousands of army soldiers, civilians, and rebels were reported killed in independent and opposition media, while official media said that killed were in the hundreds.

The rebellion ended on September 10 when both the Ministries of Defense and Interior declared the death of Al-Houthi and the ending of his rebellion.

On 27 July, former judge of Haraz court was sentenced to 10-year imprisonment for supporting the rebellion. Along side, hundreds of youngsters from Sa'adah who were thought to have relations with Al-Houthi's movement were also arrested. A number of mosque preachers in Sana'a and other areas were apprehended as well for



Main events of 2004: Al-Houthi rebel leader who was found dead after a military offensive (top left), Al-Khaiwani in prison representing the plight of the Yemeni free press (top right), a scene of the defendants in a USS Cole and Limburg trial session in Sana'a (bottom left), soldiers on guard in Sana'a depicting the tense security situation in the last year (bottom right).

suspicion of their open support for Al-Houthi's ideas.

It is noteworthy mentioning that Al-Houthi was a prominent member of the parliament during 1990 and 1993. He was also seen close to the authorities upon the 1994 for his potential role in combating Wahhabi teachings in the north of Yemen.

An attack on the free press

Among other important features of 2004 was the unprecedented wave of legal attacks against the free press. The most important development was the sentencing of Al-Shoura newspaper's editor-in-chief Abdulkareem Al-Khaiwani to one year in prison and closing down his opposition newspaper for six months. The accusation was based on reports that 'promoted religions and ethnic hatred' and for 'defaming the person of the President, national unity, and national interest'.

The articles published in Al-Shoura that were the cause of the sentence were written by other journalists, but for being the editor-in-chief and the ultimate person responsible in the newspaper, Al-Khaiwani was the only victim.

Al-Khaiwani was jailed and was unable to appeal his first instance court verdict. He was also beaten up and harassed in prison. The international community did little to ease his situation and no diplomatic or humanitarian agency took the time to visit him at jail unlike similar cases around the world.

This followed a series of other attacks against the press including the kidnapping of journalists Saeed Thabet of the Yemeni Journalists Syndicate (YJS) who was later tried and sentenced to a fine and prevention from writing for six months.

Thabet was accused of publishing a news item about an alleged assassination attempt against the President's elder son Ahmed Ali Abdullah Saleh.

In the same year, journalist Najeeb Yabli was reported kidnapped in Aden by the authorities, while Abduljabbar Saad was fired from his post in a governmental newspaper for writing in Al-

Ihya Al-Arabi newspaper.

Furthermore, Al-Wasat newspaper's editor in Chief is still being tried for publishing articles that allegedly 'harm Yemen-Saudi relations'.

Eight newspaper journalists were also accused of charges similar to those of Al-Khaiwani, and their prosecution is still on. Among those still in courts are prominent political writer Abdullah Sallam Al-Hakimi, Abdulfattah Al-Hakimi and Lawyer Jamal Al-Jobi.

More recently, five newspaper editors were sentenced to suspended 6-month imprisonments. Those included Dr. Abdulrahman Abdullah, Abdulwahid Hawwash, editors in chief of Tajammu, Ihya Arabi respectively, writer Abduljabbar Saad. Journalist Nabeel Subai was sentenced to four months in prison, and editor-in-chief of Annas newspaper Hameed Shuhra got three months.

However, the most staggering sentence came in the last days of 2004 when Abdulkareem Sabra editor in chief and Al-Safi Abdulqawi Al-Qubati writer in Al-Hurriya Weekly both got two years imprisonment with hard labor. Both men are being chased and would be imprisoned immediately once they are arrested.

Economic troubles

The percentage of Yemenis living below the poverty line has increased significantly as more than 50% of the population is reported living on less than one US dollar a day. Meanwhile, prices of commodities also increased in an unprecedented rate reaching in some products up to 300%.

The year 2004 was a year of devastating unemployment as there were reports of a staggering 6 million young persons without work. Health and education standards also dropped for the public and the level of corruption increased according to the



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Transparency International, as Yemen's rank dropped compared to the year before.

Consequently, the middle class continued to shrink, as the two most dominant classes that are now prevailing are the rich and the poor.

2004 was also a year of anticipation as the public has been told repeatedly that the economic reform package would be revived and the subsidies for petroleum products would be lifted, which could trigger a hike of benzene prices by 50% and diesel prices by 100%.

Economists believe that such a step would inevitably result in at least a 500% increase in prices of many products, especially basic commodities.

Human rights abuses

Despite the inauguration of the year 2004 with an international conference on democracy, human rights in the capital Sana'a, the year witnessed an unprecedented level of human rights abuses in the form of arrests of university students, kidnapping of citizens by the Police Security Office out of the rule of law and without solid evidence. Many of those incidents were reported by local and international nongovernmental organizations.

In Sana'a University, a number of highly qualified teachers had their rights confiscated and others who were associated with high-ranking officials were offered positions in the universi-

ty without proper qualifications. A number of other violations also took place in the student unions' elections in the university.

However, most of the cases of prisoner abuse, torture, poor sanitary conditions of prisons continued without any corrective measures throughout 2004.

Trials and security

The year 2004 continued to witness ongoing trial sessions of defendants and suspects in the USS Cole and Limburg attacks. Each trial was done separately. However, no final verdicts were issued against the suspects. The USS Cole verdict is expected to come out in February. This comes in a time Yemen continues to play an active role in anti-terrorism efforts. However, minor security incidents did take place in Yemen but not in the degree that was in earlier years.

However, the year 2004 witnessed a tangible increase in the number of criminal incidents that include murder, theft, drug trafficking, robbery, prostitution, etc.

The reported number of murder crimes committed in Yemen in 2004 was 258.

Meanwhile, the alarming rate of traffic accidents was also noticeable as almost 190,000 traffic accidents occurred throughout the country with the governorate of Sana'a leading with around 160,000-reported accidents.

An apprentice anthropologist's ethnographic account of an excursion

Picnicking in Soqotra

By SERGE ELIE

Preparation:

My research assistant came into my office to ask if I would be interested in going to Da'arho, an area located in the upland plateau of the region of Diksam in the central part of the island. The picnic invitation came from a policeman in the tourist and environment police force to all of his colleagues. Da'arho is well endowed with water because the rains are more frequent in the higher elevations, which allows for bountiful grazing grounds and healthy and productive livestock. It is also endowed with a scenic landscape. My response was affirmative.

The next day the phone rang and my assistant told me that I would be picked up at 2:00 p.m. OK, I said nonchalantly, expecting to return later in the evening. I put aside my green cotton shirt purchased in Syria, my most comfortable ten-year-old multi-pocket cotton pants from Miami, my red-checkered *mashadda* from Jordan, my camera from Japan by way of New York, and my new sandals from Syria bought in Sana'a. I tried to nap, trusting that they would be late. My ride finally arrived, late as expected.

Departure:

When we reached the pick-up spot, I noticed over a dozen people waiting, while sitting next to bundles of comforters and pillows neatly tied up. "Who are all of these people?" I inquired. They are colleagues of our host in Da'arho, and we will spend one night there. "Nobody told me about this," I said aimlessly, as I thought of my unprepared state. It was too late to pick up stuff. I resorted to making up my own comforting rationale. It is only for one night, I have chewing gum as toothpaste and some bottled water, and I can survive. Moreover, this impromptu excursion into the Soqotra hinterland was part of my apprenticeship as an ethnographer-anthropologist. I became reconciled to the idea and welcomed the opportunity. We had to take another car, as we were about seventeen in total. We finally left Hadiboh at about three in humble two-car convoy.

We stopped at Haffa, a makeshift town of dwellings built of recycled oil drums, for the 'asr prayer. After prayer we began our ascent of the mountainous road to Diksam before 4 p.m. I was sitting in front and in full view of the terrain. In spite of the minor inconvenience of a dirty windshield, as well as a rapidly setting sun, I could take it all in. Diksam is a gateway to the island's most scenic landscapes as well as the habitat of the most authentic Bedouins and their traditional life ways. While conversing with the driver, my head was bobbing left and right, looking intermittently at him and then the landscape. As we bounced around in our Toyota land cruiser in relative comfort our main worries being to hold on tightly to the handgrips for safety and the possibility of a punctured tire - I wondered about the experience of the early European travelers who came in the absence of roads, with camels and donkeys as the best means of transport available. Pretty determined bunch, I thought.

Reaching the top of the mountain brought a momentary closure to our conversation. We stopped by a *lim*, a natural formation in which water formed rains accumulate, to see the water level and get an approximate reading on weather activity. The water level was about two feet high. Not much, but enough, perhaps, to last a week or so. We continued on our way and by sunset we reached the wadi that demarcates the entrance into the Schebhen area, just in time for the *maghrib* prayer. As everyone was performing the ablution ritual prior to prayer, one of our group mounted an elevated area and to his colleagues' surprise gave a good rendition of the *adhan*, the Muslim call to prayer. This was the first time he had done it. The occasion seemed most appropriate to make an impression on the others. I think he succeeded. Although he shared the physical features of the legendary Bilal, the outstanding performer of the call to prayer during the Prophet's time, his performance could not be said to equal that of his famous precursor.

Overnight:

Our stop for the night was a small village of no more than four houses in Schebhen, not very far from where we stopped for prayer. It was a tenebrous darkness, a moonless sky dimly lit by a few scattered stars. This was welcome for when nature calls under the current circumstance, darkness was one's last resort for a sense of privacy. I instinctively knew that to ask for a bathroom would be a kind of cultural faux pas either you would be a kind of cultural faux pas, either you would look stupid in their eyes, or you would embarrass them. I borrowed a flashlight, took my water bottle and went on a search for a suitable place in pitch darkness. Against the sky I saw the shadowy outline of a lonely Dragon's Blood tree, in sufficient distance from the house where we were staying, but I felt as if I would be committing a sacrilegious act against the island's flagship symbol; I chose instead a nearby lonely, humble, meter high croton tree.

Sharing the six by four rectangular, flat roofed "traditional" Soqotri stone house, which only recently replaced the mountain cave dwellings, with nine other people, made me understand that the figures for the population of small villages quoted to me in my previous trips around the island were not exaggerations, but very reasonable estimations. The room was lit barely by a kerosene lamp seated in the middle of the floor. The relative darkness inside the room did not permit close inspection, and my imagination did not go beyond what I could see. In such cases ignorance is truly blissful. There were two coverings thrown over the earth floor: one in plastic on the elevated part of the room, and the other a cloth fabric. I gravitated toward the plastic one. It turned out to be a wise choice because ticks do not find plastic carpet to be a very suitable abode. We all sat around on the floor forming a semi-circle around the lamp. There was a momentary indecision as to the best placement of the lamp to enhance the reach of its flickering light. After much fumbling it was hung from a beam in the ceiling's center. There was much bantering among these males. One could sense a deep social bond. A feeling of inclusive camaraderie reigned although these were policemen with their two superior officers. The conversation ranged over a number of topics and was in Arabic for the benefit of the non-Soqotrans present.

