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Yemen welcomes the Syrian move

Syria vows complete and swift Lebanon pullout

By YEMEN TIMES & REUTERS

Sana'a, 6 March- Yemen's foreign minister Dr. Abu Bakr al-Qirbi has given Yemen Times a statement on the Yemeni stance regarding the Syrian president Bashar al-Assad speech on the pullout of Syrian forces from Lebanon.

Dr. al-Qirbi has said the Yemeni stance concerning the speech of president Bashar al-Assad of the Arab Republic of Syria on Saturday is welcoming all that was mentioned in it, particularly pertaining to the commitment to Taif Agreement and the United Nations Security Council Resolution 1559.

The Yemeni foreign minister has said, "We bless these solutions to rid Lebanon and Syria of conspiracies and intrigues machinated against them."

Syria vowed a complete and swift two-phased withdrawal of its troops from Lebanon but President Bashar al-Assad said on Saturday Damascus would still play a role in the tiny neighbour it has dominated for 30 years.

Lebanese greeted Assad's announcement with screams of delight in central Beirut, while opposition figures in Lebanon and European leaders cautiously described the move as positive.

But Washington, which says Syrian "support for terrorism" impedes Middle East peace, dismissed the pullout plan as inadequate and reiterated its call for a complete and immediate withdrawal of Syrian forces from Lebanon.

After mounting international pressure and faced with daily protests inside Lebanon to end its security presence there, Assad told parliament Syrian troops would initially pull back to the Bekaa Valley in eastern Lebanon and then to the border area.

"By this measure Syria would have fulfilled its commitment towards the Taif Accord and implemented (U.N. Security Council) Resolution 1559," he said.

The Taif Accord ended Lebanon's 1975-1990 civil war and, among other points, stipulated the withdrawal of



Anti-Syria Lebanese opposition protesters celebrate in Beirut March 5. Thousands of protesters, waving Lebanese flags, erupted in joy in central Beirut when Syrian President Bashar al-Assad announced on Saturday a gradual Syrian troop pull back from Lebanon. Inset: Syrian President addresses parliament in Damascus March 5. Assad announced on Saturday that Syrian troops would start a gradual withdrawal from Lebanon. REUTERS

Syrian troops from most of the country within two years. Resolution 1559, adopted last September by the U.N. Security Council at the initiative of the United States and France, called for foreign troops to quit Lebanon completely.

Elaborating on Assad's announcement, Syrian cabinet minister Buthaina Shaaban said her country's troops would withdraw to the Syrian side of the border.

"The Syrian army wants to pull out quickly ... as soon as possible logistically," Shaaban told Lebanon's LBC television. "The political decision has been taken for a complete withdrawal."

She said a meeting between the two countries' leaders on Monday would agree on the details, including the timing.

Assad said Syria, which first deployed troops in Lebanon in 1976, would not relinquish its role in the country.

"Syria's withdrawal from Lebanon does not mean the absence of Syria's role (in Lebanon)," Assad said. "Syria's

strength and its role in Lebanon is not dependent on the presence of its forces in Lebanon."

"Withdrawal does not damage Syrian interests. On the contrary it fosters Syrian interests ... That is why we began withdrawing five years ago and have withdrawn 63 percent of the forces," Assad added.

Mixed reaction

Syrian troops have been in Lebanon since intervening in its civil war in the 1970s, and currently has about 14,000 troops there, down from 40,000.

It has carried out five redeployments since 2000, pulling some forces to the Bekaa and some back to Syria, but has maintained forces in and around Beirut and in northern Lebanon.

Damascus has viewed Lebanon as a strategic asset and key economic outlet for decades. Nationalists in Damascus have traditionally seen Lebanon as a rightful part of Syria sliced off by French-British colonial machinations.

But Syria has come under growing Lebanese, Arab and international pressure to quit Lebanon since the assassination of former Lebanese Prime Minister Rafik al-Hariri last month. Many have pointed the finger at Syria, which denies any role.

Lebanon's main opposition leader Walid Jumblatt said Assad's speech was a "positive start ... Our hands are extended with the insistence on a timetable for the withdrawal".

Christian opposition figure, former President Amin Gemayel, with caution, "What is dangerous is this deployment on the borders. We have information that the Syrian army will stay in the mountain range within the Lebanese border," Gemayel said.

The United States, Syria's most vocal critic, said Assad's pledge to pull back had not gone far enough.

"We mean complete withdrawal — no half-hearted measures," said White House spokeswoman Erin Healy, repeating the phrase State Department spokeswoman Darla Jordan had used earlier.

Russia, Britain and the European Union expressed satisfaction with Assad's announcement, saying it was a first step towards a full withdrawal.

A spokesman for U.N. Secretary-General Kofi Annan said he had asked his special envoy, Terje Roed-Larsen, to travel to Beirut and Damascus this week to discuss the "full, complete and immediate implementation of Security Council Resolution 1559".

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Status of Yemeni Women Reviewed at the UN

By NADIA AL-SAKKAF
 YEMEN TIMES STAFF

With the objective of reviewing and appraising of the Beijing Declaration and Platform of Action and appraisal of women's status in 2005 the 49th session of the commission on status of women (28th Feb-11 March) is taking place currently. This session comes in line with the agreement in the Political Declaration adopted in by the United Nations General Assembly at its twenty-third special session in June 2000, where the member states agreed to "assess regularly further implementation of the Beijing Platform for Action with a view to bringing together all parties



involved in 2005 to assess progress and consider new initiatives, as appropriate, ten years after the adoption of the Beijing Platform for Action". The Commission on the Status of Women wrapped up yesterday 3rd of March, the first of two weeks of a review of progress towards gender equality with the consensus adoption of a declaration, by which governments emphasized that the full implementation of the Beijing agenda for women was essential for achieving the internationally agreed development goals, including those of the Millennium Declaration.

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Organized campaign against corrupt judiciary in Yemen

By MOHAMMED BINSALLAM
 YEMEN TIMES STAFF

Sana'a, 6 March- This week has witnessed heated escalations by members of professional unions, political parties and mass organizations in response to aggressive acts against journalists last Tuesday. In an attempt to defend their rights, lawyers and journalists continue to discuss the latest developments in this issue. On their part, parties of the opposition JMP have issued a statement denouncing the aggression against lawyers and journalists last Tuesday during a court session concerning the trial of Mr. Abdul-Karim al-Khaiwani, Editor-in-Chief of al-Shura Weekly, at the Appeals Court, in the Capital Secretariat.

which is supposed to be a sanctuary of freedom and harbor for the oppressed. The law should have prevailed in such arenas of human dignity and freedoms.

The JMP considers what happened Tuesday as coming within the context of depriving al-Khaiwani of his right of defense or is meant for prolonging his imprisonment. In conclusion, the opposition parties' statement has called on the Supreme Judicial Council to hold Judge al-Hijri accountable and must dismiss and try him according to the law.

