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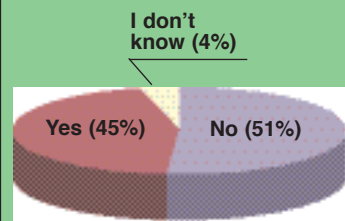


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Readers' Voice

Last edition's question:

Do you think that the independent applicants for Yemen's upcoming presidential race will ever obtain the required number of Parliament votes for nomination?



This edition's question:

Yemeni courts acquitted 19 individuals accused of terrorism after they spent years in prison. Do you think those remaining in Yemeni prisons are connected with terrorism?

- Yes
- No
- I don't know

Go to our website at: yementimes.com/#poll and have your voice heard

Bin Shamlan applies for presidency

By: Mohammed bin Sallam

SANA'A, July 8 — In a press statement, Joint Meeting Parties (JMP) candidate Faisal bin Shamlan, said, "Participation in the upcoming presidential elections is a national obligation aiming to make the democratic trend in Yemen firm."

Accompanied by a number of journalists, correspondents and crowds affiliated with the JMP in front of Parliament after submitting his application to Parliament's Presidency Board, bin Shamlan hoped the elections would be conducted according to standards agreed upon by the JMP and General People's Congress (GPC). He also assured that the 2006 elections are considered the first real and competitive elections at the highest level, the presidency.

Bin Shamlan further added that his "electoral program is the comprehensive political and national reform project adopted by the JMP and the approach we must adopt is that of reforming the political system, without which we'll achieve nothing."



Bin Shamlan

When asked about his political affiliation, bin Shamlan declared that he's an independent candidate and was nominated by the JMP. He further asserted that the future lies with the JMP.

Attended by news agencies, Arab

and foreign satellite channel correspondents, JMP leaders and several members affiliated with parliamentary blocks, bin Shamlan submitted his nomination documents to Parliament's Presidency Board on Saturday at 11 a.m.

Profile on Faisal Othman bin Shamlan

- Born 1934 in Al-Swiri, Hadramout
- Attended primary school in Ghail Bawazir and secondary school in Sudan
- Graduated from Kingston University, UK, specializing in civil engineering
- Married with one son and four daughters
- Minister of Public Works and Transport in 1967 during the first government formed under President Qahtan Al-Shabi following South Yemen's independence
- Executive Chairman of the General Authority for Electrical Power
- Member of the Supreme People's Council 1971-1990
- Founded Al-Minbar party and issued Al-Minbar newspaper in 1990 along with Omar Tarmom, Dr. Ba Faqih, Dr. Karama Sulian and many others
- Manager of oil marketing administration at the Ministry of Oil 1991-92
- Minister of Oil in 1994, resigned in 1995
- Member of Parliament 1990-2003
- Resigned from Parliament in protest against the two-year
- extended period of Parliament in 2003, refusing to nominate himself anymore after that
- When the government was formed in 1994, concerned authorities insistently called him to preside over the government, but he refused the offer
- Characterized by a clean vocational job register throughout his life, with an interest in charity projects
- Returned a car in his keeping after ending his work in oil marketing administration at the Aden refinery.
- It has been reported that unlike other 1994 government ministers, he was given just one car, which he left in the ministry's garage when he resigned his post
- Given a car by the president in 1997 and later had to sell it to meet his life needs
- As declared by some close to him, he spent all the money he saved from private work to cover his expenses during his work at the ministry.
- Unlike other ministers who receive special entitlements and a car every seven years, he receives YR 38,000 from the Cabinet and YR 20,000 from the presidential office.

Court acquits 19 terror suspects due to inadequate evidence

By: Yemen Times Staff

SANA'A, July 9 — During its Saturday session, the State Security Specialized Penal Court acquitted 19 suspects accused of plotting to hit Western interests in Yemen, including five Saudis known as Abu Musab Al-

Zarqawi's cell.

The court adjourned the case at its May 22 hearing due to inadequate evidence. Meanwhile, Prosecution charged the 19 with plotting against the Central Intelligence Agency (CIA) in retaliation for the 2002 killing of an Al-Qaeda member by an unmanned fighter plane.

According to Prosecution, the suspects traveled to Iraq and returned to Yemen to implement their plots after

receiving directives from Al-Zarqawi, Al-Qaeda's first-in-command in Iraq, who was killed in an air strike a month ago.

The court ruled in favor of the defense, clearing the suspects of any charges attributed to them due to inadequate testimony against them. The suspects' acquittal was contained in the court's preliminary ruling.

Judge Mohamed Al-Ba'adani said the court hadn't received enough evidence to convict the suspects. Announcing the ruling, Al-Ba'adani explained, "After confiscating seized articles previously in the suspects' possession, we've not found enough evidence to sentence them as the authorities claimed."

Upon hearing the verdict, the 19 suspects shouted loudly, "Allah is the greatest! Allah is the greatest!" while the Saudi suspects' relatives, who've attended the trial since the beginning, urged the court to issue the final acquittal.

"The verdict contains enough testimony against the suspects," Deputy



Some of the 19 suspects during the trial.

Attorney General Khalid Al-Mawiri said in response. He demanded the case be referred to the Penal Appeals Court, which he said is the party concerned with such cases.

The State Security Specialized Penal Court began trying the original 17 suspects February 22, adding Jalal Al-Qadas and Aqil Al-Kuhali to the list of defendants a few weeks ago.

Yemen joined the U.S.-led war on terrorism following the Sept. 11, 2001 terrorist attacks in the U.S., hunting those connected to Al-Qaeda, including bombers of the USS Cole in 2000 and the French supertanker Limburg in 2002.

Italy wins fourth title on penalties



Cannavaro lifts up the World Cup trophy after his 100th cap. SOURCE: BBC

By: Yemen Times Staff

SANA'A, July 10 — Italy won the World Cup title for the fourth time in its history thanks to a decisive penalty from fullback Cossato after the France's forward Trezeguet missed and Zidane's was sent off for crazily headbutting the Italian defender Materazzi.

Both sides played a dramatic final, the rarest of the kind in the world cup history. France went ahead in minute 7 of the first half when Zidane opened the scoring via a penalty shot while Materazzi

answered for the Italians in minute 18 of the same half through a strong header.

The two teams played a similar quarter-final in 1998 when an extra time game ended scoreless helping the French, led by Zidane, to qualify for the semi-final on penalties.

This is the second World Cup final ending on penalties, as the first was in the U.S.A. when Brazil deserved the trophy after knocking out Italy in a penalty shoot-out.

More details on the dramatic final in the next issue.

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Holocene period of Yemen explored



In recent times there have been several antiquities discoveries in Yemen.

PHOTO BY FUAD AL-HARAZI

SANA'A, July 8 — With the participation of experts from Arkansas and Durham Universities, a joint US-British archeological team has started to explore some historical places in Dhamar, Marya district.

Dr. Abdullah Bawazir, chairman of General Authority for Antiquities and Museums, told Sept 26.net last Wednesday that this archaeological mis-

sion, along with students of the Antiquity Department in Dhamar University, will survey the different phases of stability in the area right from the Iron era to the Himirite era. Additionally, the team will study ceramics of the Himirite and Islamic eras. The exploration will further cover the whole period of the Holocene era (6000-4000 BC)

However, Dr. Bawazir denied the dis-

covery of a city full of caves in Al-Jawf. He said that the cave discovered is not new for the authority and the primary information of the team sent to the area indicate there is nothing new. According to him, what is new regarding this matter is the entry of some locals into the cave which is a source of rumors as it is thought previously to be a place inhabited by jinn.

Dismissed soldiers seek reinstatement to their units

SANA'A, July 8 — Tens of soldiers dismissed following Yemen's civil war in 1994 staged a sit-in in front of Parliament Council, asking for reappointment to their units.

The protestors asked Parliament Council members to intervene in implementing the directives of President Saleh, calling for reappointment of soldiers dismissed after 1994 war in their units.

They further accused the Soldiers' Affairs Department of sidelining those who belong to southern areas and closing their ears to their demands, though they have high directives to be reinstated to their units. Additionally, they demanded to be given their rights according to President's directives and be referred to retirement with all their acquired rights.