A simmering impatience underlay the conversation and it was about the tea that was taking too long to prepare. For it was over four hours since anyone had tea and this extended abstinence was becoming unbearable. The conversation was repeatedly interrupted with shouts toward the makeshift outdoor kitchen, "*fein al shy, yoh?*"

Tea was finally ready, as two thermoses (*thalaja*) were brought into the room, one with red tea and one with milk. The sight energized everyone, as people sat up from their recumbent positions and came closer to the teapots. As is customary the guests, that is, the three foreigners, were served first, while the others waited with straining patience, as there were not enough cups. This energizing pause made everyone talkative again.

Soon, the newly discovered Soqotri Bilal was calling for the *isha* prayer. All dutifully got up to prepare to pray. Outside, I heard the leader of the prayer group reciting surahs from the Quran in a notable manner. And I thought of how in a religion-led society, the societal rhythm-indeed, and its metabolic function one is tempted to say-is dictated by the observance of religious obligations.

The last communal act was dinner, which was served soon after prayer. Chicken in a soupy sauce with potatoes was eaten with bread, and followed by sliced oranges and apples for desert, both in the Hadiboh *souk*. Not long after, blankets were being untied and sleeping spaces allocated. I stayed where I was seated. A blanket was given to me as well as an armrest cushion to be used as a pillow. Given my unprepared state, I was doing well. I arranged blanket and pillow neatly in my corner and wrapped myself in the blanket, wearing all my clothes, like everyone else. I lay down, but my knees remained bent, as there was not enough

space to stretch my legs. Nevertheless, I felt comfortable and I faded into sleep. Later, I don't remember how much later, I overheard someone say "As *sallam aleikum*." Perhaps, a curious neighbor passing by and seeing the cars and the dim flicker of the lamp inside wanted to inquire who was visiting the neighborhood. One among us managed a weak response. The night was relatively quiet, except for the hissing sound of the breeze entering the ventilating spaces in the walls of our compound, keeping the room aerated and comfortable.

Picnic Day

There was no need for alarm bell or crowing chicken, as "Bilal" was on the job belting out the *adhan* exactly at dawn for the *fajr* prayer. By five a.m. we were all up and already in the cars on our way to Da'arho. My toilet consisted of water thrown on my face to remove the traces of sleep and *cehwing* gum in lieu of tooth brushing. The wing was relatively strong, blowing a cold air, which felt invigorating. It was day but the sun had not yet broken into the horizon; the landscape was still asleep under a misty veil. We were traveling slowly, almost at walking speed, so one could take in the landscape. On our left there was a canyon like precipice and you could see the scars and sinews of the mountain on the other side. I was told that an eco-lodge would be built in this area. Properly managed it would be a boon to all concerned: the landscape gazing tourist and the Bedouin turned eco-lodger the road to Da'arho was carved out of the sides of a steep mountain. It was built through a collective endeavor between the government, supplying the heavy equipment, and the people, providing the labor. The result, while not an engineering masterpiece, is a testament to what can be achieved with basic equipment and community commitment.

Our picnic area was located in Wadi Dirhur, where the water flows throughout the year. We camped next to a natural pool two meters deep, situated right at the base of two mountains, the sides of which could serve as diving boards from various heights. There was a village of about five houses in the midst of a date palm grove but the people had migrated elsewhere as part of the transhumant cycle; they would return for the date harvesting season. It was an idyllic spot by any standard and would be attractive to nature-gazing tourists. The first priority was to set up a kitchen and prepare the tea as we had yet to have breakfast. A kitchen spot was identified and a three-man team was dispatched to collect firewood. As these preparations were underway, our host arrived with two healthy looking, medium sized sheep. By the shine of their woolen coat, which is used to make the Soqotri rug (*hadh'hi*), it was evident that they were not scavengers like the ones in Hadiboh. Of course they were both males as females were much more valued and are kept alive until they could no longer fulfill their reproductive function. Our group had brought rice, macaroni, spices, etc., to complement the meat that was to be provided by the host.

At last, tea was ready. In spite of its weak consistency and too much sugar, it was welcome to dissipate the last cobweb from our early rising. As I was sipping my tea, it occurred to me that I had not seen the "execution" of sheep since my days in Mauritania. I got up quickly and grabbed my camera to record the grisly event, but both had been put under the knife already by the host. He seemed to have done so without performing the ceremony of the *Muhar*, which was a kind of invocation of God's blessing for the occasion. Othman, a local Bedouin, was already removing the woolen coat of one animal to carve it but there was no one from the group to help. They seemed not to know how, as they were from Hadiboh or some coastal villages. Their element was water and their thing fish. They could cook the meat but not kill or carve it. Finally, a knife was handed to someone else outside of our group whose element was not the sea but the hinterland (*al badiya*). One sheep was to be prepared the Soqotri way, that is, the meat was to be separated completely from



Camel crossing a spring in a mountainous area on Soqotra

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the bones and the latter would be boiled and served separately as a pre-lunch appetizer. Whereupon they would be smashed with rocks and their marrow sucked and washed down with soup (*riho-ta*). The other sheep was to be cooked in the Mudhbi style. A bed of rocks would be built on the ground and a fire would be lit to heat the rocks. Once heated, the ashes would be removed and the meat spread on top of the hot rocks. Another layer of rocks would be laid over the meat and another fire lit on top of it and left for one hour and a half. Subsequently, the ash and rocks would be discarded and the meat served. The chef was Mabrook, a rather effeminate-speaking man from Hadiboh, who resided in Musaqibhen, a place that is regarded as the "red district" of Hadiboh. So called, it seems, merely because of its inhabitants' excessive display of a certain *joie de vivre* through frequently held "disco" nights animated with local drum music.

While Othman was carving the animal, I received a lesson in the Soqotri named for each part of the animal. I squatted on a nearby rock and I had a front row seat in the operation theater, camera at the ready. There I watched the cleaning of the intestines and their weaving into decorative necklaces; the cutting out of the liver, kidneys and heart for our breakfast; the careful collection of fat, which was to be stuffed in parts of the stomach to be cooked and served later. By this time a group of Soido birds, scavengers, that are also known as Egyptian vultures (it is related to the myth of the rising Phoenix), was swarming overhead on the look out for scraps of meat. As a few remaining pieces of the intestines were thrown away there was frantic dive and a violent pecking contest between these birds over the most fetid parts of the remains. There was something incongruous about this scene. I felt that their beautiful coat - a resplendent rainbow - like combination of gold, yellow, light brown, with a tinge of red and white colors - should not belong to a bird that feeds on feculent detritus.

At least breakfast was served: macaroni with pieces of liver, kidney, and heart. It was satisfactory, even good, except for a piece of liver that was insufficiently cooked. I ate lightly, as I wanted to leave space for lunch, which would not be very long after. I withdrew into a sedentary state for the rest of the day as I was impeded by my lack of preparedness for occasion: no *foutah* (a wraparound garment worn by males), no swimming trunks, and wearing sandals that were unsuitable to negotiate the rocky paths carved into the steep slopes of the mountains. What was unsuitable to me, however, was for the Soqotrans the equivalent of an all terrain four-wheel drive car. For them, sandals of the most basic type, both in material and style, seem to be the only footwear, whatever the terrain or occasion. Clearly, the problem was not with the sandals but my inability to use them. The wearing of the *foutah* is the "national" attire. One could assert that no Soqotran wears pants unless it is part of a uniform required by his job, e.g., policeman, school etc., or he has been abroad and has adopted a "modern" style, as was the case with my office mate who spent six years in Cuba. But for me, wearing a *foutah* would simply make it more comfortable to lounge around the "pool," rather than be a rapport-inducing display of sartorial solidarity. The swimming trunks of Soqotrans gave me an insight, perhaps, into the practice of the male version of the code of modesty. In fact, it is not a swimming trunk, but underwear. It is a pair of extremely baggy pants made of nylon material, which covers from the midsection all the way under the knees. Wearing a brief of a spandex would be the equivalent of a Soqotri woman walking in public with-

out her veil: *mamnu'ha* (prohibited). Indeed, when I was taking photographs some would rush to put on their *foutah* before I took the picture, as if they felt improperly attired for a public event. As I sat engrossed with ethnographic mental notes, a delegation of four crossed our camp on its way to the village of Da'arho where a wedding was to take place the next day; they were carrying three goats and one cow to fulfill their *rufda* obligations. The *rufda* custom is the collective giving of gifts of livestock to the groom by all the neighboring tribes resident in the area. Through this custom, perhaps the Soqotri version of the potlatch, the tribes competed to show which one would be the most generous in their offerings. The offering the group was carrying was a notable display of generosity, which changing times seemed not to have adversely affected. I learned later that seven cows and over twenty goats were donated for this occasion, and all were slaughtered. This amount would exceed the demand for meat in Hadiboh for an entire week!

The Soqotri Bilal was at it again, putting an abrupt end to his colleagues' recreation and scattering my ethnographic reveries. After a brief collective consultation as to which direction was east, a marker was placed in the ground and a little crowd gathered to perform the noon prayer.

Lunch was served, finally! Our group had been expanded by half a dozen people attracted by the sight of fire, food, and non-locals. Self-invitation at lunchtime was not frowned upon, but welcomed according to the prevailing ethic of hospitality. I sat in a group with the UN international staff, the two superior police officers, and Othman, who brought our plate of rice cooked with saffron-based spices and thick chunks of meat thrown on top of it. Eating meat in the Bedouin area has a particular ritual. The first time I saw it done, our guide took it out and put it on top of a rock to cut it. My assistant assured me that this was the way it was done in Soqotra. Now Othman, who always carried a traditional, locally made knife (*Hanshar*), one of the markers of an authentic Bedouin, immediately started cutting the meat into small pieces, at first directly from the plate, but not for long. He removed all of the pieces, placed them directly on the ground, and threw the meat back into the plate on top of the rice as they were cut. Custom confirmed!

Return

Leave-taking between hosts and guests is rather unceremonious, as I had observed on previous occasions. There was no exchange of thanks to express gratitude for the generous hospitality. Just a perfunctory goodbye sealed with a handshake, sometimes none, followed by an abrupt departure. This had been the behavior of my research assistant, after we self-invited ourselves to a little feast a Bedouin in the Ayhaft region offered to his neighbors who had participated in a Gyrif - a form of mutual aid practiced by communities to assist one member when the work to be done necessitates the collective input of all members of that community. He blandly waved to the host from a distance and did not even wait for him to reciprocate as he turned to leave as if in a hurry. It is as if hospitality was a common obligation, which did not merit any special acknowledgement. This time was not very different, as we got up to leave soon after lunch and the obligatory tea.