The JMP asked for prohibition of judges for rallying around them tribal militias as bodyguards or hiring security elements from outside the Judicial Police.

On the other hand, the Yemeni Teachers Syndicate vowed solidarity with the Yemeni Journalists and Lawyers syndicates who have announced joint activities.

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*Poverty reduction plan painfully slow***Just where is Yemen going?**

By YEMEN TIMES NEWS SERVICES

Despite its location in the oil-rich Middle East, Yemen is still one of the poorest countries in the world, even with ongoing efforts to reduce poverty. With a population of 20 million people, 42 percent are living under the poverty line on under US \$2 per day, according to the government.

In addition, 13.2 percent of the total population are living near to the poverty line. The average annual individual income is US \$450 and unemployment was running at 37 percent in 2003, according to World Bank statistics.

International organisations consider Yemen one of the 30 nations at the lowest level of development in the world. It was ranked 133 out of 162 countries, accord-

ing to the UN Human Development Report for 2001.

But experts say this figure is unlikely to change as the country faces very slow economic growth and is not able to provide enough jobs for the ever increasing population.

Efforts to curb poverty

In order to make headway on poverty reduction, the Yemeni government started an economic reform programme in 1995, following recommendations from the World Bank and the International Monetary Fund (IMF).

This programme, however, has had a negative effect on the poor, observers say, because of rising oil prices and high cost of basic materials and food. But it was considered a necessary though painful step

to increase income, provide jobs, stop inflation and improve living conditions.

Since then, a Poverty Reduction Strategy Paper (PRSP) was introduced for the period between 2003-2005. The head of the PRSP follow-up and monitoring unit in the Yemeni ministry of planning and international relations, Yahya al-Mutawakel, said that although this strategy was ongoing it could not fulfil all of its goals without appropriate funds to finance the necessary projects.

"These goals cannot be fulfilled without providing enough financial resources to finance important projects," al-Mutawakel, said.

"This strategy consists of four vital subjects related to economic growth, human resources development, substructure creation, social protection and good gover-

nance," he added.

The head of the Yemeni Strategic Studies Centre, Mohammed al-Afnadi, believes that the strategy has not led to any improvement in economic growth and living standards.

"After three years of starting the PRSP, we have not seen much improvement in reducing poverty. Poverty is still high and the number of poor people is increasing," he said.

"I think Yemen needs a comprehensive economic and social development strategy leading to increased economic growth. Without this government efforts will meet a lot of obstacles and will not be able to reduce the level of poverty in Yemen," al-Afnadi said.

In 2002, the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) began

to integrate the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) into poverty reduction strategies in a further effort to reduce the problem. The MDGs were adopted under a declaration in 2000 at a summit of world leaders in order to raise living standards, achieve common values and equality for men and women in developing countries.

Rural areas worse

Poverty in Yemen is more prevalent in rural areas than in urban areas which is home to 83 percent of food insecure people. Most of them are concentrated in four provinces, Taiz, 256 km south of Sana, Ibb, 193 km south of Sana, Sana, and Hudaidah, 226 km south-west of Sana, according to the World Bank. These regions lack job opportunities, healthcare and education, according to the Bank.

Readers' Voice

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Yemen reforms boostBy REBECCA TORR
MANAMA

YEMEN may still be facing problems of illiteracy and poverty but its strides in political and economic reform are slowly but surely helping to change all of this, says Yemen Human Rights Minister Amat Al-Aleem Alsoswa.

Ms Alsoswa, who was visiting Bahrain for the first time, was speaking at a Press conference held Tuesday at the Abdulla Al Zayed House for Bahrain Press Heritage, in Muharraq.

"Yemen's unification took place in 1990 and this step has been the most significant one taken in the history of the country," said Yemen's first woman minister.

"Yemen decided in 1990 that the only way out of Yemen's problems was to go down a democratic path and accept each others differences. Yemen is tribal, poor and different in regional places.

"The economic situation is the problem. Yemen has a high population (22 million) and there are not enough jobs for everyone.

"The only way out is to give people

rights. The main thing is development, fighting for new supplies of water and power. We still struggle to get this to all places."

The former journalist and ambassador said despite the challenges, Yemen had come a long way since unification, especially in terms of women's rights.

Challenges

Ms Alsoswa said women now enjoyed almost the same rights as men and that they were being represented, where they had never been before, especially politically.

"There are now women judges and women have full rights to vote and to be elected in local councils and we are hoping that they will soon be able to hold 10 per cent of all decisions at higher councils," said Ms Alsoswa, who has been a Yemen's Human Rights Minister since 2003.

"But senior women have to be trained. We don't just want women. We want women who are good role models."

Ms Alsoswa, who will leave Bahrain tonight, is here at the invitation of Shaikh Ebrahim Centre for Culture and Research chair, writer and researcher Shaikha Mai bint Mohammed Al

Khalifa.

She expressed her gratitude to Shaikha Mai and said she hoped that the visit would be one of many and it would open up new venues for work and joint cultural activities.

Ms Alsoswa also spoke about the challenges facing human rights in Yemen at a lecture held last night at the Shaikh Ebrahim Centre for Culture and Research in Muharraq.

She said the main problem facing human rights in Yemen was poverty and that more than 30% of the population were living below the bread line.

However, she said the future looked bright and that she was glad to be able to be given the opportunity to handle the relations of civil society in a quiet and healthy way.

"It's not easy and can be difficult at times, but I've been raised to face difficulties and challenges like all Yemeni women. I'm not the only one. There are growing numbers of us and many deserve to be in higher positions."

Cardiology center inaugurated

TAIZ BUREAU

Dr. Mohamed al-No'mi, Minister of Health and Population along with Judge Ahmad al-Hajiri Governor of Aden inaugurated the Cardiology Center at al-Jomhuri Hospital last Monday 28th of February. The center includes two departments; one for catheterization and the other for intensive cardiological care.

The two officials visited the other departments of the hospital and reviewed the medical facilities supplied recently to the hospital.

In a statement to the Yemen Times, Dr. al-No'mi said the cardiology center at the hospital contains modern medical facilities in terms of measuring hypertension and monitoring heart attacks as well as conducting a number of cardiological operations.

The minister pointed out that there are many well-qualified staffers who work for the center and other medical facilities and praised the efforts exerted by the Taiz Health and Population Office for the sake of providing better medical services.

Sultan al-Atwani, NUO Secretary-GeneralBy MOHAMMAD BIN SALLAM
YEMEN TIMES STAFF

The central committee of Nasserite Unionist Organization (NUO) elected this week the MP Sultan al-Atwani, 55, a secretary general for the party, succeeding Abdulmalik al-Mikhlaifi.