Last June 12, President Saleh called

for the formation of a special committee to prepare for the return of those absent or dismissed from armed forces and security right from 1994 up to now. For that end, a committee, including Dr. Rashad Al-Alimi, Deputy Prime Minister, Brigadier, Mohamed Nasser, Minister of Defense as well as other concerned officials in Soldiers and Officials' Units in the Defense and Security Ministries, was formed.

Ibb police kill citizen

IBB, July 9 — Police killed a citizen from the Al-Sehoul area for his refusal to surrender his gun when ordered to do so by soldiers. Police then clashed with Mustafa Al-Dhubai and shot him dead.

According to eyewitnesses, the victim was a security officer working in Sa'ada and he already possessed an arm-bearing license.

Police shot Al-Dhubai dead under the pretext that he opened fire on their vehicle and holed its tires. However,

people who were present in the scene confirmed the tires were shot by Khaled Al-Dhubai after he had seen his brother shot dead in the street, near Al-Dalil Taxi Station.

The brother of the victim pointed his gun at the police vehicle and started firing randomly, but no one was injured.

In another issue, security authorities in Ibb refused to release an aged inmate from prison, when he was suffering from hemorrhage and paralysis. One of the Ibb Central Prison inmates, under

the name of Mohamed Saleh Al-Sharif, 80, had become incapacitated from a stroke, and yet the prison management and Public Prosecution refused to release him on bail, or even transfer him to an isolated room in jail so that his family could visit him, Al-Shoura Net reported.

The inmate's family claimed that contagious epidemics in prison and the unhealthy conditions, coupled with malnutrition, were the causes of their relative's illness.

Yemen prepares for summer tourist festivals

SANA'A, July 9 — The Ministry of Culture completed this week the preliminary steps of the Sana'a Tourist Summer Festival.

Minister of Culture, Nabil Al-Faqih said that his ministry is due to launch the inaugural carnival of the activities on July 16 in the Old City of Sana'a.

He added the Sana'a Tourist Summer Festival will coincide with activities of the Country's Tourist Festival in Hadramout and the Fourth Tourist Festival in Ibb.

According to Al-Faqih, tourist activities will be coordinated between Sana'a, Hadramout and Ibb to facilitate attendance of foreign visitors in all the tourist and summer activities, as well as to allow them tour the historic and tourist sites in the country.

Minister of Culture clarified the tourist activities are due to start with the Country's Tourist Festival in Hadramout on July 14 and then the carnival of the Sana'a Tourist Summer Festival. The Fourth Tourist

Festival in Ibb is scheduled to kick off on July 16 while activities will be distributed and coordinated between the three governorates until August 28.

He emphasized that activities of the Sana'a Tourist Summer Festival, which involve many Arab and Yemeni famous artists, may help activate the national tourism via popularizing tourist, civil and historic sites in the country and attracting Arab and foreign tourists.

Seven sailors die as ship capsizes off Yemen's coast

SANA'A, July 9 — A freight ship sank off the coast of the Yemeni island of Socotra in the Indian Ocean due to bad weather, killing seven crew members. At least 13 crew members were rescued, but one later died in an Aden hospital, government officials said. Six sailors drowned in the sinking.

The ship, 'Meryam 4', sank on Wednesday night while it was on its way to Zanzibar in Tanzania from the Omani port of Salalah, with its nineteen crew members. The ship was owned by al-Hufuf Maritime Co, which is based in the United Arab Emirates, but it sailed under the flag of Panama, according to media reports.

Khaleej Times reported from reliable sources that the crew members were from India, Sri Lanka, Burma and Somalia. Whereas the Associated Press website reported that the seven dead sailors included individuals from Tanzania, Borneo, Somalia and four from India.

Yemen's official news agency, Saba, reported that the vessel was carrying a cargo of around 5,000 tonnes of Omani cement from Salalah to Zanzibar, when it drifted off course in bad weather near to Socotra island, which lies about 170 miles (270 kilometers) east of the Yemeni port of Aden. Strong winds hit Socotra in July and August each year, with speeds

sometimes reaching 13 to 18 kilometers an hour. Such weather often results in the movement of ships being stopped in that area. Saba stated that "Yemeni coast guard vessels and other foreign ships rescued the survivors and retrieved bodies from the water".

Khaleej Times said that after getting a distress call from the vessel, Yemeni coast guard boats were dispatched to the scene. The body of a sailor was recovered early the next morning, and naval ships patrolling the area as part of a US-led anti-terrorism mission, pulled five other bodies from the water that afternoon. The rescued crew members were admitted to a hospital in Aden.

Community centers trainers' course continue

SANA'A, July 8 — The special course for training community centers trainers from Mukalla, Taiz and Hodeida is to continue up until the final days of July.

Abdullah Abdulelah Sallam, a Manager of the Youth National Cultural Center (YNCC) in Taiz said the course is implemented under an agreement signed last year by the Ministry of Planning and International Cooperation, UN Development Program and the YNCC.

The agreement stipulated the establishment of three typical community centers for youths with the aim to enhance their capabilities at the local level through the use of information and telecommunication technology, Sallam mentioned. The agreement aims to create more job opportunities to help young

people improve their living standards.

"The UNDP, Information and Telecommunication Technology Program to Serve Development in Arab Countries and Microsoft Company are to support youth centers in Yemen with 200 thousand (USD). The grant is to be used in funding a year-project, expected to benefit 3,000 young men and women," Sallam noted. "There are many local partners who will contribute to the project including Al-Absi Group."

Sallam said the project aims to implement the recommendations of the Third National Human Development Report that discussed various issues. Also it aims to facilitate opportunities for obtaining information and exchanging experiences of issues associated with youth develop-

ment, increase their awareness and provide them with new job opportunities through information and telecommunication technology.

Sallam continued that the project is to support establishing electronic libraries, which in turn help young people acquire knowledge and improve their capabilities.

He concluded the community centers' project is to be implemented as part of a comprehensive program for enhancing the use of information and telecommunication technology to serve development in Yemen. The program is based on the available abilities and infrastructures, as well the effective participation of civil community and governmental organizations.

ILSI Project Ends 1st Phase

SANA'A, July 9 — The Instructional Leadership and Supervision Initiative (ILSI) project ended its first phase of training on Sunday in Sana'a.

Minister of Education Dr. Abdulalalam Al-Jawfi presided over the ceremony honoring the program's first group of graduates. He presented the 50 participants in the training — 25 teacher trainers from Sana'a Teacher Training Institutes (TTIs) and 25 teacher supervisors from the Office of Education in Sana'a — with certificates that acknowledged their accomplishment and the new skills they have learned. Through ILSI, these participants have learnt cutting edge teaching and teacher-training methods that put students at the center of the learning process.

In addition, the participants have learned how to apply these methods through the use of information communication technologies such as computer-based applications and the Internet. To support their ongoing use of these new pedagogical approaches, computer labs have been provided to the



Minister of Education handing certificates to high institute of Teachers.

teacher training institutes in each of the four governorates where the program is working.

In recognition of the program's innovations, the Minister of Education said, "I would like to urge the graduates to take all the skills obtained from the training into real practice in the field to better serve the education process."

ILSI is a two-year initiative funded by the US Department of State's Middle East

Partnership Initiative (MEPI) to build the capacity of the Yemeni Ministry of Education's in-service teacher training institutions in the governorates of Sana'a, Aden, Ibb and Ma'rib. ILSI project is to continue its work in Sana'a, Aden, Ibb and Ma'rib next year to provide Teacher Training Institute (TTI) trainers and Ministry of Education inspectors with support in using these new instructional methods and technologies.

Suicide in Yemen studied by WJCO

SANA'A, July 9 — Women Journalists with no Constraints Organization (WJCO) said that it has been following with deep concern the increase in suicide cases in Yemen, particularly among women. The organization was stunned at the number of suicide cases for the last week, as declared by Al-Sahwa net, where 5 girls committed suicide in Hodeidah and another one in

Hajah in just one month. WJCO fears that this situation may turn into a phenomenon which reaps souls and destroys families throughout Yemen.