We started the returned ride at about 12:30pm; I thought the timing most opportune, as I would be able to see the entire landscape we would be traversing in broad daylight, unlike the day before when part of the way had been traversed under cover of darkness. As we started climbing the road,

Mabrook gave a hilarious rendition of Bedouin speech patterns, in the form of a string of phrases composed of a few intelligible words interspersed mostly with guttural sounds of *yoh, yah, yeh*, accompanied by furious facial expressions, agitated tone of voice, and emphatic gestures. The point was to demonstrate the impoverished diction of the Bedouin. His favorite was the Bedouin's corruption of "As Salam Mualeikum" to "Sam Aleikum." He even attempted to confirm this by saluting a few people on the road in order to elicit their response and test their pronunciation. The mimicry was related to the biases inherent in the classic binary opposition between *Hadhara* (Civilization or the culture of city dwellers), and *Badawa* (culture of dwellers of the desert or hinterland) that originated in the writings of Ibn Khadun.

While the Bedouin mimicry was going on in the back of the car, the driver was sharing with me his impressions about the contours of the landscape, which suggested prior use in some distant past. We were traveling on the upper plateau of Schebhen, and indeed, the outlay of the land does resemble a place that was used for some type of agricultural production. There was a vast expanse of land with a few straggling Dragon's Blood trees, dispersed in a manner that allowed one to infer that either they served as shade for agricultural workers or were the last few survivors of a once forested area. This would seem to confirm that this area was once organized to facilitate large-scale production. There is in fact a debate between Vitaly Naumkin, a Russian anthropologist, and Brian Doe, a British archeologist, regarding whether or not there was large-scale agricultural production in parts of the island.

On the way back we stopped by the village of Kufuz. A UN project had installed an automatic weather station, to provide data for the predictive analysis of the Soqotra weather. This is, of course, useful. But I thought that this weather station would never be able to approximate in subtlety, if not in sophistication, the seven ways in which the people of Diksam differentiate between types of rain. This was the last stop prior to our descent out of Diksam on the only mountain access road from the northwestern plains adjacent to Hadiboh. Our group had expanded by a few more people, as picking up hitchhikers is cultural obligation in Soqotra, and if you cannot fulfill this obligation you must yell through the window the reason why, with a genuinely apologetic demeanor. We reached Haifa in time for the 'asr prayer. Thankfully, our Bill's service was not necessary, as the group dismounted the cars and gravitated toward the place for ablution.

As everyone was returning from prayer to the cars to continue our journey, I noticed that an elderly Bedouin, picked up on our way back, was negotiating with someone the sale of the resin of the Dragon's Blood tree. A deal was concluded for 600 Yemeni riyals. I saw a satisfied smile on his face as he mounted the back of the pick-up truck. His encounter with *hadhara* was most promising. He was cleaned, he had prayed and now he had some cash to meet some of his basic needs. His prayers were answered. I reflected upon my own encounter with his world. I felt enriched as well and better prepared for a much deeper ethnographic encounter with Soqotra's badawa. While hoping that I was not engaged in some premature wishful thinking, I felt an instinctive identification with Malinowski, one of the forefathers of anthropology who said of his fieldwork site that "a bond was growing up between myself and this landscape... everything was pervaded with the promise of fruitful work and unexpected success." *Al Hamdu lillah!*

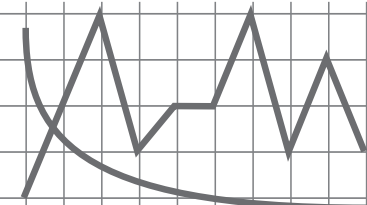
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YT Business



Donors support implementation of water strategy in Yemen

By MAHYOUB AL-KAMALI
YEMEN TIMES STAFF

The Japanese ambassador to Yemen handed over in Hudeida governorate the Japanese grant for the cleanliness sector and it was in the form of 73 various equipment for cleanliness costing an estimated \$ 10 million offered as a gift from the Japanese people for Yemen and the grant would be distributed to all Yemeni governorates.

In the ceremony held on the occasion the governor of Hudeida Mohammed Saleh Shamlan confirmed the importance preserving the equipment that would provide 200

new job opportunities and contribute to realization of the goals of the strategy of poverty alleviation. In addition the event would help develop work in cleanliness nationwide, expressing gratitude and appreciation of the Yemeni people for the Japanese government and people for offering the grant that comes under the steady growing of the Yemeni-Japanese relations. On his part, the Japanese ambassador to Yemen confirmed that the government of Japan was focusing on supporting projects related to the people needs in all areas, wishing that that equipment would contribute to improve the level of cleanliness in the Yemeni major cities.

It is to be recalled that the gover-

norate of Hudeida would receive, as part of the grant, equipment worth \$600 thousand.

On the other hand, the ministry of planning and international cooperation hosted a consultative meeting with representatives of the donor states and international organizations. Mr. Ahmed Mohammed Soufan, deputy premier, the minister of planning and international cooperation and participation of ambassadors and representatives of donor countries and international organizations working in Yemen, chaired the meeting.

The meeting, attended by Dr Mohammed Lutf al-Iryani, the minister of waters and environment, was devoted to discussing the water situa-



Workers performing street cleaning and paving works.

tion in Yemen and the future support by donors to the sector of waters in the light of the strategy on investment in this field. The meeting also discussed the possibility of organizing a plenary meeting with donors aimed at offering material support by donor countries to implement outputs of water sector's strategy.

In the meeting, Mr Soufan had indicated that the strategy of waters sector had received interest from donors and would require from the

government the approval of its document so that to be a reference for the donor countries in their support for the waters strategy. Mr Soufan also made it clear that the strategy included policies and measures related to supporting this sector, in addition to that the strategy had defined the nature of the needs in terms of the volume of investments that is expected to reach in the five next years to around \$550 million. Mr Soufan has affirmed that realisation of the goals of this strategy

is considered as the major milestone for the economic growth in Yemen and that it is the real investment for many areas.

Representatives of donor parties have pledged to support the waters sector strategy that is considered among the most important sources of economic and investment growth in Yemen because it forms an utmost importance in development of agriculture in all Yemeni areas especially those that suffer from water shortages.

Yemen-APEC trade up

By YEMEN TIMES STAFF

An economic report says that the volume of trade between Yemen and the Asia-Pacific Economic Cooperation Organization (APEC) has risen steadily, reaching YR 652 billion last year, compared to about YR 401 in 1999.

This year, Yemen is seeking to diversify its exports and increase the volume and revenue of non-oil goods. The report issued by the Statistics Central Apparatus (SCA) said that trade -total of exports and

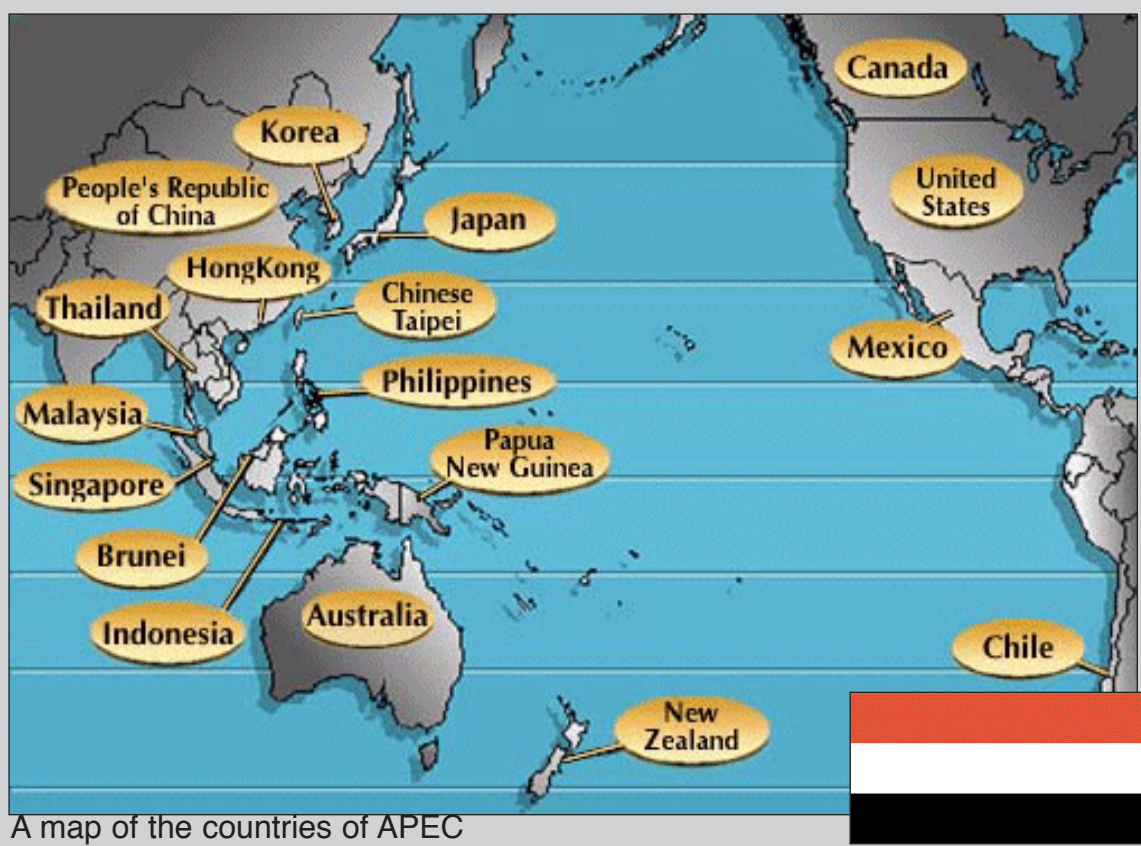
imports- between Yemen and the APEC countries accounts for 48 per cent of Yemen's external trade (around YR 1.3 trillion) in 2003.

The Yemeni government wants to concentrate on its fisheries and agricultural sectors this year to improve the balance of trade with international groups. The government has given directives to concerned parties to prepare strategic plans for the development of non-oil exports to attract investment in the productive sector.

According to the report by the SCA, the total volume of Yemen's exports to APEC countries in 2003

amounted to YR 494 billion, with 43 per cent of those exports going to China, followed by Thailand with YR 213 billion, South Korea with YR 36.2 billion, Singapore YR 29 billion, Indonesia YR 12.5 billion, the USA YR 11.6 billion, Malaysia YR 11 billion, and Japan YR 7.2 billion.

The government says its endeavor to join the World Trade Organization requires improvement of its exports of non-oil product industries. It is scheduled that negotiations be launched in a second round between Yemen and the WTO during the second half of this year.



A map of the countries of APEC

Consumer Protection Law enacted in Yemen

By MAHYOUB AL-KAMALI
YEMEN TIMES STAFF

The Consumers Protection Law is expected to be enacted in the later days to stop smuggling expired merchandise, including foodstuff, medicines and other consumer goods sneaked into Yemeni markets.

Prime Minister Abdulqader Ba Jammal had discussed the law draft with the Chairman and the members of the Board of the Yemeni Society for Consumer Protection (YSCP). They discussed different activities to be carried out by the Society as well as the damage caused by expired and smuggled merchandise or those not conforming to prescribed specifications and standards of industrial products, foodstuff, crops and drugs.