Al-Atwani obtained an overwhelming majority of votes in a secret ballot by the central committee members while Ali al-Yazid was elected deputy secretary general and Mohammad al-Rada'ai and Hamid Asem secretary

general assistants.

It is worth noting that around 70 percent of the general secretariat members are new faces and this reflects the great change, which is the first of its kind in Yemeni political life.

The Nasserite Unionist Organization commenced the functions of its tenth conference ten days ago and was attended by a number of party leaders and Arab and Yemeni diplomats including Mohammad al-Douri, former Iraqi Ambassador to the United Nations.

Al-Saleh Association distributes flour in MaribBy HASSAN AL-ZAIDI
YEMEN TIMES STAFF

Al-Saleh Social Development Association distributed 410 sacks of flour among various associations in Marib in order to give them to the needy locals, last week.

As many as ten charitable associations in Marib representing different social categories profited from the

grants offered by the association to distribute them among the handicapped and many other poor people.

This is considered the first aid extended to the civil society organizations in a province like Marib that is mostly inhabited by tribesmen.

The grant comes in the framework of a charitable campaign carried out by al-Saleh, to distribute flour to different areas all over Yemen.

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Applications should be sent during the Official Working Hours (Saturdays through Wednesdays) 09:00 to 14:00 Hours, to the following address:

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14-year anniversary

Yemen Times celebrates

By YASSER AL-MAYASI
YEMEN TIMES STAFF

Consider freedom of press and opinion, intellectual awakening, and transparency in dealing with various issues; consider the defender of freedoms and human rights, and we can look at The Yemen Times and its goals.

This establishment that has been representing genuine journalism for 14 years attributes its success to its founder Prof. Abdulaziz al-Saqqaf (1951-1999), who started in a small building, and made it a huge establishment.

Celebrating the 14th anniversary of the newspaper, we acknowledge it has been able to lay at last a solid foundation to have a free and independent media in the Arab region, a part of the world that still



Late Prof. Dr. Abdulaziz Al-Saqqaf

doubts the existence of the free and independent media.

The Yemen Times is not just a newspaper to be printed and sold; rather it

reflects the views of a well-cultured slice in Yemen, via the efforts of such a sector to light the country with its luminous lamps in cultural, political, economic and social areas. The newspaper has been working hard to raise cultural awareness among Yemenis and bring up a well-cultured generation.

Its success stems from its base and its widely known that no glory can be attained without having the taste of risks and hardships. The late Dr. Abdulaziz al-Saqqaf, who is still the title of success of such a pioneering newspaper, discussed a variety of issues with independence and objectivity.

He was patriotic and defended his country in all international conference, and this made the Yemeni population respects him highly, alive or dead. Out of this newspaper, he made a strong voice criticizing corruption bravely without

fear. Out of the Yemen Times, he could make the defense voice that defends human rights, freedoms of expression and civil society organizations.

By virtue of its own resources and efforts, the Yemen Times proved able to introduce Yemen to others with transparency and promote its tourism. Its articles and news, especially those on its web site, are read by thousands, which attracts many foreigners to visit Yemen and enjoy seeing its natural attractions.

Over its history, the Yemen Times has endured difficult situations and proved to be patient and tolerant by virtue of its staff, making up admirable stories of success.

The death of its founder has only compelled the staff to be more enthusiastic to carry the mission on making it biweekly to cope with whatever changes of may come with the era.

Workshop held at Taj Sheba

Management skills training: a new approach

By PETER WILLEMS
FOR THE YEMEN TIMES

A workshop was held at Taj Sheba Hotel last week to pass on information and methodologies for business management training to trainers from different private sector institutions that provide business skills management training.

The workshop, which was held from Saturday to Wednesday, was carried out by The World Bank's International Finance Corporation (IFC). IFC, a member of the World Bank group, is the private sector arm of The World Bank.

As part of its technical assistance programs, IFC has developed a comprehensive training program, named Business Edge, and teams up with training institutions that want to focus on working with small and medium size companies in Yemen looking for assistance on improving their management skills.

"Our goal is to enhance the knowledge capacity of small and medium size enterprises in Yemen," said Saad Sabrah, Business Development Officer and Resident Representative of IFC in Yemen.

"This is done through building the capacities of the local training companies and ensuring sustainability. We have established partnership agreements with more than one company and the Chamber of Commerce in Taiz, which provide

business management training to local businesses in the private sector."

IFC provides its partners with the Business Edge curriculum, which is based on a well-known text in business management divided into 38 workbooks.

"It is the curriculum of 38 workbooks that have been developed and maintained by IFC," said Sabrah. "The majority has been translated into Arabic, and the entire package will be translated by June."

Partners sign a one-year agreement with IFC, invest in an annual membership fee, pay for trainers to be trained and pay a fraction of the cost for the books. IFC, on the other hand, provides the training sessions for trainers - called Training of the Trainers (TOT) - contributes funding for marketing campaigns to pull in clients in Yemen's private sector and equips partners with training manuals that can be used to apply the material in Business Edge into adaptable training courses.

"At the end of the day, this is a profitable business for training institutes in Yemen because there is a high and obvious need for training the private sector in business management skills," said Sabrah.

Partners that attended the workshop were the Chamber of Commerce in Taiz, CMT House and NIIT. Trainers from other institutes took part expecting to become partners in the near future.

"The Business Edge material is a big plus for us because it focuses on the small



Participants in The World Bank-IFC workshop, held last week on business management skills training. (Yemen Times photo by Peter Willems)

and medium size enterprises and the material is available in Arabic," said Arco de Leede, Founder and General Manager of CMT House which was established in Yemen eight months ago and had three of its trainers attend the workshop.

"This material can really serve our customers. With the investment, we get very useful materials and our trainers are being trained for the skills that are needed. As a result, we can improve our services in our private institute a great deal."

Rami Camel-Toueg, Head of Integrated Management Consultancy, came from Cairo to carry out training for local trainers. He is a Business Edge partner in Egypt and an IFC Contractor and Master Trainer of Business Edge.

"Training mainly focuses on the strategy of learning by doing," said Camel-Toueg, who has been conducting workshops for trainers for six years. "The methodology of Business Edge is learned through activities, practice, self evaluation, role playing, and so forth."

Camel-Toueg added that Business Edge is a useful tool because it has been adapted to the Arab business environment which will fit the needs of the trainers.

IFC bases its business management training plans on its Private Enterprise Partnership (PEP) program that has been providing technical assistance to private sectors in many countries around the world, such as China, Vietnam and Cambodia. It now applies its PEP program in the Middle East and North Africa (MENA) region, covering countries from Morocco all the way across to Pakistan.

IFC plans to hold another workshop with new partners in Sana'a in two or three months.