In a statement distributed last week, WJCO called upon all human rights organizations and state institutions to take a stand against the psychological, financial, social and religious deterioration which leads to an increase in sui-

cide cases. The situation of woman will be considered in this study.

Via field study in the Yemeni government, WJCO has announced that it has begun to study this phenomenon in Yemen, focusing on both the initial causes and possible solutions. The study will lead up to a final symposium dedicated to the issue and a recorded film on suicide in Yemen.

Club for Yemeni and French businessmen

SANA'A, July 9 — In collaboration with the Yemeni embassy in Paris and Yemeni-French Parliamentary Friendship Association, the first club for Yemeni and French businessmen opened on Friday in Paris.

"Establishing the club aims to expand the range of economic and commercial exchange between

Yemen and France", said the Yemeni Ambassador to France, Mohammed Al-Aidarous. "It also aims to encourage investment in Yemen, facilitate the difficulties before French investors and provide the benefit of French Companies working in Yemen."

The ambassador further pointed out

that the Yemeni Embassy in Paris will provide all necessary facilities for French investors in accordance with the Yemeni government's directives aiming at expanding foreign investment opportunities in Yemen. Additionally, the club will be a link between Yemeni and French businessmen.



Free Voice monthly newsletter on media, support and developments in the Middle East and North Africa provides information about Free Voice's Arab media programme and Arab partners. Editor-in-chief: Nicolien Zuijgeest. Website: www.freevoice.nl

The Netherlands – Funding for Investing in the Future Program

The conference Investing in the Future on 7 and 8 June in The Hague, the Netherlands proved a huge success. At the conference the Investing in the Future Program was officially launched. Dutch Foreign Minister Ben Bot announced the funding of a substantial part of the program.

The Arab partners of the conference from Yemen, Bahrain, Lebanon, Jordan, Egypt and Morocco also had a fruitful separate meeting with Mrs. Agnes van Ardenne, Dutch Minister of Development Cooperation.

The foundations were laid for a unique form of capacity building in the field of good journalism, protection of journalists and press of the freedom in the Arab world. The idea was raised to create an Alliance of Arab NGO's, newspapers and institutions to support the program.

The conference gave the opportunity to have a frank discussion about "best practices" as far as professional training and protection of journalists in the Middle East and North Africa are concerned. Specific recommendations were made about the content and future means of cooperation regarding the Investing in the Future Program.

One of the objectives of the conference was to strengthen donor coordination and to create the opportunity for donors to meet the main protagonists of the Program Investing in the Future and representatives of Arab media NGO's. The steering committee will continue its efforts in raising

public and private funds. After Ramadan 2006 the program Investing in the Future will officially start.

Jordan – Status of freedom of the press
At the end of May the Conciliation Court sentenced Jihad Momani, former chief editor of Shihan weekly, and Hashem Khalidi, the editor of Al Mihwar weekly, to two months in prison each. One day later the government proposed a bill ending jail time for journalism crimes.

It is for the first time journalists have been given prison sentences for reproducing the cartoons on the prophet Mohammad. Reporters without Borders: "Journalists must not be punished for their editorial decisions. The two journalists in this case were simply doing their job by choosing to reproduce the cartoons, like dozens of other media outlets around the world."

Lawyer Mohammad Qteishat pledged to launch an appeal. If the sentences are upheld on appeal, both editors will be given the option of paying a fine to avoid imprisonment. Under the Penal Code, sentences of up to three months can be replaced with a fine. The journalists are free on bail pending appeals.

One day after the sentences the government proposed a bill ending jail time for journalism crimes. King Abdullah has endorsed the free-press policy of not sentencing journalists to prison for journalism-related offences. In February, however, the king condemned the cartoons as a crime that 'could not be justified on the pretext of freedom of expression.'

According to Human Rights Watch the Jordanian government is giving the intelligence agencies, the police and prosecutors free rein to clamp down on legitimate speech. On 11 June prosecutors from the Court of First Instance in Amman ordered the arrest of four members of parliament after they consorted family members on the death of Abu Mus'ab Al-Zarqawi. The MP's are members of the Islamic Action Front. They are charged with violating Article 150 of Jordan's Penal Code, which bans all writing or speech that is "intended to, or results in, stirring up sectarian or racial tension or strife among different elements of the nation."

Saudi Arabia – Newspapers stop showing women

King Abdullah has told Saudi editors to stop publishing pictures of women because they could lead young men astray, newspapers reported in the beginning of June.

The king's directive, made in a meeting with local editors, caused surprise because the monarch has been regarded a quiet reformer

since he took office in the ultraconservative country in August 2005.

In recent months, newspapers have published pictures of women always wearing the traditional Muslim headscarf to illustrate stories. The stories usually have had to do with women's issues. The papers have also started publishing a range of views on causes that are not generally accepted in Saudi Arabia such as women having the right to drive and vote.

The king told editors that publishing a woman's picture was inappropriate. The king also called on editors to stop printing stories that portray the country in a negative light. The king added that newspapers should ignore the foreign press, especially when what it publishes is 'against Islam or against Arabs.' All media in Saudi Arabia are either state-owned or state-run.

Bahrain – Shut down private radio station

The first privately-held radio station in Bahrain stopped broadcasting due to a series of "violations". Sawt Al-Ghad (The Voice of Tomorrow) began operating in January and focused on entertainment and steered clear of politics.

According to the Ministry of Information the owner failed to present bank evidence that their company has a capital of three million dollars. Although a draft law regulating audiovisual media in Bahrain is still before parliament, the information ministry licensed Sawt Al-Ghad on the basis of internal bylaws in a bid to open the market to investors.

Newspaper Al-Waqt quoted Sawt Al-Ghad's director Sawaya, as denying that the company had violated any of the terms of the agreement with the ministry. The cancellation order did not contain any details about, or justifications for the decision.

Sawt Al-Ghad is operated by Delmon Media, owned by Lebanese investors with Bahraini, Kuwaiti and Saudi partners. Delmon is considering making a formal protest. It has been preparing to launch a private television channel.

North Africa – Advocacy group formed

A recently formed advocacy group will push for greater freedom of expression in North Africa. The Working Group on Press Freedom and Free Expression will support regional networking, campaigning and monitoring on press freedom and freedom of expression.

The Cairo-based Arabic Network for Human Rights Information and the Tunisia-based Observatory for the Freedom of Press, Publishing and Creation (OLPEC) have joined advocacy groups from six North African countries to form a new coalition including journalists, human rights activists and lawyers from Algeria, Egypt, Libya, Mauritania, Morocco and Tunisia. The group formed at a meeting held June 6 and 7 in Casablanca, Morocco. The meeting focused on media laws in North Africa and included international groups such as Reporters Without Borders (RSF), UNESCO, and Index on Censorship. The working group plans to establish a regional network that would raise aware-

ness of press freedom violations and lobby governments to better protect journalists' rights. The group members agreed to share information, organize support campaigns, document press freedom violations, and send groups to investigate violations when needed, among other things. The Working Group will be based in Casablanca and coordinated by three of its founders - Sihem Bensedrine, Gamal Eid and Aboubaker Jamaï - until it holds its next meeting.

For more info: see website: www.hrwinfo.net/en/wgfenal2006/about.shtml

Egypt – Blogger released

Blogger Alaa Abd El-Fatah was released on 22 June. His blog www.manalaa.net, founded with his wife Manal and dedicated to current affairs and politics, receives some 2,000 visitors a day.

El-Fatah wife said he had spent 24 hours standing in a small cell. She said he was also beaten, but she was not sure if it was by his cellmates or police officers. It seemed that the authorities released him because his family and friends were demonstrating outside the police station. Meanwhile, on 21 June, the public prosecutor ordered that bloggers Mohamed Sharkawy and Karim El-Shaer should be held for another two weeks.