The meeting also handled ways to

improve the Society's relations with concerned governmental authorities, the active role of civil community organization, and also ways to raise public awareness on issues of commercial and industrial fraud, and the specifications and standards.

They pointed out the indispensable role of consumers in responding actively to the whole activities carried out by the Consumer Protection Society, meant to safeguard the people from the risks of smuggled and badly made products, and help save the national economy.

Prime Minister had confirmed the government's support for the Society's activity, especially, in executing the draft of Consumers Protection Law presented by the Society, aiming to strengthen the Society's legal ground. Prime Minister considered the law integral to laws in the framework of comprehensive reformation intended to

combat corruption.

He emphasized the importance of broadening the scope of the Society's activity so that it covers more provinces by opening new branches in cooperation and attracting more members especially from among young people. The necessity of such a step is obvious since the society has a function inextricably linked to the life of ordinary people and all of them across the country.

The PM had urged media outlets to completely cooperate with the Society monitoring activity, awareness, and the reporting fraud cases.

Mr. Abdulrehan al-Akwa', Minister of the Youth & Sports, Honorary Chairman of the Society, and Mr. Abdul Salam al-Qamesh, Head of the Society, assured the government's support and their response to the Society issues in a way leading to the success of the Society and its activity.

UN report urges rich countries to double aid

By Evelyn Leopold
UNITED NATIONS, Jan 17 (Reuters) - More than 500 million people can be lifted out of abject poverty, 250 million people will no longer go to bed hungry and 30 million children can be saved if rich countries double development aid over the next 10 years, a new U.N.-sponsored report said on Monday.

In a 3,000-word report, some 265 experts came up with long-term projects and quick fixes, such as supplying mosquito bed nets against malaria to creating free school lunch programs - to meet global goals of alleviating poverty and preventing disease that nations promised at a U.N. summit in 2000.

Poor nations were to reorder priorities, such as eliminating school fees and drawing up realistic development plans, and rich nations were to step up funds for specific projects, forgive debts and promote trade. But few have lived up to their commitments.

"The system is not working right now - let's be clear," said Jeffrey Sachs, a Columbia University professor and lead author of the report, commissioned by U.N. Secretary-General Kofi Annan. "It has taken too long to figure out an approach that will work. It's now a question of life and death."

The report, "Investing in Development," was to be presented to Annan on Monday, as well as to the G8 meeting in July and to world leaders in September at the U.N. General Assembly, which is expected to set a global development agenda.

It proposed deadlines for specific projects and asks developing nations to present strategies by 2006 that would increase public investments for health and education and promote the private sector.

Rich and poor countries alike should participate in "quick win" projects, such as mosquito nets or providing retroviral drugs to 3 million AIDS victims by 2005, giving farmers soil nutrients, eliminating school fees and uniforms and providing free schools lunches, among others.

Among industrial nations, only



Children being brought up in one of the shanty towns in Sana'a (Yemen Times photo by Pter Willems)

Denmark, Norway, Sweden, the Netherlands and Luxembourg have spent more than the long-established world target of 0.7 percent of their gross national product. Britain, Belgium, France, Finland and Ireland have made promised to reach the target before 2015.

UNITED STATES LAGGING

The United States with its \$12 trillion economy contributes the least development aid among 22 industrial nations with some 0.15 percent, followed by Italy at 0.17 percent, and Japan at 0.20 percent.

The report says high-income nations should increase development aid from 0.25 percent of their GNP in 2003 to 0.44 percent in 2006 and reach the 0.7 target by 2015.

"We have the world's eyes focused on the tsunami of the Indian Ocean," Sachs said. "But the world continues to overlook the silent tsunamis of deaths from malaria which take every month the num-

ber of people that died in the Asian tragedy."

The Millennium Development Goals, agreed on by all nations in 2000, include halving extreme poverty and hunger for at least 1 billion people living on \$1 a day, reversing the spread of AIDS and malaria and providing basic education by 2015.

Nevertheless, foreign aid continues to be controversial, with a perception in some countries that it would be wasted on useless projects and corruption.

The report says there are anywhere from a dozen to three dozen nations in Africa and Asia that could be put on a fast track for aid immediately.

But for nations like Belarus, Myanmar, North Korea and Zimbabwe, whose political leaders are widely criticized, "there is little case of large scale aid," the report said.

Aid should be channeled through humanitarian groups, who can monitor progress on the ground. "There is no black market for mosquito nets," Sachs said.

Middle-income developing nations, like China, Brazil, Mexico, Malaysia and South Africa, can afford the programs.

But for a poor African nation, the report said everyone needed \$110 a year. About \$10 per person could come from households and \$30 from national budgets.

The remaining \$70, the report says, should come from wealthy nations, whose economies total some \$30 trillion a year. This means doubling development aid over the next decade for most and much more for some, like the United States.

Words of Wisdom



Gentlemen, Yemen does not need more money! It needs a system. Yemen need accountable officials, and it needs people with some decency in the way they work. If the IMP, World Bank and other organizations pump loans into Yemen, where will it go? More importantly, how will it be paid?

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

OUR
OPINIONTourism boom
in 2005?

The Yemeni government had previously declared that the year 2005 would be dedicated to tourism, and plans have started to focus on this very theme.

Some tourism agencies and companies agree with this step and they have already seen some good numbers of tourists coming. Just two weeks ago, more than 1,000 tourists from Italy and other European countries visited Yemen.

The news is good.

However, one cannot forget that announcing a year for tourism is not enough to boost this important sector.

What is needed is a campaign. The travel agencies can do their share of the work by publicizing the different attractions they offer services at. But the government should also do some effort in producing attractive films and advertisements that show what Yemen's fascinating landscapes, ancient sites, and hospitable people.

Furthermore, what triggered me to write about this in this edition is the huge number of people sending emails once in a while asking questions like:

How is Yemen? Do you have tourism attractions? Where can I get information? And so on and so forth.

Our country seems to be a mystery for many around the globe. If there is a reason for that, then it is our inability to convey the true picture about Yemen and its people.

So as we get excited about the potentials that the new year will bring us, let us not forget that no fruits can be yielded without hard work and dedication.

As the press, we have been and will continue to be a source of information about various areas of Yemen. The number of articles that were published in Yemen Times focusing on tourism attractions is quite high even compared to other English language newspapers in the region.

We need to seize the opportunity and enjoy the time Yemen is seen as a peaceful country with few if any incidents happening for weeks and months. Looking at some violent incidents happening in some other countries in the Arabian Peninsula, we feel lucky that so far, things have been steady, at least when it comes to foreigners' safety and security.

The future looks bright in the tourism aspect. Tourism agencies are optimistic.

Let us hope that impressive numbers and greater international publicity for our country would follow this optimism.

This is possible as it happened in the past.

Otherwise Yemen would not have been called Arabia Felix.

The Editor

Several world leaders barely got in

Do elections always
lead to legitimacy?

RALF DAHRENDORF

So Ukraine now has a legitimate government. Or does it? Viktor Yushchenko has been elected with 52% of the popular vote. His opponent received 44%. Observers confirm that infringements of the electoral rules were but minor. Yet questions remain. The defeated candidate, Viktor Yanukovich, contests the result. The country is deeply divided. Will the miners of Donetsk start the next revolution, this time in red against the orange of the protests staged by Yushchenko's supporters against the original election with its clearly illegitimate result? Will there be a secession movement in eastern Ukraine?

Legitimacy is a delicate, yet utterly important feature of stable democratic politics. It is also complicated. Was George W. Bush the legitimately elected President of the United States in his first term, having gained office only after America's Supreme Court ordered an end to the Florida recount and with Bush having secured only a minority of the votes nationwide? Are the presidents of some former Soviet republics who seem to command 90% of the popular vote legitimately elected? Will the planned elections in Iraq be regarded as legitimate internally as well as externally?

It is vital to remember that elections alone do not guarantee legitimacy, even if they are seen to be free and fair. Americans find it hard to understand this, as do others in the lucky democracies of the Anglo-Saxon world. For them, legitimacy simply means that voting and counting votes happens according to undisputed rules. What is

legal, they think, is also legitimate.

For many others in the world, however, at least two other questions remain. First, turnout is crucial: who has voted and who has not. The second question is whether there remains any systematic, potentially violent opposition to the outcome.

The point about George W. Bush's first term was that despite grumblings and continued vocal opposition, the result of the election of 2000 was generally accepted. Or consider Tony Blair's "landslide victory" in 2001, when Labour won 40% of the vote with turnout of 60%. In effect, 25% of the total electorate gave him nearly two-thirds of the seats in the House of Commons. Did anyone doubt the legitimacy of the result? Not in Britain, nor among Britain's partners.

But there are not many countries where that would be true. Most others would - at the very least - demand a coalition government to reflect the existing diversity of views. Legitimacy by election is particularly problematic in countries with what might be called "endemic minorities."

In Canada, for example, it would be risky to overlook the special interests of Quebec. In Ukraine, the divergent interests of the country's west and east have to be recognized if legitimacy is to be established. In Iraq, a technical majority in a wholly legal election is almost meaningless if the position of Sunni Muslims and Kurds is not explicitly recognized. The occupation powers are therefore right to be worried about an election in which massive abstention among Sunnis results in a large Shiite majority.

So legitimacy is more than legality. It rests on what the people concerned

believe to be real. At the very least, there has to be an absence of violent opposition, including the threat of secession.

In Western countries, notably in the US, people tend to assume too much when it comes to bringing democracy - meaning elections in the first instance - to others. In particular, we assume an essentially homogenous electorate, so that even a low turnout does not involve any disadvantage for particular ethnic or cultural groups. We also assume an automatic acceptance of rules that in fact took a long time to become embedded even in the US.

Without legitimacy, there can be no stability in any political system, and without elections - that is, an explicit expression of popular consent to the holders of power - there can be no legitimacy. But while free elections are a necessary condition of legitimacy, they are far from being sufficient to assure it. Constitutional arrangements must guarantee all entrenched groups a place in the countries' political institutions. It is equally imperative to establish the rule of law, exercised by an independent and respected judiciary.

We should remember this as we pursue the elusive objective of democracy in Iraq, so that we are not surprised if the upcoming election fails to generate a legitimate government.

Ralf Dahrendorf, author of numerous acclaimed books and a former European Commissioner from Germany, is a member of the British House of Lords, a former Rector of the London School of Economics, and a former Warden of St. Antony's College, Oxford.

We need to talk

JAMES A SHOCKLEY SR.
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NEW YORK, USA
FOR THE YEMEN TIMES

Regarding your editorial, "Misrepresenting Islam, again.", I must say, I am impressed. I have not recently gone into the pages of the Yemen Times to read your opinions. It is always more of the same, i.e., US equals BAD, everyone else (except the Jews) is GOOD. As an American this unending rhetoric always seems so ridiculous. Why is there never any room for debate? And why does there ever seem to be any concessions made by the editors of the Yemen Times?