Workshop on working women

By SALEH AL-BASHA
FOR THE YEMEN TIMES

A workshop on the role of woman was concluded Feb. 28 in the city of Hadramout. The two-day workshop discussed and reviewed ways to assist working women in Taiz and Hodeida, appropriate areas of coordination with the ministry, and the role of the International Work Organization in this process.

The event was organized by the

Ministry of Social Affairs and Labor and was funded by the International Work Organization with the participation of 35 members of staff from the Yemeni Laborers Syndicate, the union of commerce, industry chambers, and the bureaus of women's development in the cities of Taiz and Hodeida.

The workshop was attended by Dr. Najwa al-Qusaibi, an expert at the Yemeni Working Women's Development Project, part of the International Work Organization, and Mrs. Nuha al-Aghbari

, the General Manager of Working Women's Development.

Speeches were delivered at the inauguration ceremony by Mohammad al-Eriani Undersecretary of Ministry of Social Affairs and Labor for Workforce Sector, Omair Mobarik, Deputy Governor of Hadramout and Darwish Suwaid Director General of Social Affairs and Labor Office in Hadramout. In their speeches, the officials emphasized

the importance of the workshop in empowering women.

Continued from page 1

Syria vows complete and swift Lebanon pullout

Demonstrations in Syria, Lebanon
Five days after celebrating the fall of the country's Syrian-backed government, Lebanese flocked to Martyrs' Square in Beirut to hail another "concession" late into the night.

"I am very happy and excited," Collette Hajj said. "I hope we will achieve true independence, as long as we stay here and keep demanding it."

Many protesters, waving Lebanese flags,

decried the absence of any reference to the demand for dismantling Syria's pervasive security role in Lebanon. The Syrian intelligence service has been under intense fire from Lebanon's opposition figures who accused its officers of running the country.

But not everyone was celebrating. Hundreds took to the streets in several Lebanese towns to declare support for Syria.

Fifteen years after the end of civil war, Lebanon remains divided between its

Christians, Sunni and Shi'ite Muslims. Some Lebanese worry a Syrian pullout might end in renewed internal conflict.

In Damascus, thousands of Syrians gathered outside parliament to back Assad before and during his speech.

"One, one, one, Lebanon and Syria are one," several thousand Syrians, some carrying pictures of Assad and Syrian flags, chanted outside parliament in the build-up to the address.

Status of Yemeni Women Reviewed at the UN

Heading the Yemeni delegation to the Commission on the Status of Women at the United Nations was Mrs. Rashida al-Hamadani Chairperson of the Women's National Committee. In her statement at the session she explained Yemen's achievements in promoting gender issues in the various sectors in Yemen since the last session Beijing +10. Advocacy against some of the discriminative laws have paid off and some of these were amended such as the nationality law and practices against women in prison. The Yemeni delegation that consists

of government officials as well as non-governmental organizations discussed also the challenges Yemeni Women keep facing in terms of education, health, infrastructure, economy and political participation.

Simultaneous with this event the WNC is organizing an event on 8th of March for Women's International Day where many delegates and prominent guests and organizations will be attended.

"We want this occasion to be a chance for us to celebrate our achievements in the past and to push further for more demands in

order to enhance women's status in Yemen. The ruling party has come forward with a positive initiative regarding the quota system where 10% of the Parliament seats would be reserved for women as well as 15 to 20% in the local councils, as we duly appreciate this initiative we are actually aspiring for a 30% quota system in all elected and non elected decision making positions and it is only fair considering that half of the population are women and need to be represented in a better way." Said Mrs. Hooria Mashoor in a statement for the Yemen Times.

Organized campaign against corrupt judiciary in Yemen

A statement issued by the YJS opposed the decision of preventing journalists from practicing their profession in reporting facts and events as well as the activities and developments in the society. It pointed out that journalists are so harassed that they are assaulted while conducting their work in the field including courtrooms,

coverage of the strikes of doctors, pharmacists, and university teachers.

On the other hand, a statement circulated by the Press Freedoms Center on March 2 condemned what it described as "crime of attacking Yemeni journalists and lawyers." The statement put the responsibility on the President of the Republic as

Chairman of the Supreme Judicial Council, asking for a neutral committee to be set up to investigate into "the crime of the brutal attack against journalists, lawyers, legalists and activists in the building of the judiciary which should present a secure place that defends people's rights and dignity."

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مبروك للقائزين ليوم 15:

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U.S. vows probe of Italy hostage shooting in Iraq

ROME, March 5 (Reuters) - Italian Prime Minister Silvio Berlusconi has won a U.S. promise of a full investigation into the killing of an Italian security agent and the wounding of freed Italian journalist Giuliana Sgrena by U.S. forces in Iraq.

U.S. troops at a checkpoint shot dead the agent and wounded Sgrena on the road to Baghdad airport on Friday after she had been freed and handed over to three Italian security agents.

"The agent, Nicola Calipari, covered Sgrena with his body, he was hit by a bullet which unfortunately was fatal," Berlusconi told a news conference.

It was the most serious diplomatic incident between the two allies since a U.S. Marine jet killed 20 people when it sheared the cables of a ski-lift while on a low-flying exercise in northern Italy in 1989.

Berlusconi summoned U.S. ambassador Mel Sembler and demanded a full investigation, and took a telephone call from President George W. Bush who expressed his regrets.

"This was a call to reach out to a good friend and express our regret about the incident," White House spokesman Scott McClellan said. "The president assured Prime Minister Berlusconi that it would be fully investigated ... We're cooperating closely with Italian authorities."

Sgrena's partner said he could not blame the U.S. soldiers for the shooting, saying they were probably "scared boys", and that the real blame lay with those who had sent them to Iraq.

Sgrena's colleagues at the Communist daily Il Manifesto were holding a party to celebrate her release on Friday evening when news of the shooting reached them, plunging the gathering into bewilderment and sadness.

After meeting Sembler, Berlusconi issued a statement saying: "The prime minister expects that, in the spirit of the particular friendship that characterises relations between Italy and the United



Italian intelligence officer Nicola Calipari (R) speaks to reporters in a 2002 file photo provided by the Il Messaggero daily newspaper. . REUTERS

States, the U.S. government leaves no stone unturned to shed light on what happened and on who might be responsible."

The U.S. Defense Department said multinational forces had fired at the car when it approached a checkpoint at high speed, discovering only later who its occupants were.

Sgrena critical of war

Berlusconi said he personally knew Calipari, who had worked on previous hostage release cases in Iraq, and that the agent's wife worked in his Palazzo Chigi office.

He leaves two children.

Sgrena, 57, an award-winning war reporter, is highly critical of Italy's role in Iraq.

Her partner, Pier Scolari, said he could not blame soldiers who had been sent to war for the killing.