Alaa Abd El-Fatah was arrested on 7 May while he was taking part in a demonstration in front of a Cairo court. He was accused of "illegal gathering" in violation of the emergency law, "obstructing traffic", "insulting President Mubarak" and "insulting police officers during his arrest". Alaa Abd El-Fatah is co-author of Manal and Alaa's Bit Bucket, jointly awarded a 2005 best blog prize by Reporters Without Borders and German media Deutsche Welle.

Syria - Writer to spend 6 months in prison

A Syrian military court ruled that a dissident writer must serve six months in prison after convicting him on charges that include insulting the president.

Mohammad Ghanem, a journalist who edits a website and advocates greater rights for Kurds in Syria, was sentenced to a year in prison on 6 June, but the military court commuted his sentence to six months, according to the National Organisation for Human Rights in Syria.

Ghanem was convicted on charges of "insulting the Syrian president, discrediting the Syrian government and fomenting sectarian unrest". Ghanem has been publishing articles on an Arabic website that have called for greater freedom for Kurds in Syria and have criticised the ruling Baath Party. Syria's detention of more than 10 well-known writers and human rights activists in recent months has been met with international criticism.

Iran – Akbar Ganji winner Martin Ennals Award

Akbar Ganji, an Iranian journalist who recently spent six years behind bars, is one of the winners of this year's Martin Ennals Award for Human Rights Defenders.

A jury representing 11 international human rights organizations decided to honor Ganji. He will receive the award, worth CHF20,000 (about US\$16,400), at a ceremony to be held October 12 in Geneva.

Iranian authorities released Ganji on 18 March 18 after his imprisonment for writing articles that implicated officials in the murders of political dissidents. Iranian intelligence officials later blamed those murders on "rogue agents" in the secret service.

Ganji, who was on hunger strike for more than two months last year, also received the 2006 Golden Pen of Freedom award from the World Association of Newspapers. Created in 1993, the Martin Ennals Award honors those who oppose human rights violations in courageous or innovative ways.

Egypt – Journalists get jail terms

Two Egyptian journalists have been sentenced to a year's imprisonment for defaming President Hosni Mubarak.

Al-Doustour chief editor Ibrahim Issa and reporter Sahar Zaki were found guilty of insulting and harming the president and the Egyptian people.

In April the paper reported on a legal case against the president accusing him of misusing public money during the privatization of state-owned companies. The man who filed the lawsuit, Said Abdullah, was also given a year's jail. The three were also fined EGP 10,000 (EUR 1,400), and were freed on bail pending a review by an appeal court.

Two years ago the president promised to abolish prison sentences for publishing offences but the new legislation has not yet been adopted. Al-Dustour is an independent weekly paper which returned to newspaper stands last year after a seven-year ban for criticising the government.

Lebanon – Censorship

The latest edition of the French weekly magazine, Courier International, has appeared on

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It marked the spot where state censors clipped two articles, one on Iran and one on Bahrain. Civil rights activists say it is the most serious example of censorship since Syria withdrew its troops from Lebanon in April 2005, ending almost three decades of political influence on its neighbour. No official reason has been given for the censoring of the two articles "Iran: the disturbing beauty of the Prophet" and "Bahrain: shut up that muezzin who is shouting".

Anonymous sourced of the Interior Ministry said the censorship was 'necessary because the contents of the articles risked harming the dignity of Islam and its symbols'.

Jordan – Report on Status of Media Freedom 2005

Freevoice's partner Center for Defending Freedom of Journalists (CDFJ) in Jordan publish its 2005 report on the status of media freedom in Jordan.

The annual report issued by the Center for Defending the Freedom of Journalists [CDFJ] has revealed that the status of media freedoms in Jordan did not witness any development that would reflect the calls for reform that have been reported for years now. It also revealed that the status of the media freedoms in 2005 remained unchanged despite all the government's promises to elevate the ceiling of freedoms.

An opinion poll attached to the annual report showed that most journalists in Jordan are still not satisfied with the status

of media freedoms; around 84 percent of the polled journalists said that the status of media freedoms are modest or even below. The field monitoring survey conducted by report-drafting team disclosed that the different violations of the media freedoms have yet to stop, as evidenced in the apprehension of journalists, interference, harassment, prior censorship, trials, and others.

CDFJ Chairman Nidal Mansour said that "the survey conducted by the center for the four year in a row clearly shows that the media freedom in Jordan remained standstill and that it is not on the list of priorities of the successive governments despite the honey-coated promises to support the media freedom they have been customarily unleashing."

This year's report which was published by the center came in 186 pages distributed in six chapters that contain an opinion poll of journalists on the status of media freedoms in Jordan in 2005 and reports on the violations of media freedoms and the current status of media legislation in the kingdom.

The report also includes an analytical reading of the status of media freedoms from the viewpoint of media experts and leaders in Jordan provides an account of the debate over the mandatory and option membership of the Journalists Association, in addition to a review of the local, Arab, and international reports and information on the press status in Jordan in 2005.

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Congratulations... but after what?!

By: Fatima A-Iajel
Fatima_fajr@yahoo.com

Graduation day is a dream for every university student. For four years they see each batch celebrate their graduation and imagine themselves in that enviable position. However, students face a difficult time as they prepare for the celebration. At the same time as the students make arrangements for graduation, they have to prepare for their final exam. Students from the University of Sana'a narrate their experiences and show the difficulties and the stress they

my experience, as the individual responsible for the preparatory committee of our department, the major problem we faced was that none of us had enough experience in this field, so we had problems writing the letters asking for sponsorship money from companies, which was necessary for the party to be a success.

The reactions we had from different companies varied; some of them refused our application politely, and we respected that, but other companies treated us like beggars. Some businessmen proved that there are still generous and understanding people by receiving us kindly and listened to our

that they need, like the cost of the music group, flowers and other extras."

"We prefer to have the party outside the hall of the college because the securities wouldn't allow us to enjoy our festival. Whatever we want to do is not allowed. We will not do bad things, especially since our guests are our families and friends" Samer commented. "I think we are grown up enough to be responsible for our actions" she added.

While Raja'a Jaber commented that "we did our celebration in a big hall outside the college, even though the organizers of the college's ceremonies advised us to hold it in the hall of the college. However we were a party of



University graduates seem to be happy on their graduation day.

YT PHOTO

face as a result of the carelessness of university's staff.

Usually two parties are held for graduation day; the Academic festival, which the university's management arranges, and the music party, which the students organize themselves under the care of the university. However, students say that the university doesn't support them in organizing the festival.

"We organized our party without support from the university staff so we spent days looking for a hall and collecting money for the requests of the party. As a result, we didn't attend many lectures", Jamel AlNajar, the representative of the English students in the faculty of Education said. "The support from the youth manager in the college was only about 10% percent, only 30 thousand YR for every batch of students; I didn't receive any material support from the college organizers. They say you have to do the party under the care of the university, but when we asked them to support us, they replied that there was not enough support available" Jamel added.

Moreover, Abeer Al-Sarei added that "I knew that the Academic ceremony was free, but I was surprised when they told me to pay one thousand YR for the academic party."

"We earned these congratulations ourselves. The majority of the audience in any graduation party is unaware of all the troubles and difficulties that the organizers faced to make it successful." Samar Jameel M. Al-Saker the responsible student for the preparatory committee in the translation college at Sana'a University commented. "From

needs."

Mohammed Saeed Modhesh said about the problems he found, that the students were uncooperative and very demanding. But he found out that it is difficult to please every one, and he believes that knowing this fact will help him in the future.

Abeer Al-Madeh, the cultural representative in the committee, explained that the most difficult situation she faced was gathering everyone together to make a plan for the program, before the day of the party, as well as creating new ideas to make the party special.

"It's hard to know the things which will please the audience so I had to make some decisions at the last minute, for example to omit or add parts to the program. I know it's tough and sometimes it may take a strong character, but it has given me courage and self confidence."

When asking Dr.Ahmad AIQyadi, the youth leader in the Education College, whether the organizing staff allow students to hold their party inside the college, he said: "We allow students to make the music celebration inside the hall of the college, instead of having to hire a hall, which costs money. It is as a kind gesture to the students. However some students reject the idea of having the party in the hall of the college, so they look for venues used for weddings and other similar occasions. This way they lose a lot of money." When asking him why students have to pay money whilst the academic party is free, he replied that students have to contribute to the cost of preparing the extra things

about 250 students, and all of us wanted to invite our family and friends, so we rented a hall which was suitable and big enough for us."