It is occasionally perplexing.

However, I today read the above-mentioned column. How refreshing! you are finally moving forward, a positive development.

For any who wish to see, who care to take a little time, research, and find out

just what the US has been up to for a VERY long time now. Please, check the libraries, it is in all the HISTORY books. Large chunks of France and Belgium were rebuilt following the end of World War I with US taxpayer money. Virtually EVERY country in Europe benefited from US taxpayer money at the end of WWII, to the tune of billions of dollars. The same is true of the Philippines, Indonesia, many of the smaller Island nations as well as Japan herself, like Germany, a defeated enemy, rebuilt with U.S. Taxpayer money.

Billions were then spent, untold treasure to guard Western Europe, and hold back the Godless, Communists, a standoff that lasted for 45 years. Now, ALL of Europe is free.

The US intervened when Muslims were being massacred in Yugoslavia, and stopped the killing.

Kuwait, another Muslim nation, freed from Saddam troops in 1991.

Afghanistan, freed from fascism, where Women were executed on soccer

fields, routinely. Its own-independent-elected-Islamic nation. Not perfect, but moving in the right direction.

And now - Iraq, a home for fascists and mass murderers, now a battleground where young Americans and Iraqis are dying every day to help give that nation a chance. The stories we hear in the US from our soldiers are heart rending. We know we are doing the right thing, and perhaps, this sacrifice will help many of the other despotic regimes in the region to see - that freedom is the way. Nothing else will do. What a tragedy it took an event like 9/11 to be the catalyst for this change. But on such events, do the pages of history turn.

All that being said, I commend you for recognizing that the US is in the forefront with other large economic powers, in helping to bring relief to the sad and traumatized countries of that region.

Thank you for recognizing the truth. I pray this trend will continue, and I will come in and read your column, perhaps a bit more, with also a bit more optimism.

A strange dream
by a gloomy person

EMAD ABDO MOQBEL
emadlord@yahoo.com
FOR THE YEMEN TIMES

One day, while I was in a very strange cemetery, everything was serene as if they had been waiting for a hurricane. Lions, snakes and many vultures were staring at me hoping to smash my bones. Darkness was clouding everywhere and thunder was shaking every hole of the cemetery and the house. As I headed for the house, my body started to tremble and my stomach began to squeeze because of the tragic fright I was facing. I started to scream with a loud voice that was echoing the whole place.

Suddenly, I woke up from that nightmare and realized that I was dreaming at home. It was relief after I faced death in front of my eyes. Later, I figured out that the cemetery, house and animals were my obsessions about America and its people since I heard a lot of propaganda about them. Although I was terrified of the

nightmare becoming true, everything changed from the moment I stepped onto U.S. land.

When I arrived at the airport, many officers were smiling to me and they were so friendly that I couldn't believe it. When I reached Emporia, many smiles were emitting from everywhere that I thought I was a celebrity. The image about the U.S and its people changed 90 per cent and I felt very guilty for believing what was said about the U.S, but at the same time I learnt a lesson not to judge by appearance because "the sun is bigger than it looks". People in the U.S are very friendly and they deserve to be respected. This positive change couldn't distract me from missing everything in Yemen.

While I am happy for learning new things in the U.S, I still feel gloomy since I miss the old days in Yemen and miss everybody there. Whenever I touch my friends' gifts, I start to feel sad and sometimes cry. I remember the old days in which my loud laugh was spreading

everywhere at YALI (Yemen America Language Institute), which was my home and the place that I used to work. Sweet moments can never repeat themselves, but they still remind us of the happy memories we have lived. I had many friends who were my colleagues that filled my life with joy and happiness. I used to tease them and they did in return. This change affected me a lot since I don't have friends here like I used to in Yemen. I believe that I can never find friends like those because they are really hard to find.

Living in a new place has its own positive and negative changes that can affect any person deeply. It makes us gain new experiences and understand new cultures, but it can never make us forget our lovely friends at home. I feel that people in the U.S are very friendly and can make the other people feel like at home, still I sadly miss everybody at my home (YALI) and my parents, as well. There is always a question in my mind that asks if my friends still remember me?

COMMON
SENSE

By Hassan Al-Haifi

Bridges to peace
can easily be built

In a world of increasing communications between people all over the world and airwaves do not recognize political boundaries, the observer is inclined to believe that through rising communications between individuals across continental and regional boundaries, the world will eventually find strong grounds for developing peaceful coexistence among nations. History has often showed us that conflict between nations is bred by prejudices and misunderstandings, as well as an inherent evil nature among certain men that they have a right to a greater share of the world's plenty. But thanks to the internet, communications between different people of various ethnic backgrounds, religious affiliations and political persuasions is easily attainable. In addition, when people resort to dialogue and exchange of views and perceptions, people can find the avenues that will circumvent prejudices and misunderstandings and in fact render such preconceived notions as foolish and senseless since all human beings are the creation of One God Al-Mighty to whom in essence all of mankind recognizes as the Supreme possessor of our souls.

No one is ready to state that conflicts between people have come to an end, but there are now many avenues for people to look at all sides of the issues we face and the individual is encouraged to seek out answers to questions that the open-minded should seek answers to before taking sides in any conflict. Of course this does not mean that prejudices are easily overcome by an email or a look at a peace advocacy group's website. Moreover institutionalized references for information on particular situations may not always be the effective sources of information that help us to judge the merits of an argument as the sides of a conflict set them out. Personal interaction between people is now proving to be the best of inciting mutual respect between people. Everyone would not fail to forget that the late President Ronald Regan represented the ultra-right wing attitude towards the Soviet Union and as far as followers of the conservative political persuasion; the Soviets were always to be viewed with the greatest suspicion and mistrust. It is said that when Ronald Regan met with Mikhail Gorbachev, the former head of the Soviet Union, he was willing to compromise on many of his right wing views and to sideline his total mistrust of Soviet leaders in general. This paved the way for several agreements that helped to end the Cold War that has kept the world under an ominous aura of nuclear destruction and perpetual conflict between countries that found interest in aligning with this bloc or that bloc to advance their interests or provide the tools for armed conflict.

When this observer was a student at an American university in, one of the greatest reminiscences that come to mind is the active participation in promoting international cooperation among the different nationalities that made up the international student community at the campus. Through the international student's organization a large number of students found different activities in which not only did they get together and exchanged views, but worked to make such activities symbolic achievements of international cooperation. These included social gatherings (parties), seminars, bringing speakers of different views together to debate international issues and a crowning international festival that was considered the best cultural event of the university for the year. It was the most profitable and was the only event that generated the revenues that provided the International Student's Organization with the only budget surplus amongst all the cultural and student activity organizations. The university did not have to give the ISO any subsidies. Quite often departing students left with tears in their eyes for the friends they have come to make at the ISO, some of whom may be viewed as enemies, had they not been brought together by this dynamic organization. A cardinal rule in the ISO was any conflicts at home that governed the relationships between the countries of origin of students were not to be "argued" out based on the assumption that all problems that stood in the way are solvable. If they were discussed it was with a view to determining what are the options for coming out of the stalemates that have kept the conflicts carry on sometimes for centuries. The greatest conclusion most of the students came out with was that most of the reasons for conflict are motivated by erroneous perceptions of "the other side" by the disputants, and the years of misleading propaganda that has been forced upon the people of both sides, by selfish politicians, who exploited unwarranted animosities and age old misunderstandings to further their own political ambitions. On the other hand, the ISO adopted a philosophy that war should never be a mechanism for settling disputes, because there are really no winners in wars, and even the winning side is bound to take up a lot of agony and wasteful loss of lives and resources that all could have been used to better the lives of the people of both sides in a conflict.

In our present world, any country that seeks to dictate its political concepts and ideas upon the rest of the world, will come to find that even amongst its own people there are people, who believe that no nation should be granted such right and that even these ideas and philosophies may not be the ultimate option for all the people of the world to fall under. In the latest misadventure in Iraq, literally millions of Americans were openly against what they perceived as the arrogant attitude pursued by the George W. Bush Administration and openly sought to convince the international community that their government is not serving the interests of the United States nor is it representing the values upon which America was founded. This is significant in that it shows that people are willing to go as far as necessary in defending peaceful measures to settle matters of dispute between nations, rather than to take comfort in the amount of power amassed by any nation or side. Because of this greater inclination to make maximum use of the available lines of communications, people who may not agree with what certain governments pursue, will find that there are literally thousands of active opponents within the country of such government, to such policies. Thus animosities become diluted and do not take on a nation against nation manifestation. Increasing communications between people should be encouraged and one is inclined to believe this will provide a wide gateway to international cohesion and understanding.



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Remembering Zhao Ziyang

BY BAO TONG

The conditions under which Zhao Ziyang lived at the time of his death, in utter isolation from Chinese society due to an illegally imposed 16-year house arrest, shames both Chinese justice and the Chinese Communist Party (CCP).

Zhao's persecution was the persecution of a leader who dedicated himself for over a decade to groundbreaking efforts that became the foundations of China's economic reform. In the late 1970's, Chinese peasants had long since lost their rights to own their land, owing to collectivization and the establishment of the People's Commune. It is a right they have never regained. Zhao, however, was the first to advocate giving autonomy back to the peasants and so initiated the first pilot tests to abolish the People's Commune.

Chinese industry had been transformed into subsidiaries of government through nationalization and central planning. Zhao was the first to propose "expanded autonomy for Chinese enterprises" and "restoration of a healthy relationship between government and industry." Expanded autonomy for enterprises and the peasantry were critical first steps whose success led eventually to full-blown economic reform.

These were among the many incremental victories Zhao won to help China's people break out of the suffocating stagnation of Maoist socialism. As China's Premier, Zhao implemented ten years of

economic reforms that brought steady progress in which the people, especially the peasantry, enjoyed tangible improvements.

But Zhao was also the only CCP leader to propose a political reform package to tackle China's system of one-party rule. The Party's unchallenged monopoly on political power systematically ensured that every mistake it made – such as the dreadful decade of the Cultural Revolution – turned into a prolonged nationwide crisis.

For genuine and long-term stability, Zhao proposed reforms that ultimately aimed at the legalization and systemization of democracy. He wished to establish the kind of democratic politics that could support and nurture a healthy market economy. Although the short-term practical objectives of Zhao's political reforms were limited by the circumstances in which they were proposed, the measures all aimed at containing Communist Party power and represented a concrete step toward returning, peacefully, power to China's people. Zhao's package – a sharp break with Mao's totalitarianism – was approved by the 13th Party Congress, officially the highest authority within the CCP.