"I have said so many times, war is madness.

Probably it was scared boys who fired, it wasn't their fault, it was the fault of those that sent them there," he

told Sky Italia TV.

The editor of Il Manifesto said he had learned that Sgrena had undergone surgery in a U.S. military hospital to have shrapnel removed from her collar bone and would be able to fly back to Italy on Saturday.

The newspaper's cartoonist had to redraw his picture.

A first draft showed a man hugging a dove with an olive twig in its beak, saying "You've brought her back to us".

In the final version the dove is dragging itself along the floor in a pool of blood.

The paper's headline on Saturday read:

"Giuliana Sgrena is free.

The Americans fired. Her liberator is murdered.

His name was Nicola Calipari."

Berlusconi has been one of Washington's most outspoken supporters in the campaign in Iraq, where some 3,000 Italian troops are stationed.

His left-wing opponents say the majority of Italians oppose their country's military presence there.

Syria poised to announce Lebanon pullback

BEIRUT, March 5 (Reuters) - Under intense global pressure, Syria was poised to announce on Saturday that it would start to pull troops out of Lebanon, but the move looked unlikely to placate the United States or other vocal critics. Lebanese political sources said Syrian President Bashar al-Assad would tell parliament some troops were leaving its neighbour completely and others would redeploy closer to the border.

They have been there since intervening in Lebanon's civil war in the 1970s but criticism has mounted since a former Lebanese prime minister was assassinated last month.

U.S. President George W. Bush warned nothing short of a full withdrawal would do.

"When we say withdraw we mean complete withdrawal - no half-hearted measures," he said on Friday.

"Syrian troops, Syrian intelligence services must get out of Lebanon now."

He earlier called for all Syrian forces to be out by May to clear the way for elections due that month to be free.

Lebanese newspapers were dominated by what Bush said and what Assad might say.

Most commentators agreed that Syria

had no choice but to start a pullout from Lebanon.

"Withdrawing is the only way out of the dark tunnel," commentator Rafik Khouri wrote in the Al-Anwar daily.

"It is the only door towards restoring ties between the two countries to their brotherly nature and end international pressure on Syria.

"Everyone is waiting to listen to what

President Bashar al-Assad will declare," Khouri wrote.

Abdel Rahim Mrad, defence minister in the Syrian-backed Lebanese government which resigned on Monday amid anti-Syrian street protests, said the move would adhere to the Taif Accord which ended Lebanon's 1975-90 civil war.

"Syria will redeploy its forces in line with Taif," he said.



Syrian soldiers chat near a bus at Mount Lebanon, east of Beirut, March 5. Under intense global pressure, Syria was poised to announce on Saturday that it would start to pull troops out of Lebanon, but the move looked unlikely to placate the United States or other vocal critics. REUTERS

Italian hostage home from Iraq after shooting

ROME, March 5 (Reuters) - A freed hostage from Iraq arrived home in Rome on Saturday as Italians demanded to know why U.S. forces shot at her car as it approached Baghdad airport, wounding her and killing an Italian secret agent.

Giuliana Sgrena, looked in pain as she was helped off a plane and into a military ambulance.

The reporter, who was treated for a wound in Iraq, clutched a plaid blanket around her shoulders and was attached to a drip.



Italian hostage Sgrena arrives at Ciampino airport in Rome, March 5. REUTERS

Four U.S. soldiers killed in action in Iraq

BAGHDAD, March 5 (Reuters) - Four U.S. soldiers were killed in action on Friday in Iraq's western Anbar province, the U.S. Central Command said on Saturday.

The soldiers, assigned to 1 Marine Expeditionary Force, were carrying out security and stability operations in Anbar, the Command said in a statement, without giving any further details.

The deaths brought to at least 1,506 the U.S. military death toll in Iraq since U.S.-led forces invaded the country in March 2003.

Arabia Airway

YT Business

Hodeidah markets are popular

Fish sector needs attention

By ABDULWAHAB AL SOFI
abdulwahab_alsofi@yahoo.com
FOR THE YEMEN TIMES

Nobody goes to Yemen's fish markets without wanting to visit it again. Fish markets in Hodeidah are the popular place where persons can buy many kinds of fish and enjoy the fisheries.

The main fish market in Hodeidah is situated exactly next to the attractive anchor of fishing boats. In the early morning, swarms of people varied between among young and old people coexist. They come to either buy fresh fish or enjoy the fish anchor.

Others come to the market for working in the fish auction in which people can buy fish at cheap prices. People can buy many kinds of fish such as tuna, sword fish, lobster, shrimp, yellow fin, cuttlefish, red snapper, crabs,

and other kinds of fish.

Fish is the best replacement of meat, as it is healthier.

Some fish is put under the burning sunshine at the boats' anchor, until it becomes dry enough to eat. It is called in Arabic language Lukham. This is a favorite food to Hadhramout people.

Meanwhile, fresh fish that is cooked called Salona, which is very popular in Hodeidah folk restaurant. It is so delicious that persons become addicted after just one taste.

In the morning, you can buy fresh fish and roast for lunch or breakfast, with local cheese mixed with paste of tomatoes, garlic, and green peppers. In addition to that, shrimp is a famous supper. We usually buy fresh shrimp from the market and have a very delicious dinner.

As soon as you arrive at the fish market, you realize that Allah's grace is there. Poor people and rich people can buy fish for food. The prices vary

according to the kind and the freshness of fish.

We cannot but thank all anglers who bring different kinds of fish into our hands. Anglers live terrifying adventures in the sea with their boats, for weeks at a time. They sometimes lose their fishing boats or even their lives in sea storms.

Despite that, they do not get any support or compensation from the government. Fisheries are one of Yemen's greatest potential sources of wealth after oil. There are some fish exports to Europe and the Middle East.

They export frozen and fresh fish to many countries. It is unfair that government neglect this vital sector. Yemen would be a much happier place to live in if she could better utilize the natural resources such as fish wealth. Yemen is rich in many natural resources, but they will be useless unless every citizen can benefit from them.



Fishermen pursuing their fishery vocation in coastal city of Hodeidah.

Banking in Yemen

Yemeni banks outpace Arab competitors



By MAHYOUB AL-KAMALI
YEMEN TIMES STAFF
mkamaly@yahoo.com

Yemeni commercial Banks now have 68 per cent of total banking activity in Yemen, while other Arab banks in Yemen have 32 per cent, according to reports.

During the year 2004, commercial banks increase their financial revenues, according to a report referred to by governor of the Central Bank of Yemen Ahmed Abdulrahman al-Samawi.

The report says Yemeni commercial banks budgets have risen to YR660 billion at the end of last December, an increase amounting to YR 120.7 billion compared to 2003. Investments of the banks of the available revenues of securities were at an amount of YR47.1 billion.