New experience

"Now I have good experience and knowledge of how to deal with all sorts of people kindly and wisely; also I learned how to work with others in a team. There was no difference between boys and girls, all of us stood on the stage and received our certificates equally" Bador Hanthel commented.

"The party was great and full of excitement, although I didn't feel that I was a graduate on the day, because I spend most of my time behind the scenes, supervising the program and the checking details. I also benefited from this experience, by learning how to be patient and how to make relations with others, which will be important in my career."

He said about the party that it would have been better if the students were more helpful and organized.

"We faced a huge challenge and most of the time felt depressed, but what made us satisfied was that the party was a success and now because of it, we have had a good experience, which will help us in our careers." Samia Al Wajeh commented.

Finally, congratulations to every student who worked hard and suffered till he achieved his dream. Thanks for every student who put his country in his heart and mind, thanks for those who take care of their study and leave their touch in their country. Thanks to the future leaders.

Killing and detention top human rights violations in Yemen

By: Mohammed Al-Jabri

The Yemeni Observatory for Human Rights (YOHR) has recently issued its first annual report on human rights for 2005. Over seven chapters, the report reviews the situation of human rights violations, including democracy, rights of women, children, and refugees, freedom of the press, and self-expression.

Murder cases comprised 854 deaths in 2002; 878 in 2003; 788 in 2004 according to official figures, the report said. 2005, however, witnessed the largest number in comparison to previous years; 800 deaths were registered, as well as hundreds of casualties, during 11 months of the year. The YOHR observed that most of the deaths were deliberate acts of revenge. Armed clashes between government forces and followers of Al-Houthi in Sa'ada also claimed the lives of hundreds of people.

The report criticized the state for not curbing corruption, poverty and unemployment - factors responsible for suicides among youths. "The rights of life were also breached indirectly as a result of the spread of poverty and corruption. Many resort to taking their own lives because of their suffering and the lack of a clear policy on the part of the state to solve their problems by providing job opportunities and fighting corruption," states the report. Official accounts state that suicide is more common among females than males.

In 2003 and 2004, the phenomenon of suicide spread remarkably, where 588 cases were observed. This number seems larger than previous years.

A country rife with arms, Yemen also witnesses killings among citizens. 704 cases of deliberate killing were registered in 2003, and 664 in 2004.

Detention

Security authorities resort to detaining



the protests against the hike in fuel prices, security forces clashed with protestors who took to streets all over the county.

opposition politicians or citizens with opposing opinions, according to the report. Tribal groups, similarly, detain members of other tribes, and sometimes detain foreigners by means of pressuring the state to respond to their demands. In comparison, those detained by tribal groups are not subjected to physical torture and/or murder.

Year 2005 saw a number of forced disappearances and detentions. Twenty-eight-year fisherman Ghayour Awad is a case in point. Journalist Ahmed Al-Dhaheeri was detained in the capital, where eyewitnesses stated that soldiers forced him to get into a military vehicle. Moqbil Al-Ani and his brother Mohammed were detained by soldiers from Brigade 127 based in the Amran governorate. Human rights activist Khalid Ali Mahfoudh was detained in the Dhamar governorate, and military officers were thought to be behind his detention. Yahya Saleh Al-Zaidi was detained by Mechanical Brigade 25 based in the Marib governorate, and then sent to the political security detention where no one was allowed to visit him. Rasef Hasan, a university student, was detained by the Special Forces while he was practicing sport.

Although the Yemeni constitution

secures the personal freedoms of individuals, there are indications of cases of detentions without legal reasons, clear charges, and judicial sentences. The human rights committee's report at the Shoura Council states that there are prison inmates of different nationalities who have been jailed beyond their imprisonment term.

The same report makes it clear that female prison inmates who can't speak Arabic are not given any assistance to overcome the language barrier, and that there are 290 such women imprisoned in the Central Prison of Sana'a and some 800 others all over the country - most of them are poor and have served double their prison sentences and are kept in prison until they pay their debts and dues.

Aggressive measures against protestors represent yet another trend. During the protests against the hike in fuel prices, security forces clashed with protestors who took to streets all over the county. Tens of them were shot at, and numerous others were detained. Observers think that the protests were at first organized peacefully but with the interference of security forces, they turned into riots. "The shooting at protestors by security authorities and not presenting those who fired shots to the judiciary represent the extent of not respecting lives... confiscating journalists' cameras during the coverage of those protests represents another violation against the right of transferring information and freedom of press. In addition, a number of journalists were detained and insulted, which contradicts the law that secures freedom of expression," says the report.



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Reform Policies of the Turkish AK Party Setting an Example for Arab Islamists?

Many still regard the experiment represented by the Islamic AK Party with skepticism. Nevertheless, there is hope that the party could develop into a reform model for political change among the Islamic movements in the Arab world.

By: Slaheddine Jouchi

reform-oriented Islamist movements?

The founders of the Turkish-Islamist movement never expected that the political pragmatism of engineer Necmettin Erbakan would prompt some of his students to risk a one-of-a-kind experiment – an experiment that would give rise to much debate and a never-before-witnessed confusion among the governments of the Islamic states, as well as in the ranks of Islamist and secular intellectuals.

Is this all about an innovative new way for Islamists to form a government? Or does it merely represent a tactic born of necessity due to Turkey's special situation? Is it a consequence of trying to come to terms with the painful, failed experiments of earlier generations of Turkish Islamists? Or is it perhaps instead a re-interpretation that departs sharply from the culture of political Islam (especially the Arab version) as we have known it until now?

Potential impact of the Turkish reform model

But the most important question of all is: Will this experiment remain limited to Turkey, since its unique features cannot be readily transferred to other political cultures? Or will this new wave – despite its idiosyncrasy – in some way influence the political thinking of the more

When the "Justice and Development" party (AKP) won an overwhelming victory in the last parliamentary elections in November 2002, with 34.4 percent of the vote and 365 seats, Islamists everywhere reacted with euphoria. They saw in this triumph a clear sign of Turkey's return to the fold of the Islamic nations, and positive proof of the failure of "Turkish secularism" – and a defeat for all defenders of secularism in the region.

The victory of the AKP bolstered the self-confidence of the Islamists in the Arab world and reinforced their conviction that the Islamic peoples would back the Islamists when given the choice. They assumed this to be the "natural course" of events, since the Islamists are associated most closely with the religion of the "community of believers" (umma).

The Islamists' positive reaction to the electoral triumph of the AKP would not last long, however. The big shock came when the AKP leaders announced their party platform. They denied the experiment's Islamist aspirations and spoke out against viewing the AKP as one of the Islamist movements. They were referring here to the Refah party, the Fadila party and all the other Islamist-Turkish parties.

The AKP as representative of a "moderate Islam"

The AKP is based – in the words of its chairman, Erdogan – "on humane



In the words of Turkey's Prime Minister and AKP chairman Erdogan, the party is based on "humane and not on religious principles"

and not on religious principles. Its goal is the good of the Turkish nation and the promotion of democratic and political standards." The nation should be founded on the principles "of secularism and on democratic as well as social values."

This doesn't mean that the AKP has totally renounced Islam, even though its platform does not make explicit reference to the religion. Instead, Erdogan maintains that the AKP represents a "moderate Islam." The party program not only espouses secularism, but even praises the nation's founder, Atatürk, and quotes his guiding principle: "The nation's salvation lies in its resolve and perseverance."

These statements prompted diverse reactions. Most of the secularists viewed them as a victory for their

own model of how society and government should function. Although many doubted the actual motives of the AKP, they did see in the party's commitment to secularism an important indication that these Islamists had given up on their previous political projects. Radical secularists, however, whether Turks or Arabs, are impatiently waiting for this experiment to fail so that they can once again marginalize their opponents.

Many Arab and western governments still regard the experiment represented by the AKP with caution. But they have nevertheless not yet given up hope that it could evolve into a "model" for the region, one that would contribute to squelching "Islamic fundamentalism."