During his twenty months as CCP General Secretary, Zhao created a culture in which the Politburo refrained from interfering in the courts, and he stopped its attempts to control literature and the arts. Zhao abolished the policy of enterprises being run by Party organizations

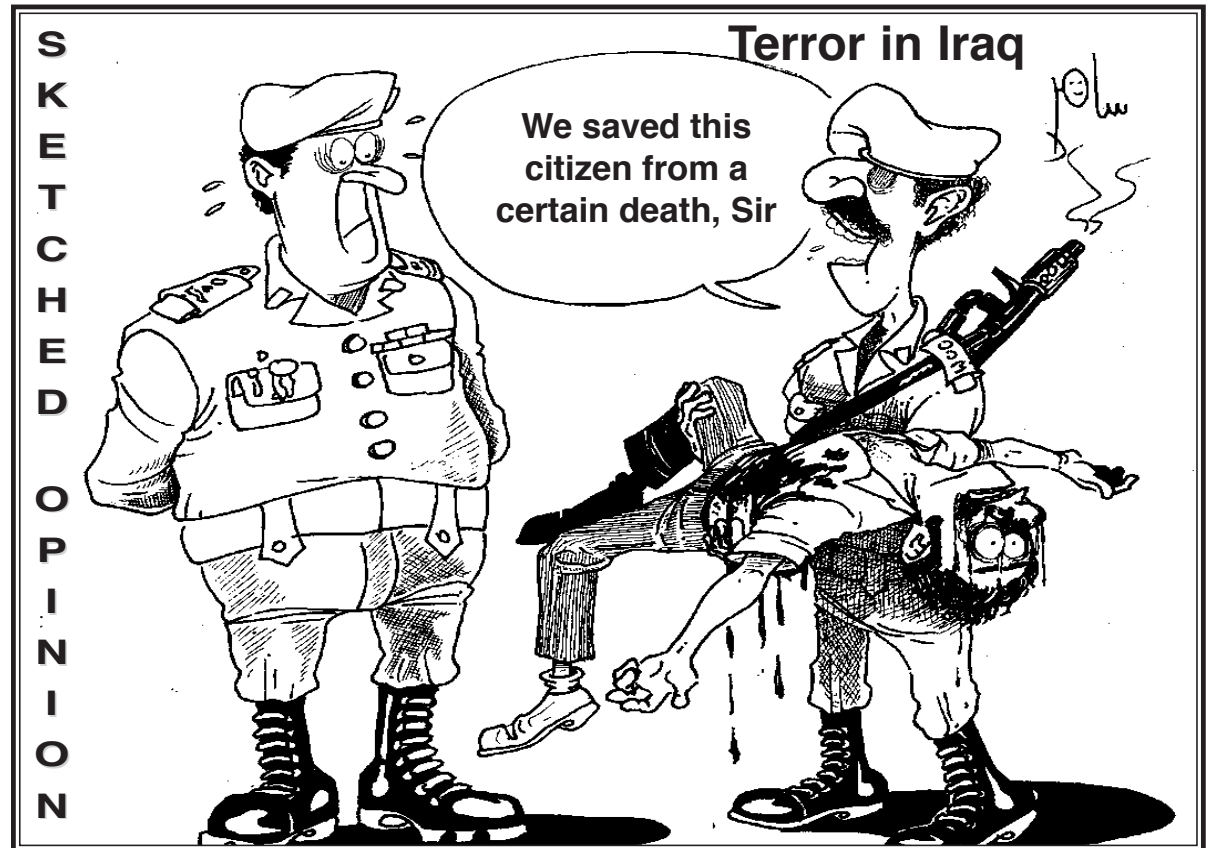
and the system by which *fa ren* ("legal representatives") were the core of enterprises.

Unfortunately, Zhao's political reforms were terminated upon his fall from power. The dreadful result was the indiscriminate denial of civil rights and the principles of democracy, and the rise of what today's leaders call "socialism with Chinese characteristics" – a bitter euphemism for unchecked Party and government power entwined with commercial interests.

Zhao's fate is also a chilling reminder of other injustices that are on the consciences of those now in power. The only reason for Zhao's continued ill treatment was his opposition to the violent repression of the Tiananmen Square protest in 1989. It should have been his decision to make as General Secretary, but things were not as they should have been.

It should be remembered that former General Secretary Hu Yaobang, who had been forced to step down two years earlier by Deng Xiaoping because of his liberal stance, died in April 1989, triggering spontaneous and peaceful student demonstrations in Beijing, which spread across the country. Half a million college students in Beijing alone were involved in this movement.

It lasted 50 days and was heartily supported by Beijing residents and people all around the country, from all walks of life. Zhao pointed out to the Politburo that the sentiments expressed by the students and residents in their commemoration of Hu, in their protests against corruption, and



their desire for democracy were really the same sentiments that they themselves held. He believed that it should be possible to resolve the student protests and respect the principles of democracy and the rule of law.

Under Zhao's direction, the Politburo and its Standing Committee called for dialogue with the students. This hopeful direction changed completely, however, when Deng Xiaoping revealed his desire for a violent crackdown.

In the end, it came down to a fight among five members of the Politburo Standing Committee: Li Peng and Yao Yiling sought to deploy the military. Zhao opposed this. Qiao Shi and Hu Qili ini-

tially sided with Zhao, but then withdrew their support and, instead, asked Deng Xiaoping to make the final decision.

With deep divisions evident, Deng chose to bypass all existing institutions, the Party's Politburo, the Central Committee, and the National People's Congress and its Standing Committee. Without further discussion, Deng mobilized 500,000 troops to enter Beijing to crack down on the unarmed students and civilians. The Tiananmen Square Massacre of 1989 was a tragedy for China, and another tragedy for the twentieth century. Sixteen years have passed, but the pain remains, buried in the hearts and minds of the people.

In the years that have passed, China's leaders were responsible not only for Zhao's unlawful house arrest but also for a systematic effort to erase his name from history. But their attempts to conceal the truth about the past only reveal their weakness and their shamelessness. For one thing they cannot change: Zhao Ziyang remains with us, in the Chinese people's ongoing struggle for rights and democracy.

Bao Tong, former Director of the Office of Political Reform of the CCP Central Committee, was Secretary to Zhao Ziyang, Premier of the State Council, from 1980 to 1985.

TV has let us down

Black bears and television junkies

BY MIHALY CSIKSZENTMIHALYI

This summer, friends who live a few kilometers from us in rural Montana in the western US had to interrupt their dinner when a black bear suddenly came out of the trees. They went indoors to watch as it came up to the picnic table, licked the dishes clean, and then drank two cans of beer.

Over the following days, the bear turned over the garbage cans of two neighbors and terrorized children and pets. Forest Service rangers set up a cage and put some bacon inside, soon catching and transporting the bear 30 kilometers into the wilderness. The bear was tagged before it was released, to show that it had been causing trouble. "Unfortunately," said the ranger, "that bear may be back here even before our truck returns. Once they develop a taste for bacon and beer, you can't keep them away." If a tagged bear is caught two or more times causing disruption, the rangers have orders to shoot it.

It is easy to feel sorry for an animal that discovers tasty food and can't resist getting more the easy way. The bear has no idea that its days are numbered unless it remains in the forest and hunts in the traditional way for its meals. But that bear was following the wisdom natural selection had programmed in its genes: food that is high in proteins and sugars is good for you, and the less energy you expend getting it, the better.

That much the bear knows well. It had no chance to learn – and probably never will – that picnic tables and garbage cans are defended by forest rangers with orders to kill. How much luckier we humans are, knowing what is good and bad for us. We cannot be trapped so easily by things that taste good but will cause our downfall.

But, in reality, most of us are no different from that bear. Most

people are aware that high-fat diets, too much alcohol, smoking, promiscuous sex, and recreational drugs, while pleasant, can ruin one's health. Yet we can't resist the lure of the garbage can and its delights. But at least we have had clear warnings about the dangers of such habits, so people who want to use such knowledge can avoid being trapped.

There are other potentially harmful pleasures in the environment that are less known, but not less destructive than those that are. One of the most seductive of these pleasures – and thus one of the most dangerous – is television.

Television is attractive to the architecture of the human nervous system: our brains are built to absorb information and follow rapid changes in the sensory field. TV provides these in easily digestible, sumptuously prepared morsels.

Constant change and the appearance of excitement absorb viewers' attention. The Sistine Chapel cannot compare with it – most children will become bored after ten minutes by the frescoes of Michelangelo, but will watch a detergent commercial with riveted interest.

All of this applies just to the way the medium works, without taking content into consideration. The content in turn reinforces the seductive qualities of the medium by offering generous helpings of sex, violence, easy comfort, and other material that we are genetically prepared to respond to, but that in large doses detract from the ability to lead productive and serene lives.

Indeed, by now the evidence that television watching is a dangerous habit has grown to such proportions that it is a wonder that stronger warnings and effective prevention have not been adopted. Among the many findings is that watching too much television induces passivity, both at the level of neural

functioning and of behavior and that it interferes with learning and reduces political and civic participation. It also encourages aggressive behavior in children and produces negative moods such as sadness and loneliness. Nor is there any evidence of benefits to counterbalance these negative effects.

When television was in its infancy, many thinkers and not surprisingly, television producers – painted the future of the medium in glowing terms: TV would keep us informed, cultured, and entertained; it would strengthen family life and civic virtues.

None of this happened. Even the informational value of television turned out to be a dream: individuals and communities that watch TV often know much less about what is happening in the world than comparable audiences that do not.

The only clearly positive effect of TV watching is that people feel relaxed while doing it, and many people are willing to exchange that relaxation for the more enjoyable and useful things they might be doing instead. Like the bear that learned to fill his stomach comfortably, they feel satisfied to be entertained without having to exert themselves.

Of course, television can be nice when consumed in small doses and with discernment. Like drinking a glass or two of wine, it helps digestion and lightens the mind. But those who spend hours watching it each evening, with less and less control over their attention, and deriving progressively less enjoyment from what they watch, risk becoming as besotted as an alcoholic who only feels alive when he blots out reality. No bear, if it knew what we do, would fall into that trap.

Mihaly Csikszentmihalyi is Professor of Psychology, Claremont Graduate University, California.

Exiting international justice

World criminal court fails expectations

BY RUTI TEITEL

I recently took part in a conference in Belgrade entitled "Dealing with the Past in ex-Yugoslavia." Although the rest of postcommunist Europe confronted such questions a decade ago, the Balkan wars of the 1990's left both perpetrators and victims stuck in a time warp of justice delayed.

As the conference's participants made their way into Belgrade's Hyatt Hotel, an angry band of mostly older protesters bearing posters that read, "Free Milosevic" greeted them. In a flurry of media and security, they confronted Carla Del Ponte, chief prosecutor at the International Criminal Tribunal for former Yugoslavia (ICTY) in The Hague. Del Ponte is pressing Serbia's government to cooperate in the still unresolved cases of Radovan Karadzic and Ratko Mladic, who ordered, implemented, and oversaw the massacre of 7,000 Muslim men and boys at Srebrenica in 1995.

The protesters are not unrepresentative of Serb opinion. Almost a decade after the start of the ICTY's work, debate still rages over responsibility for war crimes, with little agreement on even the most basic facts of the conflicts in Bosnia, Croatia, and Kosovo. Serbian Prime Minister (then President) Vojislav Kostunica's attempt in 2001 to set up a truth commission was doomed from the outset by allegations of bias, and was disbanded within a year.