The report mentioned that deposits of foreign currencies at the end of 2003

rose from \$1.3 billion to \$1.4 billion at the end of December 2004. The deposits in local currency rose from YR 236 billion to 309 billion during the same period.

The report has also said that assets of loans and funding operations offered from the commercial banks to various economic sectors at the end of December 2004 rose to YR 183.6 billion.

The trade sector gained the first place of those loans with an amount of YR 90.1 billion, then the industrial sector with an amount of YR 35.3 billion, construction sector by YR 14.7 billion and agricultural and fishery sector by YR 2.6 billion. The volume of investment in stocks and deposit certificates rose at the end of last December to YR 187.8 billion.

The report indicated that at the end of last year the assets of accounts rose to YR 153.7 billion, or \$827.1 million. Assets of open credits at banks have, at the end of last December, amounted to YR 128.8 billion.

The report also mentioned that assets

of exported security letters had at the end of last December rose to YR 147.4 billion against YR 122.1 billion at the end of 2003.

Erratum

In Issue No. 821 of the Yemen Times, due a technical mistake, in the business article "Corruption goes progressing", please note that the name "Bahamas" should have correctly been written as "Bajammal." Also the author's full name is correctly known as "Mahyoub al-Kamali." The Yemen Times sincerely regrets the error.

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المحاضر والخبير العالمي

د. إبراهيم الفقي



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تعز

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تنظيم راقى للحفلات

Climate – poverty link

Africa, climate change, and the G-8 Summit

By JEFFREY D. SACHS

British Prime Minister Tony Blair has declared that the two issues at the center of the G-8 Summit this July will be African poverty and global climate change. These may seem to be distinct issues. In fact, they are linked. A trip I took to a village in the Tigre region in northern Ethiopia shows why.

One morning, I was taken to a dry riverbed at the village's edge. Farmers were digging a pit in the riverbed, down to the water table approximately two meters below ground level. They explained that until recently this was a perennial river – one that flows throughout the year – but now the river stops flowing during the dry season. Only when the annual rains begin in the summer does water reappear in the river bed. Until then, water-starved communities dig for water, if they can find it and if they can afford to pump it out.

In northern Ethiopia, as in much of Africa, the rain cycle has changed markedly in recent years. Ethiopian village life has long depended on two crops, one during a short rain in March and April, and the main crop during the long rain in the summer months. In recent years, the short rains have failed entirely, and long rains have been erratic. Hunger is omnipresent. Perhaps half of the children are severely underweight.

Much of arid sub-Saharan Africa, notably in the Sahel (the region just south of the Sahara desert), has experienced a pronounced drop in rainfall over the past quarter-century. This decline coincided with

a rise in the surface temperature of the neighboring Indian Ocean, a hint that the decline in rainfall is in fact part of the longer-term process of man-made global warming.

Failures of rainfall contribute not only to famines and chronic hunger, but also to the onset of violence when hungry people clash over scarce food and water. When violence erupts in water-starved regions such as Darfur, Sudan, political leaders tend to view the problems in narrow political terms. If they act at all, they mobilize peacekeepers, international sanctions, and humanitarian aid. But Darfur, like Tigre, needs a development strategy to fight hunger and drought even more than it needs peacekeepers. Soldiers cannot keep peace among desperately hungry people.

One course of action must be to help impoverished African regions to "adapt" to climate change and to escape the poverty trap. Water-stressed regions like Ethiopia and Sudan can adapt, at least in part, through improved technologies such as "drip irrigation," rainwater harvesting, improved water storage facilities, deep wells, and agro-forestry techniques that make best use of scarce rainfall. Better land-management practices (the replanting of degraded forests, for example) can recharge underground water aquifers.

Poor countries cannot afford these technologies on their own. Nor should they have to. Help for poor countries in Africa and elsewhere to adapt to climate change should not be described as charity or aid, but rather as compensation for damages being imposed on the poorest people

on the planet. Greater help for these countries to escape from extreme poverty has been promised for decades but has not been delivered.

In addition to adapting to climate change, the world must also reduce future risks to the planet by cutting back on emissions of greenhouse gases, which are the source of man-made climate change. While adaptation to climate change is necessary – because it is already occurring – this is not enough. If the world fails to mitigate future climate change, the effects of rising temperatures, increasing droughts, more numerous and severe tropical storms, rising sea levels, and a spread of tropical diseases will pose huge threats to the entire planet. The famines in Ethiopia and the violence in Darfur suggest what can lie ahead.

The best way to reduce long-term climate change is to reduce carbon emissions. There are at least three options:

- shift to non-carbon energy sources such as solar or nuclear energy;
- capture and dispose of the carbon dioxide emitted at carbon-based power plants;
- economize on energy use, for example by shifting to hybrid automobiles and trucks.

Most likely, all three of these methods will have to play a role. The effort to reduce greenhouse gases will require decades of action, but, given the long lead times in overhauling the world's energy systems, we must start now. Rich countries need to lead the way.

It is ironic that the United States, which portrays itself as a friend of

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By Samer A.

democracy and impoverished countries, gives the smallest share of its GNP in aid among the rich countries, and also refuses to participate in global efforts to reduce greenhouse gas emissions. This is especially ironic because African countries like Ethiopia stand steadfastly and bravely with the US in the fight for freedom and against terrorism, even as they struggle with hunger, disease, and famine. Moreover, countries like Ethiopia are making valiant, indeed remarkable, efforts to overcome their problems, despite the lack of adequate, and long-promised, help from the world's richest countries.

Africans suffering from hunger and drought, and indeed poor people everywhere, have a right to ask much more of the US and other rich countries. Tony Blair is right to call on his rich-country colleagues to follow through on their unfulfilled promises.

Jeffrey Sachs is Professor of Economics and Director of the Earth Institute at Columbia University.

By Yahya Al-Olfi
alolfi@hotmail.com

Reflections

Immigration swindlers, and Yemeni Turks

Before the discovery of oil in the Middle East, there were no boundaries between what is now known as KSA, Oman, UAE, Qatar, Bahrain, Kuwait and Yemen.

Lawrence of Arabia, Wilfred Thesiger, Harold Ingrams as well as Sir Harry St. John Philby amongst other many English Arabian Peninsula adventurers during the British supremacy, mentioned as early as the could that the discovery of oil in the Arabian Peninsula signaled an everlasting transformation of the movement of tribes in the Arabian Peninsula.

Following Kuwait's invasion by the Iraqi Armed Forces back in the year 1990 many Yemenis were kicked out from Saudi Arabia and the other Gulf Sheikdoms. And this put an end once and for all to the age old practice of land immigration by the Inhabitants of South Arabia towards either Mesopotamia or the Levant. That used to be on camels and horseback, and at the outset of last century on the newly-invented automobiles.