The Turkish AKP experiment can be helpful in the quest for ways to politically integrate the majority of the non-violent and democratically inclined Islamist reform movements. In this regard, two positions can be discerned among the Islamists:

A genuine change in attitude or mere lip service?

Some believe that the leaders of the AKP have genuinely left their Islamist past and disposition behind them and consciously want to integrate themselves into Turkey's political landscape – which would also mean that they accept the separation of church and state.

Others are convinced, however, that the new discourse being embraced by Erdogan and his party cronies can be explained by the political circumstances prevailing in Turkey today.

After the failed attempt by Necmettin Erbakan, the founder of the modern, Turkish-Islamist movement, to defeat the red lines of the Turkish army – which was supported by the "secular fundamentalists" – the Islamists saw a need to change their course and their tactics.

According to this viewpoint, the AKP's about-face is therefore merely a "feint" aimed at getting around the strategic difficulties otherwise encountered by Turkish Islamists.

To date, very few Islamists have tried to separate out the positive aspects of this experiment. And those that did think along those lines neglected to face the fundamental questions; for example, the relationship between church and state or the compatibility of Islamic and European values.

The issues that preoccupied them

were instead more practical aspects of party work, such as the structure of the AKP, its ability to mobilize women and young people, or its success at overcoming the economic crisis in Turkey.

Mutual interest instead of ideology


Notwithstanding the Islamists' reserve with regard to the AKP, which by now has been in power for three years, it cannot be ruled out that this experiment will leave its mark on some of the movements of political Islam – particularly those in the Arab world.

It is thus conceivable that some of the Arab-Islamist movements will embrace a more flexible line, gradually taking leave of their conservative stance on questions of faith, and will be prepared to enter into alliances based on mutual interests – and not merely on shared ideologies – although it must be emphasized here that the Turkish democracy, despite its deficiencies, was what made the emergence of the AKP possible in the first place. And in the process it also gave the Islamists a chance to unfold.

Conversely, Arab despotism is one of the biggest obstacles to the political and intellectual development of Arab-Islamist movements, which have been forced to put most of their energy into the bare struggle for survival.

If these movements are ever to mature, there are several factors that need to change – above all, it is urgent that the Arab states carry out fundamental political reforms in order to afford at least a modicum of democratic freedoms.

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Words of Wisdom



The fall-out from technology advances, notably globalization, is clearly ahead of us. We need to grapple with this and the sooner we assess the issues and decide on what we need to do, the better prepared we will be. A main component of globalization is liberalization.

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

Arabs' Palestine & the silence of graves

From my viewpoint, writing about issues away from the current situation in Palestinian is like singing and dancing at the funeral. I don't know how words can satisfy the reader if they are not about Palestine, a land filled with blood and smoke and besieged by the ugliest aggression, which is the daily practice of settlement occupiers whose values are worse than those of thieves and murders anywhere and at anytime.

It is obvious that this aggression does not differentiate between children and old men, nor does it respect trees or seeds, and no blame or denunciation can deter it from exercising brutality. It only has a faith in the force, which it worships and fears.



By: Dr. Abdulaziz
Al-Maqaleh

Some political analysts, be they Arabs or foreigners, never see a reason for the unprecedented Israeli aggression, except for Iraq's absence plus the comprehensive Arab catastrophe and the spiritual and material defeat on the part of Arabs this absence caused. The consequence of Iraq's absence made some Arab leaders, mainly those who are loyal to the US, feel horrified by the leisure left by the Iraqi army. They fear facing up to what happened to Iraq, however, if they have some loyalty to their citizens and nations, they will find out that nothing except for defending rights and principles can save them from the tragic destiny. The Palestinian right is the first thing to back, as it is the right of those who face death every moment for they cling to

defending what remains of their home soil and refuse to submit or to accept eternal slavery and the settlement of occupiers.

There is no doubt that rage and sadness have become a commonplace among the ordinary Arab citizens, and there should be no surprise if we hear or listen that sad citizens started to behave in a way closer to madness. This is the ordinary citizens' natural reaction to what is daily committed by the Zionist occupiers who use various means and show differing excuses and wrong justifications. The Zionists' acts are confronted by a kind of reaction, similar to the silence of graves. Policies adopted by the Arab regimes, who established political ties with the Israeli Occupation, make the ordinary citizen behave this way and demonstrate this reaction, whether it is convenient or not. What matters for the ordinary citizens is overcoming silence and indifference on the part of regimes.

I don't believe that furious reactions are only felt among ordinary Arab citizens, but that there are similar reactions in the eastern and western communities as they view massacres and brutalities on a daily basis. There still are nations with humanitarian attitudes and look sadly over the killings of children and old men, the demolition of houses, the uprooting of trees and strikes on innocent people holidaying at the beach. Retaliation towards what happens to children and innocent people, who are subjected to bloodshed on a daily basis in their homeland, is a must. Under no circumstance, can this retaliation be carried out by the Arab regimes. Only nations or the world public opinion, which stocks the daily reactions, are able to retaliate.

Dr. Abdulaziz Al-Maqaleh is Yemen's prominent poet and intellectual. He is the director of the Yemeni Center for Studies.

OUR
OPINIONGenerational
contract

Meeting His Royal Highness Prince Hassan bin Talal is a very special and unique experience. Not because he is a prince, but rather because he is a man of thought and a very passionate thinker. He is one of the few driving forces in the Arab and Muslim world, and has established many organisations and institutions that aim at making the world a better place.

During my delightful interview with him, he talked about the generational or historical contract. It is the obligation and commitment towards the future generations whereby we confirm their right to a better life; a life, which we the current generation manipulating the resources and the fates, are destined to impact. He gave the example of Norway where a fund for future generations was created. Through this fund investing in future, development projects take place the same way parents put aside money for their children's education.

This is not the first time I come across such a concept. In fact, once a Yemeni businessman brought up this topic while complaining about the way investment is abused in our country. "At least leave the underground wealth buried for the future generations instead of exhausting our resources this way," he said, commenting on the notion that the Yemeni oil is almost used up without significant impact on development.

I totally agree. If we are not responsible enough to handle the wealth of the country with wisdom and honesty, then better leave them untouched. Unfortunately many governments of the lesser developed and developing world do not understand this point.

President Saleh, when he changed his mind and decided to run for elections, said that he did it because he felt that there are so many responsibilities yet to be met. That he felt he owed it to his people to rule again. He talked about maintaining the unity, reforming the government and creating jobs among the many things in a grand plan promised to be achieved in his 7 years term in power. This is all great, only I wish that he could be held responsible for his words and that there is some independent committee to observe and monitor the so called grand plan devised to save the country. A committee, which is made of dedicated people who will ensure that the resources of this country are not wasted or monopolized. Actually this is the responsibility of the Parliament had it been really representative of the people's best interest. Seven years in development terms is not much, yet it is a lot of time to show the real intent of the President in providing a better future for the generations yet to come and his commitment to the generational contract.

Nadia Al-Sakkaf
Editor-in-Chief



By: Samer (samer_art@maktob.com)

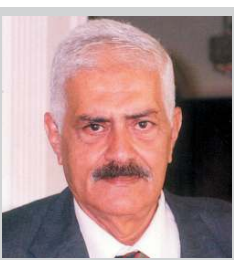
Freedoms and
authorization ... what next?

There must be an emphasis and recognition that the freedom of expression is the basic remedy and no political reform can be achieved without good space for criticism and expression.

Even after its creation, the political reform will mostly suffer from a speedy setback if there is no free criticism of its practices. Even a good political system will renounce its commitments and performance in the absence of criticism. Also, the genuine political reformist needs, more than the dictator, to be assisted with criticism. Despite my deep belief and faith in the significance of the freedom of expression and that it is the first important step on the road to reform our Arab region is in dire need of, it is a freedom deserving many lessons and reconsideration; it is not as easy an issue as it appears.