The ICTY is also in trouble. To be sure, Milosevic is on trial in The Hague for war crimes, crimes against humanity, and genocide. But comparisons to the post-WWII Nuremberg tribunal have worn thin: as the proceedings drag on, observers wonder why it has taken so long to establish criminal liability. After all, at Nuremberg, the top rung of the Third Reich was tried and convicted within months.

By contrast, Milosevic has taken advantage of the ICTY's procedures to delay his trial, while challenging its jurisdiction and legitimacy. This

plays well back home, where indicted war criminals are still touted as war heroes. Indeed, Serbia's last presidential election became something of a referendum on Milosevic – and hence on Serbia's relations with the West and the wider world. The pro-Milosevic candidate, Tomislav Nikolic, lost, but he received 46% of the vote.

Despite his campaign promises, Serbia's President Boris Tadic has so far failed to cooperate with the ICTY by assisting in turning over Mladic (Karadzic is probably not in Serbia), who would surely testify against Milosevic. One understands his trepidation: the first post-Milosevic prime minister, Zoran Djindjic, cooperated with the tribunal, and paid for it with his life.

Such foot-dragging exposes the ICTY's fundamental weakness: unlike the Nuremberg tribunal, the international community convened it during, not after, a war. Without full control of either the evidence or the accused, the ICTY lacked from the outset the legitimacy and authority of "victors' justice."

This continues to impede the case against Milosevic, raising questions about whether there is sufficient proof directly linking him to the policy of genocidal ethnic cleansing, although this is likely to be less problematic since the charges against him turn not on "command responsibility," but instead on the ICTY's charter principles of individual responsibility. These implicitly authorize prosecution of those responsible for a "joint criminal enterprise," thus linking liability for criminal behavior such as deportations and removals to other foreseeable atrocities.

But time is running out. The ICTY must wrap up new indictments this year, and disband by 2008. It enters this end game facing diminished resources and waning political will within the international community.

What will be the Tribunal's legacy? From the start, the ICTY's aims were ambitious, having been launched under the UN Security Council's peacemaking powers. If this meant that the Tribunal was

intended to deter further violence, then it failed, at least in the short run. After all, atrocities – including the Srebrenica massacre – continued after the ICTY began operating.

What about ethnic reconciliation? The ICTY's first chief prosecutor, Richard Goldstone, called for condemnation of ethnic persecution in order to enable all sides to transcend identity politics and move towards a more liberal political order. Individual accountability would somehow break the chain of ethnic identity and communal vengeance.

But fostering ethnic reconciliation is a tall order for any court, and the ICTY hasn't yet delivered. A liberal political order implies a rule of law that recognizes precedents and analogical thinking. But many Serbs hold on to their sense of historical exceptionalism and unique suffering. Indeed, the coincidence of the NATO bombing in 1999 with the indictment of Milosevic helped convert both events into "attacks on the Serbian people."

Historical denial is no less evident in Croatia, where the polarities of blame and suffering have simply been reversed. There, too, the ICTY will not be missed.

So the talk nowadays is of the right "exit strategy" from international justice. When the ICTY closes its doors, where should its unfinished cases go? Del Ponte has called for "new partnerships for justice." That sounds fine, but what, realistically, are the choices? Can the ICTY's investigations and indictments really be turned over to national courts? So far, the picture is not promising: the few domestic trials in the region continue to reflect the fractious politics and pervasive ethnic bias that surround them.

As in many parts of the world, it may be several generations before the region's crimes can be worked through. The ICTY's responsibility should be to forge and disseminate a record that limits the possibility of historical denial.

Ruti Teitel is Professor of Comparative Law at New York Law School.

Staggering numbers in the world's largest sporting event

Seats for 3.2 million fans available for 2006 World Cup

Selling the tickets for the 2006 FIFA World Cup is "probably our most difficult challenge of all," declared Organising Committee (OC) President Franz Beckenbauer. "If I reflect on the number of times I've been personally asked for tickets, we must assume demand will massively exceed the supply we have available."

Capacities
The overall capacity for the 64 matches at the 2006 FIFA World Cup at the 12 stadiums in Germany amounts to some 3.2 million seats. In a FIFA World Cup first, all the seats are covered. However, the total of tickets available for sale is lower after subtracting quotas for VIP guests and in particular for the world's media. At group matches, journalists are allocated 600 seats with a further 150 boxes for TV and radio commentators, occupying the same space as 3,000 regular seats. Some 2,000 reporters' desks and 200 TV and radio commentary boxes will be laid out for the FIFA World Cup Final, reducing the regular seat capacity by 7,500.

Some seats cannot be offered for sale due to views restricted by external factors such as



extra camera positions, for example. The exact total of available match tickets will be finalized at a later stage.

Quotas
The FIFA World Cup is a global event. Ticket sales procedures must adhere to applicable FIFA guidelines. Alongside public ticket sales, which are required to follow the same rules and timings around the world, a number of quotas must be set aside to fulfill regulatory and contractual obligations. Tickets are held back not only for the associations contesting the 2006 finals but also for the associations which fail to qualify. The FIFA family comprises 205 associations.

Blocks of tickets are also set aside for the Official Partners, Official Suppliers and the TV partners, whose license fees make up a substantial proportion of the tournament budget. It should be borne in mind that many of these tickets are then used in promotional activity and prize competitions, so that a substantial number of tickets does return to the ordinary fans.

The Commercial Hospitality programme features a fixed number of hospitality packages, including executive boxes and business seats but also category 1 match tickets.

The packages are on sale to everyone and not just business customers. These tickets are exclusively available from FIFA appointed agent iSE.

The German football family
Quotas will be set aside for regional associations and clubs, the first and second division clubs, the German Football League (DFL), the Host Cities, fan projects and other fan organisations, albeit in substantially smaller amounts than for Germany international matches.

More information will be announced at the 24 January news conference.

Public ticket sales
The first phase of official sales begins on 1 February 2005 exclusively at www.FIFAWorldCup.com. An important point to note is that the precise date of ordering within the first sales phase is immaterial. Applications will not be processed chronologically, but rather via a lottery at the end of the first phase.

The OC has issued an urgent general warning regarding unauthorised offers of tickets. "Our goal is to protect fans from being misled by dubious offers. All we can do is urgently warn fans off freeloaders, the majority operating on the internet. Anyone who falls for these offers runs the risk of losing a lot of money and failing to gain admission to the stadiums," commented OC senior vice-president Horst R. Schmidt.

www.FIFAWorldCup.com is the official internet platform for ticket sales. The 2006 FIFA World Cup OC established the 2006 FIFA World Cup Ticketing Center to handle all aspects of ticket sales.

Pricing/budget
Match ticket prices were announced in December 2003, ranging from Euro 35 for cat-

egory 4 seats at the 47 group matches to Euro 600, the most expensive category 1 ticket for the Final. The prices include all handling fees and taxes together with spectator insurance. A delivery charge will be applied separately. The Organising Committee expects revenues of approximately Euro 200 million from ticket sales, of which 15 percent will be redistributed to the 12 Host Cities. "Our calculations are based on selling 90 percent of the tickets, although obviously we're hoping for 100 percent," OC vice-president responsible for finance Dr Theo Zwanziger commented.

Electronic admission control
The 2006 FIFA World Cup OC is introducing a technological innovation related to stadium access control. In another first for the FIFA World Cup, admission to all matches in every stadium will be electronically controlled at turnstiles located at the entrance areas. The system is based on microchip technology built into each one of the 3.2 million tickets.

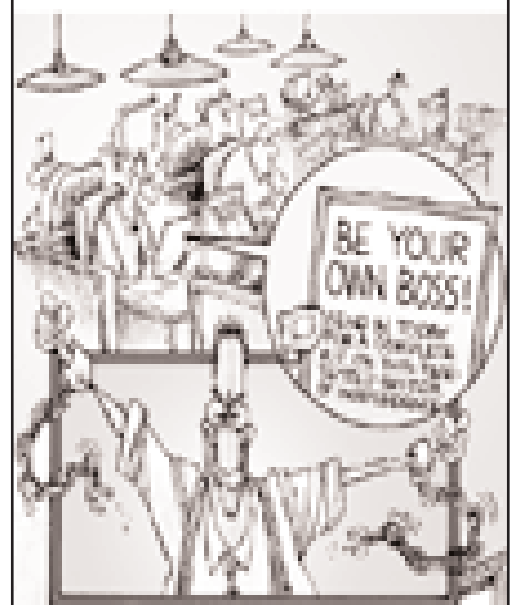
The ticket incorporates a wafer-thin chip which can be read from a distance of around 10 centimetres at the entrance turnstile. Tickets will be printed bearing the name of the purchaser.

The chip technology means 2006 FIFA World Cup tickets offer a number of advantages as a personal and fundamentally non-transferable document.

1. Vastly improved customer service both in terms of general security and during admission to the stadium, as every ticket is clearly personalised with a name and is therefore unique.

2. A high-value investment, as the electronic admission system will remain installed at the stadiums after the tournament, allowing the stadium authorities to benefit for years to come.