In fact this old time process was the crucial reason in the remote past for the Semitic cohesion of the peninsula's northern areas i.e. Iraq, Syria, Lebanon and Palestine prior to Islam and the easy Arabization later on of the other fraternal Semite tribes i.e. Assyrians, Aramites, Phoenicians etc.

Anyhow, Yemenis now are not free like their predecessors in moving northwards, so they are trying to leave to other lands.

While I am on the subject, I would like to mention a real anecdote which begins with a Saudi visiting Canton, China and complaining to his other Saudi colleague. (Though pretending to be different they are Yemenites too) that the Yemeni contractor did not build his home properly (even though Yemenis working in KSA, in fact have learnt how to build modern houses on the expense of Saudi citizens.) Hearing the word "Yemen" to the dismay of the two Saudis, the waiter in Canton China told them that he was too, of Yemeni Origin.

Another Yemeni was working in JFK Airport, USA in transporting passenger luggage, while a Saudi passenger had just arrived. Upon

knowing that the airport laborer was from Yemen, the Saudi expressed his utmost displeasure for he has seen enough Yemenis back home (self renunciation) only to find them ahead in an American airport. He started to call the poor laborer names.

So the worker's reaction was knocking the hell out of the Saudi snobbish nouveau-riche, and he was consequently sacked from the job due to such a rash reaction.

Thus, immigration swindlers find in Yemen a thriving market for their schemes. During the past several years, a Lebanese immigration swindler charged US \$14,000 for each individual. Thus, 20 Yemenis whom he fraudulently convinced to make them arrive in USA were eventually stranded in Curaçao in the Caribbean. Some of them managed to return and others are still scavenging to subsist.

Yemeni Turks

Turks occupied Yemen for three short periods and were mostly rebuffed, maimed and killed. So Turks have sad memories about Yemen to the extent that they dubbed it the cemetery of Anatolia i.e. Turkey. Turks in my opinion do not like to be moderate on things. They like being on the extreme.

We Yemenis have earned from them the black shroud worn by women and termed as "Sharshaf" when Turks were for radical Islam. Now, they are for secular life.

I was dumbfounded to count more than 25 houses in Sana'a alone whose owners are of Turkish origin and have either melted or are quickly melting into society. A good way to know if one in the old city is of Turkish origin is the speech mode of women and the color of their eyes. A non-Turk woman for example would say Aaqwaldayh (i.e. naughty boy) while a Turkish Yemeni would say "Valadaaq".

Unfortunately, most have melted and the remaining few are trying to melt as quickly as possible into Yemeni society. Some have chosen extremely local Yemeni names while others opted for a lineage to the Prophet in imitation of other segments. So Yemen, not just the USA, has proved to be a melting pot despite all odds.

A new diplomatic frenzy

Dealing with North Korea's nuclear blackmail

By HIDEAKI KANEDA

North Korea's announcement that it possesses nuclear weapons has fuelled a diplomatic frenzy. To persuade North Korea to return to the six-party talks – with China, Japan, the US, Russia, and South Korea – on defusing the nuclear threat on the Korean peninsula, Japan, the US, and South Korea have now offered to expand the scope of the talks to allow North Korea to raise any issue that concerns it. This could be a grave mistake.

The talks ground to a halt in June 2004, when the North Koreans pulled out, citing the allegedly hostile policies of the US and Japanese governments. Now they claim to have manufactured nuclear weapons for self-defense. Although there had been several unofficial statements by Kim Jong-il's regime admitting that North Korea possesses nuclear arsenal, the announcement was the first official confirmation.

What lay behind the declaration was the regime's recognition that a second-term Bush administration would not soften its demand for a complete repudiation of its nuclear program, but would instead continue to pursue policies aimed at isolating and stifling North Korea. The same goes for Japan, whose stance on the abduction of its citizens by North Korean agents in the 1970's and 1980's was also cited by the Kim regime last June as a reason for

walking out of the six-party talks.

With this in mind, the North Koreans' motives in playing the nuclear trump card are clear, and the timing couldn't have seemed more advantageous for them: force the Americans into making concessions while the situation in Iraq leaves the US with no room for maneuver, and undercut the rising call in Japan for economic sanctions against North Korea over the abduction issue. Thus, whereas North Korea's announcement of its nuclear capability strongly condemned Japan and the US, it did not mention China, Russia, and South Korea, which had been more conciliatory during the six-party talks.

Indeed, in withdrawing from the six-party talks, North Korea did not completely abandon the possibility of resolving the nuclear standoff through dialogue. Rather, North Korea's aim was to postpone the six-party talks as long as possible in order to force direct bilateral negotiations with the US, in which it would presumably extract energy assistance and other aid while demanding a security guarantee for "Dear Leader" Kim Jong-il.

America didn't budge on bilateral negotiations, and its response to North Korea's recent announcement that it possesses nuclear weapons likewise emphasized the need to revive the six-party talks. Japan adopted a similar stance.

Like Japan, the Bush administration's relatively moderate stance toward North Korea has

changed since the talks broke down last year. The US seems to be tightening its diplomatic encirclement of North Korea with a view to shifting the nuclear discussion to the UN Security Council.

Moreover, the Japan-US Security Consultative Committee brought together the countries' foreign and defense ministers in Washington in February to discuss common strategic objectives related to the reformation of US forward forces. This includes US forces in Japan, which will focus on responding to North Korean nuclear and ballistic-missile threats, as well as new threats posed by international terrorism and China's military build-up. Remaining in step with each other on security issues is essential if Japan and the US are to maintain a firm alliance to ensure the stability of the Asia-Pacific region.

The Japanese government has also been searching for effective measures to respond to North Korea's consistently insincere attitude on regional and bilateral issues, including the abduction cases. Militarily, Japan revised its law on the Self-Defense Forces to establish procedures for ballistic missile defense, with a strong focus on North Korea.

The decision, coming at the cabinet's regular meeting on February 15th, was not intended to coincide with Kim Jong-il's 63rd birthday the following day. But it did show that Japan's government, having long suspected that North

Korea already possessed nuclear weapons, would not be intimidated into a fundamental policy change by confirmation of the threat.

The revision establishes the future direction of Japan's military posture by delegating greater authority to the commanders of the Self-Defense Forces to initiate defensive actions against immediate threats. According to South Korean news reports, in addition to its existing mid-range Nodong missiles, North Korea has improved its Scud missiles, extending their range to reach Japan's main islands. If North Korea is, indeed, continuing to develop not only its nuclear arsenal, but also various types of ballistic missiles, in defiance of international commitments, it is truly a rogue state.