The responsibility in this regard is heavier on shoulders of media leaders, such as journalists, as well as specialized trade unionists and organizations, in offering visualization on the meaning of freedom and its boundaries. Maybe the simplest means for drafting the concept of freedom is to be acquainted with systems and regulations existent in societies that have great experience in this field, evaluate them and copy them if there is no better local alternative.

Here, the freedom of expression will face the familiar hindrances on part of the society or by workers in the profession of jour-



By: Prof. Abdulaziz
Al-Tarb

nalism themselves. Various forces of society do not want freedom impinging on their privileges. On the other hand, journalists want to practice freedom without limitations; they accuse, they libel and even defame! Members of society do not want anything from the conflict of expression except for security, work, honorable living and suitable care. They do not oppose accounting their accusation, if they exist in the conflict of free expression that is in need of protection. The smallest gun is able to muffle and silence the largest printing press.

If the regime is not convinced that accepting freedoms and their protection and that they are in their interest in the long run, there will be no reform or development and the society would remain suffering from its ills that have not been talked about, and the political system will remain as it is. In fact I have become acquainted with different experiences in our region that I have never known before, and they deserve considera-

tion; some of them in legal areas and others interested in promoting transparency.

The emerging Yemeni democracy is facing very strong social and political hindrances because of the incompleteness of the state's institutional structure as the state is playing a marginal role in the public life of the people. Its role is not yet reached deep enough to the level of legal impartiality that it plays without paying attention to the will of the tribal and military governance or of both of them. Here the need for reformation of the political playground, for which many wise people in our country have called, is confirmed.

Here we put before you Mr. President a very difficult task but it is a national duty which no less important that of the revolution and the unification. This fact is represented in effecting a new social revolution that would rob the corrupting parasitism alliance of their sleep that delayed and is still delaying our general social mobility, weaving away the economy and corrupting the political life. It is an alliance fully aware of its power and hegemony over the Yemeni present reality and poses a danger to every-

thing. This necessitates a joint effort to put an end to it with genuine democratic governance and a supportive and pressurizing popular will.

The popular authorization grants you Mr. President more resolution and determination for effecting real changes in a state groaning from consequences of corruption, and to reform the economic, political and social situation in the homeland on the foundation of the state of law and order.

Therefore, Mr. President you can make the people's support a force for reforming what has been corrupted and destroyed by the old guard and its ally parasites. Can that happen with the beginning of the presidential election with a government capable of translating words into acts and immediate accounting of the dossiers of corruption to found the modern Yemen and the state of law and order?

Prof. Abdulaziz Al-Tarb is an economist and a professor in Political Science. He is the head of a number of professional associations, such as the Arab Group for Investment and Development

Letters to the Editor

Go ahead with the recognition of Israel

Israeli Jews are still in a state of "exile", which was decreed by their God, YHWH, to last until the coming of the Messiah. But the Messiah's time frame is unknown. Jews were not supposed to create a political and military entity in Israel, especially through violence and bloodshed. The creation of Israel, therefore, is both illegitimate and extremely vulnerable from within.

Palestinians have two options. First, to recognize the illegitimate Israel without any conditions. Thereafter suspend intransigency against Israelis unilaterally. This will tilt world opinion in their favor. The result in Israel will show in the Israelis splitting up in and against peace with Palestinians.

Israel is threatened with a piece of divine hammering for violating the decree of coming into the Holy Land ahead of the Messiah and that too by shedding blood. If that happens, Palestinians should rush to the rescue of bruised Israelis with a healing touch. The Jews that have now arrived in Israel are not supposed to go back in exile. They are quite likely to stay there but at the mercy of a divine hand as well as the will of the Palestinians. The Israelis will undo the statehood of Israel after a lashing from the heavens. Their power would be gone from them.

The second option is to allow the Israelis a "safe haven" in the West Bank and let the Jews from the Diaspora, as well as from America arrives in the West Bank's "safe haven". The Jews have lived for the better part of their exile under Muslim regimes right from the time when the Caliph Umar restored them to live in Jerusalem. It is recorded that they were expelled from there by the Byzantine Christians. The last time it was the Ottomans who had opened their door to the expelled Jews from Spain and Portugal. The Jews turned out to be a "Golden Sparrow" to the Turks. They enjoyed full freedom of expression and religion in the Ottoman's Empire for four centuries.

Jews have no destiny. They don't trust Christians. The American Jewry is expecting a backlash against them and will migrate to Israel. Let the Jews live under the care of Palestinians in freedom. They will need to trade with Arabs in order to survive and there are no better traders than the Jews. The Jews behave best when they get peace. Let Palestinians give them peace. Most Jews would prefer to go back to Morocco, Libya, Syria, Iraq, Turkey, etc.

Sher Mohammad,
sher_apr@yahoo.com
Pakistan

"Pope" music

I commend Pope Benedict XVI for pulling the plug on electric guitars and modern music in the Church. Pop music is aimed at the phenomenon of the masses, is industrially produced, and ultimately has to be described as the cult of the banal. Rock music is the expression of elemental passions, and at rock festivals it assumes a cultic character, a form of worship, in fact, in opposition to Christian worship. People are released from themselves by the experience of being part of a crowd and by the emotional shock of rhythm, noise, and special lighting effects. Here there is little chance for the sober inebriation of faith to take place. Rap music has a downward deflection that is condescending in nature. Traditional choirs and Gregorian chants, on the other hand, possess that solemn cadence capable of creating the correct ambience for perceiving God's mystery.

For those Catholics tired of the empty freedom experienced through pop music at Holy Mass and other liturgical events the Pope's latest condemnation of modern music is both refreshing and welcome. May leaders of other religious faiths follow Pope Benedict's good example.

Sincerely yours,
Paul Koski
paulkoski@mountaincable.net

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Yemen Press Review

By: Mohammed Khidhr

Al-Thawri weekly, organ of the Yemen Socialist Party (YSP), 6 Jul 2006.

Main headlines

- JMP nominates Bin Shamlan the coming president of Yemen
- Bin Shamlan: Changing the current situations depends on the political system
- YSP assistant secretary-general Batheeb calls on the socialists to rally behind the JMP candidate
- JMP holds the elections supreme Commission responsible for poisoning elections atmospheres
- Journalists will not throw away their syndicate or allow authorities impose guardianship on them
- 15 bullets kill him, Journalists Syndicate demands interior ministry capture killers of journalist al-Aseeli

Writer Tawakul Abdulsallam Karman says in her article at last the JMP has chosen its candidate and that has been a great achievement. The difficult question was repeatedly being asked if the JMP will succeed in selecting the suitable candidate. By selecting Bin Shamlan, the JMP has succeeded in restoring confidence to many that the JMP is not just an alliance whose members do not know what they want. It has been a clear message to those whose enthusiasm level dropped after the signing on the agreement of principles, and to tell them that you can bet on us and we bet on you.

Addressing members of the JMP, the writer says day by day you prove to be trustworthy and can wager on you. Some were saying it is a transient alliance governed by contradictions of

the past, but the days pass and you left behind your backs whatever was said. The writer says our demands are clear and our expectations are clearer. We are going to the polling boxes to win and we possess all qualifications of winning.



Al-Nida weekly, 5 Jul 2006.

Main headlines

- Personal motives behind attacking the deputy of taxation authority
- In his first press interview after his official nomination for presidency, Faisal Bin Shamlan: I refuse the regional alignment in the national issues
- Saleh inaugurates his election campaign with attacking the opposition
- Opinion poll reveals 70% of the Yemenis do not know the date of elections, Majority of the Yemenis wants a candidate with good reputation, tackling their living conditions
- Elections speed up local currency deterioration
- The government lifts boycott on French chickens

Writer Bilqis Ali Al-Lahbi says in her article in the extraordinary conference of the General People's Congress (GPC) all have embarked displaying accomplishments of the president and all who attended the conference were unanimous that the most important of those accomplishments was the building of a modern Yemeni state. The general concept of the modern state is that it is based on institutions and that could

mean institutions with clear policies depending on officials with determined tasks and administrative authorities. Affiliate of those establishments is monitoring institutions working on keeping observing and evaluating performance of those establishments.