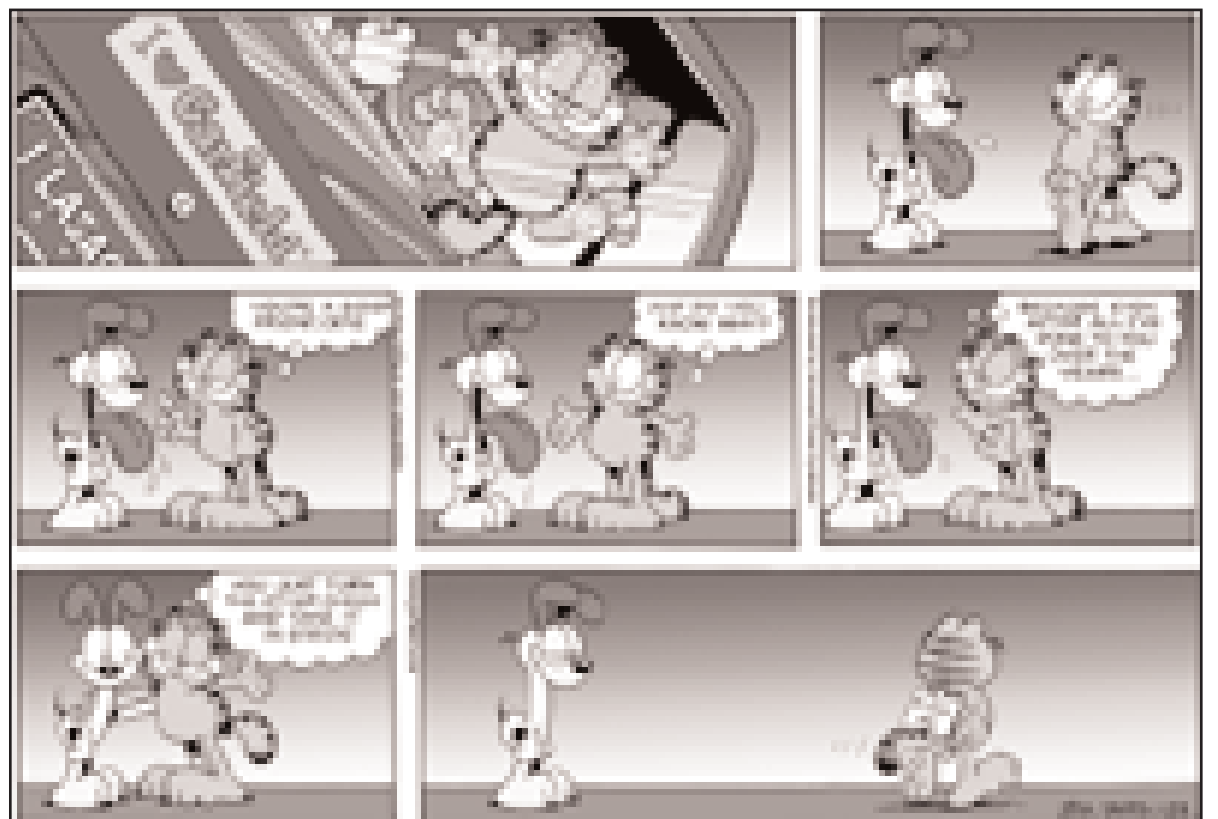
Source: fifa.com



THE LAST WORD IN ASTROLOGY

BY Eugenia

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| <p>Aries (Mar 21 - Apr 19) This is not the time to make waves with people who can affect your future. Do whatever you have to do and get on with it. Being accommodating can lead to getting what you want.</p> | <p>Cancer (Jun 21 - Jul 22) Partnerships may have a different spin to them today. Observe what others do and you will be much more inclined to make the right choice. Help will be offered if you need it.</p> | <p>Libra (Sept 23 - Oct 22) Take the route you believe is most likely to help you avoid conflict. Something may be going on behind your back. Rely on yourself and keep an eye on everyone else.</p> | <p>Capricorn (Dec 22 - Jan 19) Go after what you want. Love and romance are in a high cycle. The more you do to please someone you care about, the more you will get in return. Travel will lead to knowledge.</p> |
| <p>Taurus (Apr 20 - May 20) You can make some very crucial moves today that will enable you to accomplish something really important to you. Forget about what has happened and focus on what you can do.</p> | <p>Leo (Jul 23 - Aug 22) You can make a change that will equate to making more money or giving you more of a positive challenge. You will be able to make personal improvements as well as nurture your love life.</p> | <p>Sagittarius (Nov 22 - Dec 21) Form alliances with anyone who can contribute to your future. Consider changing your direction or trying something new. Use your creative attributes in order to get ahead.</p> | <p>Aquarius (Jan 20 - Feb 18) A little time spent sorting through your belongings, having a garage sale or putting a little effort into your home will pay off. You'll feel better about your life and your future.</p> |
| <p>Gemini (May 21 - Jun 20) You may want to take note of what others are telling you today. Not listening will result in making a mistake that you can't alter. Don't get angry; just be careful how you handle things.</p> | <p>Virgo (Aug 23 - Sep 22) Not a good day to let your heart rule your head. You will be set off by comments or criticism. Keep in mind that sometimes an outsider can see your situation more clearly than you can.</p> | <p>Scorpio (Oct 23 - Nov 21) Don't blow it by being too pushy or telling everyone what you think. Aggressive action will lead to trouble. Put your energy into something concrete that will bring good results.</p> | <p>Pisces (Feb 19-Mar 20) Keep a close eye on what everyone else is up to. Someone may try to set you up or bring you down. Do your best, but don't let anyone take you for granted. Change may be inevitable.</p> |



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A museum for mummies to attract tourists to Yemen

By MAHYOUB AL-KAMALI
YEMEN TIMES STAFF

In context of its efforts for increasing its tourist revenues, Yemeni State Authority of Antiquities and Museums is preparing to build a first museum for mummies expected to be finished and open in 2006.

Many mummies had been discovered in Yemen whose history date back to thousand of years. There are at present seven mummies kept in glass boxes in Sana'a University discovered in 1983 in the area of Jurf Muslih in Shibam Al-Ghiras, the city of Mahweet by a team from the Sana'a University.

Last year a Yemeni farmer found, while he was digging and carrying stones in a cave, a mummy for a child kept inside a tightly closed dry piece of leather. The mummy's age was estimated at three thousand years and beside that mummy, there had been found some historical artefacts and inscriptions written in Musnad alphabets. Researchers expect the discovery of more mummies in Hadramout, Mareb and other historical regions.

After studying and testing the discovered bodies in specialised laboratories in the United States, it had become certain that they date back to around 300 and 400 years before Christ. Some mummies were found still bearing head hair, faces and feet and were covered with skin and bearing bracelets, leather shoes and waist belts, some of them were kept inside a leather bag.



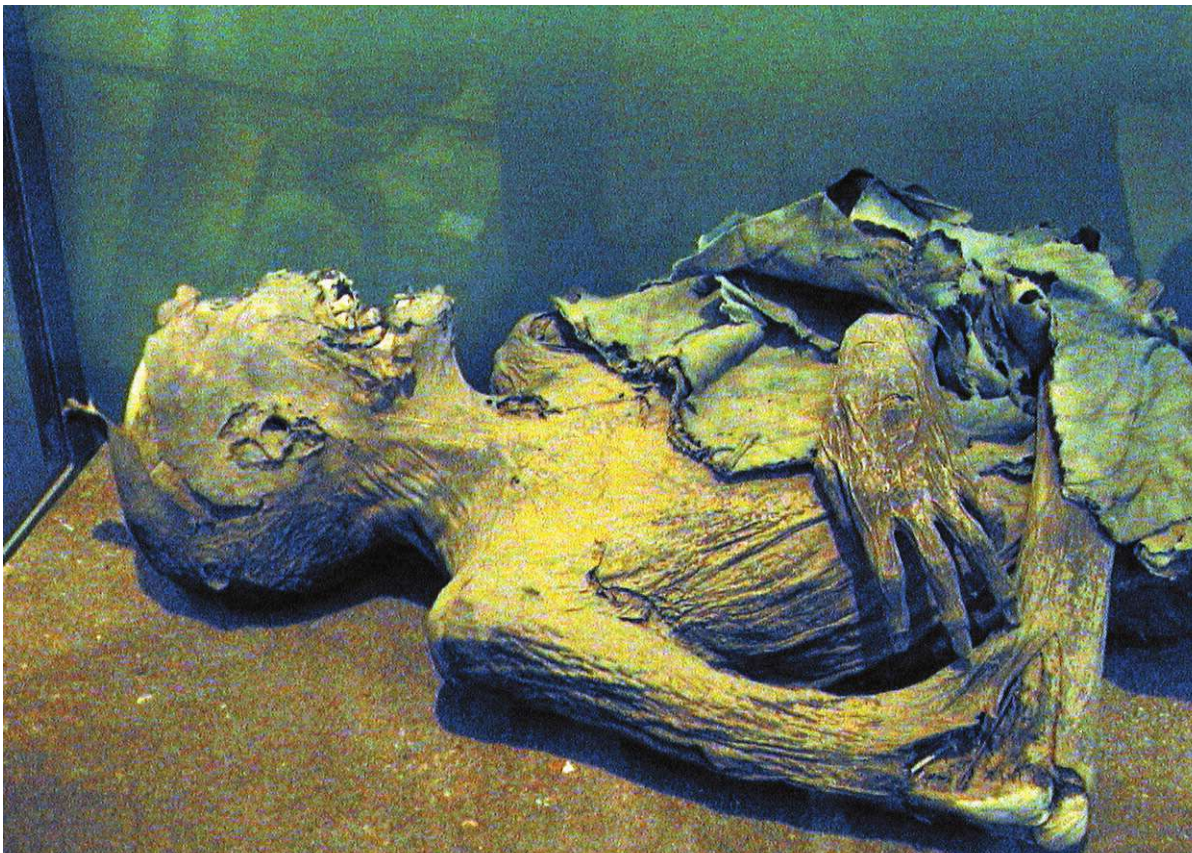
The mummy museum to be established in Sana'a will display remains of many mummies that date back to more than 2,000 years. It is expected that the mummies would look similar to the one shown here, which is 2,300 years old and belongs to a two-year-old girl on display at the Templo Mayor museum in Mexico.

to absorb liquids in a manner higher than the ability of sawdust the Egyptians had used for the same purpose.

The vine leaves and a kind of tar, the Yemenis call "Al-Muma'a", resembling the tar. The specialists think it is an organic material formed from animal or plant remains and changed into liquid by the force of time and factors of pressure exerted on it by the earth's upper layers. Mummification in Yemen was also

millennium. Researchers found that Egyptian embalming method was done in an accurate way, depending on the idea that Egyptian mummies existed earlier than the Yemeni mummies. They also rule out that the idea of embalming transferred from Egypt to Yemen. Researches indicate that Yemen is the second country in the world, after Egypt, where mummies have been discovered embalmed for the purpose of preserving the corpse in its

according to a scientific way and in a manner preserving this national wealth that records a significant stage of the history of the Yemeni civilisation.



Another 2,000+ year old mummy. Ancient Yemenis mummified their dead to preserve corpses.

Despite the fact that most of the mummies were exposed to misuse, studies conducted on them confirmed that the Yemenis had displayed great interest in taking all possible measures for preserving the body through wrapping it with various kinds of leather and cloth. There were then more than one type of mummification to be compatible with various classes. In the process of mummification, various kinds of plants were used such as the "Ra'a" plant, this kind of plants is well-known in Yemen and found here in abundance. Yemenis use it as disinfectant of bruises and for stopping bleeding. Experiments conducted on it revealed its ability

characterised by the use of leather instead of flax, which the Yemenis used infrequently but the Egyptians used it much more.

Researchers consider this discovery as strong evidence that the ancient Yemenis had known mummification and succeeded in practicing it before Islam, pointing out that that proves the discovered Yemeni mummies date back to periods and dates following those of the Egyptian mummies. Laboratory scientific analyses conducted on the mummies of Yemen confirmed that their date is back to 400 years before Christ while the Egyptian mummies are dated to the third and second millennia and beginning of the first

original shape.

On his part, Dr Yousuf Mohammed Abdullah, the researcher and former head of the State Authority of Antiquities and Museums believes that mummification has greatly connected to Egypt and the ancient Egyptian civilisation, but the discovery of mummies in Yemen has affirmed that the Yemenis have also known embalming and preservation of their corpses in a method close to that of the Egyptians.

The State Authority of Antiquities and Museums in Yemen is at present working on studying the areas where the discoveries were found and excavating for mummies

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