As for the nuclear issue, Japan's policy toward North Korea should continue to emphasize solidifying ties with the US and strengthening cooperation with China, South Korea, and Russia, making every effort to promote early resumption of the six-party talks. But dialogue with the Kim regime cannot be an end in itself. Negotiation is necessary, and it must be sufficient, but progress will be impossible if North Korea is allowed to turn its mere participation in the six-party talks into a bargaining chip.

Hideaki Kaneda, Retired Vice Admiral of Japan's Self Defense Forces, is currently Director of the Okazaki Institute.

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Yemeni Jews feel oppressed

By MOHAMMED BIN SALLAM
YEMEN TIMES STAFF

Yemeni Jews are part of the Arab people of Yemen, and history shows they embraced Judaism 2500 years ago.

Jews are one branch of the Semitic peoples, which have a common language, Yemen's Jews are an integral part of the Yemeni people. They have the same characteristics as Yemenis including racial, facial, Arabic language with its various dialects. They have the same demographic distribution as other Yemenis over the Yemeni land.

The fact can easily be realized if we compare between a Muslim and a Jew from Hadhramout or a Muslim and Jew from Sana'a. Their physical characteristics are the same. Thus we say, "Nobody can find a difference between two citizens from Hadhramout or Sana'a (a Muslim and a Jew) but we can find a difference between two citizens one from Sana'a and the other from Hadhramout."

This time, during my attendance of a Jewish wedding in Raydah district, Amran province, where hundreds of Yemeni Jews dwell, I tried to recognize any difference between the Jews and the Muslims native to the area who had been invited to the wedding. My attempt was in vain, save the facial whiskers. Then it is only the whiskers that makes Jews different from Muslims in Yemen, and nothing else.

During this invitation, I could acquaint myself with some aspects of Jews' life such as the living and cultural standards, their relations with their Muslim neighbors, their wedding and religious rituals, and other things. I do not claim that this article will cover everything. However, allow me to report as much as the article can contain.

Thus, wedding is costly and represents a big burden for limited-income people. The average expense hits the mark of YR 1.2 million distributed as follows:

- YR 200,000 as a dowry.
- YR 200,000 for gold ornamentation.
- YR 210,000 for three bulls (70 thousand for each)
- YR 90 thousand for bride's mother, and maternal and paternal aunts.

There is also the expenditure on meals, drinks and other petty cash.

Living conditions

Unofficial statistics reveal that number of Jews in Yemen does not reach 1,000 people. Some Jews mention they are 450, excluding women.

Yet, living conditions of Jews do not differ from Muslims in terms of poverty, privatization, and destitution.

Muslims in this area are distinguished from Jews by possession of more lands and free movement facing no obstacles or restrictions and other prerogatives such as medical and educational services as well as recruitment for the army, governmental departments, and other establishments. We have not heard of a Jew being employed by the army or the government in general.

Jews are not equal to Muslims in rights and duties. They are prohibited from carrying arms both white and fire weapons. They face difficulties wherever they go due to the whisker (one of a pair of hair strings dangling on both sides of the head) which makes him stark among other citizens.

Jews have professional experience in handicrafts as well as trade, bricklaying, automobile engineering and other humble professions.

The house owned by a Jew does not differ from that of a Muslim in terms of furniture, fixtures, or other household articles. Social security provided by the state for



Some of the younger members of Yemen's Jewish community.

a few years ago to have a 12-room school built for us," said a teacher. "However, this promise has not been fulfilled yet. Therefore, students are sent over to America to receive religious sciences. They are not accepted by universities due to their low performance and therefore their opportunities to get good jobs in the US or Israel are impossible."

The school's resources are very limited: a blackboard, textbooks kept in the rabbi's closet or with students. There is also a computer set used by a teacher to type lessons in Hebrew. He keeps it at home in fear of burglary.

Teachers' salaries are contributed by US-based Jewish organizations, said a teacher.

The supporting organizations warn teachers of browsing the net in order to avoid surfing porno sites. They are prohibited and whoever is proved to have surfed them will get punished.

They shun traveling to Israel because they fear to commit wrongdoing. Traveling to Israel means mortification and bearing oppressive forms worse than what they face in Yemen. Once in Israel, they would either be recruited for the army or used in menial jobs. They would not be given the chance to join education or training programs appropriate for their ages which most often are over 18.

The youth who want to travel find the US the best choice. A rich Jew would cover all travel expenses (we met with one of the rich Jews who has come from the US, the interview is to be published next issue). There, they get enrolled in religious schools to learn the Modern Hebrew. Then, they are given the right to choose, either to stay in America and work over there or to leave for another country, as he likes. Those who prefer to return to Yemen are supported by wealthy Jews to get married, establish a home and get monthly pensions, sometimes irregular. However, this attention is not paid to aged people or women who do not enjoy similar insurance.

Concerning procedures of travelling to the US, a young Jew mentioned that they were easy before September 11, but now they are complicated. "If you get an invitation from there, things get easier. After all, we receive a better treatment by the US than Muslim do," said he

Jews speak out

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Yemeni Jews, besides their hair, look like any other Yemeni.

Marriage traditions

There are no big differences between the Jewish marriage and the Muslim one. The only difference is in the length of the wedding: whereas Muslim weddings continue over three days, the Jews have a week long wedding (if it starts on Thursday, it ends on the next Wednesday). Suppose that Thursday is for engagement, the bride's father has to have a bull slaughtered to entertain the guests coming from different areas (Sa'adah for example) for two days (Thursday and Friday). Most of them are Jews except for Muslim cronies.

On Saturday, the wedding rituals are suspended completely till the evening. The rabbi then slaughters another bull presented by the bridegroom who entertained the guest on Sunday and Monday. Tuesday is the consummation day when the bride is taken to the bridegroom. On this day, the rabbi slaughters a third bull presented by the bull to entertain the guest all the day. Upon the bride's arrival in the bridegroom's house, guests dispersed, coming the next day to the house of the bride's father where they dine, drink, and chew qat at the expense of the bridegroom.

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the short term."

Another Sulaiman added: "Decades ago, our children were allowed to join public schools to learn different sciences as Muslim children. They were also exempted from studying the Islamic subjects. Some of them got the Secondary School Certificate. However, today, especially over the last decade, certain Muslim scholars, who claim to be Sunni, have controlled the bulk of schools in the area and have imposed on our children to memorize the Quraan and study Islamic sciences by force or incite their Muslim classmates to bully them. Therefore, our children have abandoned government's schools."

Another attendant said: "Our being characterized by whiskers has made us outcast by many people. Moreover, we are not educated which considerably lessens job opportunities and complicates our search for bread. This condition has led us down below the most crushed classes in the society."

Other Jewish citizens ask questions about the responsible for these difficulties. "Isn't the State responsible? Where are our rights as Yemenis? Where are our rights to education, health, security, and public liberties? Aren't we Yemenis like you? Don't we have rights and duties as you have?"

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