At the same time the conferees were unanimous that the accomplishments will end and the unity will be dismembered and the country will disappear from the map of history if the president maintained his personal stance of not running for the coming presidential elections. This is a contradiction. If the state is modern it is then able to manage itself even at times of crises and emergencies because there are laws determining what is emergency and specify the means for dealing with it. As the president has said that he is not unable or sick, but able to run the state. But don't we let the man, as leader of any accomplishment, have some rest like that of the warrior and see all enjoy what he has achieved away from burdens of responsibility?

Through what they have said, those people at the conference indicate that they were doing nothing and the president alone was bearing the responsibility of what they should have been doing all that period and therefore they were against the president's decision of not nominating himself to another presidency term. It seems they do not want to expose their inability.



Attariq weekly, 4 Jul 2006.

Main headlines

- In response to the threat against the party's general secretariat and sticking to rectifying the course of the unity and removal of war consequences, YSP in Dhalee refuses elections and calls for boycotting them
- Technical failure in "Al-Saleh" ship at Aden port
- The parliament receives applications of nomination for the president post
- Citizens complain against Qaataba security chief

Writer Ayman Mohammed Nasser Mohammed writes on reconciliation saying no doubt any god citizen who loves his people and country would welcome any call for reconciliation and tolerance as long as it is a great end rather than a means for the realization of some in their attempt to attain power over heads of the people and exploitation of their suffering.

Talking about any reconciliation is supposed to be associated with clear bases and vision including recognition of the mistake and condemnation those practices as well as drawing up perception for guarantees on not repeating those tragedies at present and in the future.

Tolerance will usually be a result of an effort of transparent frankness and reconciliation and then comes tolerance. Without that it will be just a political act to muster thousands of citizens under this banner. We much concerned to register our respect to all those who at al-Dhalee meting "We have to tackle the past with transparency", which means that disclosing the facts does not contradict reconciliation.



Akhbar Al-Yaum (The Daily News), 4 Jul 2006.

Main headlines

- Organized by political parties and civil society organizations, Demonstration demands stop of the Zionist aggression on the Palestinian people
- Dissent inside the League party because of interference by its leaderships abroad
- Al-Qeeli: I did not ask the JMP to nominate me
- Verdict on the case of Zargawi cell

Political editor of the newspaper rites there are indications calling on the GPC to wake up from its political and partisan slumber and its stereotype handling with the democratic dues. There are many data that dictate on the

ruling party to upgrade its performance in a manner enabling it to enter the competition of presidential and local elections. The upcoming elections are certainly different from previous ones and this places the ruling party before a confrontation with parties of the JMP that proved they have mechanisms, organized and coordinative to a degree of harmony and integration with the group of the general goals for which the JMP works. This is the proof that the JMP has confirmed in selecting its candidate to the presidential elections and timing of the choice announcement. It is an action bearing many implications the ruling party has to be aware of.

The ruling party must not lose it power through a mistaken reading of what may the upcoming elections would entail. This hope is connected with political and organizational measures to be taken by the ruling party under motivation of a real feeling of the grave challenges facing it and that dictates on it to deal with its consequences to of a strategic vision embodying desires and aspirations of the president and reflecting positives of his decision.

The GPC is now facing real challenges and it has to comprehend the traps set for it in the presidential and local elections.

The ruling party has to restore trust of the political leadership and the masses of the people by sending away all polluted elements and to push to the front new elements capable of embodying ambitions and aspirations of the political leadership.



Al-Ayyam daily, 3 Jul 2006.

Main headlines

- Faisal Bin Shamlan the JMP candidate to presidential elections
- MPs demand increment in their salaries similar to employees
- Ibn Khaldoun Hospital administration in Lahj confirms its response to recommendations of the national committee of nuclear energy
- Somalia Islamists distance themselves from Bin Laden
- Finance minister refuses to approve financial increase in the parliament's next year budget
- Sheikh in Radafan threaten to boycott the upcoming elections
- Iranian students want to fight Israel

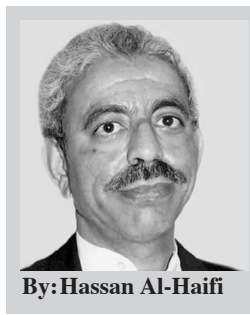
Mohammed Salem Qatan says in an article in the contemporary times the media has used the term of donor countries to mean the rich states that are used to grant others of poor countries some assistance and loans. Because relations among nations are political one, we think granting in this regard is subject to political requirements and motives. This matter created for this subject new dimensions and many corridors that dictated on those donors to establish Paris Club and donors conferences.

With regard to individuals, some

COMMON SENSE

Even Shalit's father knows best

Israel is really worried about the latest developments emanating from its recent wanton destructive attack against Gaza. For one thing, the Israelis are not getting that strong a sympathetic eye for their mass punishment strategy of "getting their soldier back". Even the father of the captured soldier, Noam Shalit, could not help but note that the handling of the crisis by the Shin Bet/Israeli military is neither properly directed at getting his son back nor justified by the wholesale agony it is causing the overwhelming majority of the Palestinians in the Gaza strip.



By: Hassan Al-Haifi

obvious "violations of international law", not to mention the many journalists and bloggers and other freelance advocates, who have dedicated their efforts in bringing the true facts of what is happening in Gaza to the world public.

Furthermore, it is clear that Israel is not really gauging international (public) opinion properly and believes incorrectly that its sure fix on official support for its "stupid" actions as implied by Gideon Levy of Haaretz (Haaretz, 2 June 2006), clearly points to a worsening position for Israel in the international community, which in the long run could hopefully bring some civilized behavior to the Israelis. This is of course, wishful thinking for the moment, but people are not naive and Israel cannot rely on the International Zionist Establishment offering it clear immunity from official condemnation from the governments of the world, while it does what ever it needs to do to achieve its dangerous Zionist ambitions that will in the long run threaten world peace and make a mockery of moral conduct and adherence to international law. Thanks to faster and more readily accessible communications (Internet), one can still find more objective news about the tragic events unfolding in the Holy Land, notwithstanding the pathetically weak help from the Arab media and Arab Governments. Surely, Iran's President has taken a cue from the rising contempt against Israel for its latest actions in Gaza and went back on the offensive against the Zionist state, knowing full well that this will have a greater appeal among the general Moslem and Arab populations, who have lost faith in their own leaders' ability to support their brethren in Palestine.

It is time that we give credit to those that did not bow down to the awesome pressure of the Zionist lobby, such as Amnesty International, Human Rights Council of the United Nations and the Swiss Government for their unbending condemnation of the Gaza attacks as

Getting back to the Arab media, the most deplorable commentary came from the Al-Shark Al-Awsat (Arabic) Newspaper, published in London:

"those who ask where the Arab regimes are in helping the Palestinians in their crisis should ask themselves who consulted with the Arab governments when they kidnapped an Israeli soldier."

I am not sure, where this commentator is getting his ideas from, but apparently he is living in a different Arab world than the one we know and live in. On top of being naive and ridiculous, first of all no one is asking where the Arab regimes are anymore. Hope has been lost on these regimes long before this commentator (this was taken from the Christian Science Monitor, which did not give direct links or reference to the details of the commentary) was born. How ridiculous it is to expect that Hamas should "consult with the Arab leaders" prior to carrying out their military mission that led to the capture of the Israeli Corporal and the death of two others. The practicality and the sensibility of such a suggestion throws the mind in an endless sphere of scenarios as to the expected outcome of such "consultation". A friend suggested that most likely the Arab regimes consulted would first of all warn the Israelis, providing all the details. Second of all, to try to defend the impotent regimes we have surely connotes an inherent desire to gain from the easily gullible regimes to dishing out cash to anyone who supports them, even if that support is irrational and works against the national interests of the entire Arab nation.

Such commentary really tells most informed people that the Arab media is not only responsive to the aspirations and desires of their readers, but continues to sell itself cheap.

Hassan Al-Haifi has been a Yemeni political economist and journalist for more than 20 years.

donors would like beautiful propaganda for themselves and some others their granting is based on accurate calculations in harmony with their own interests. Very few of them offer grants out of human motivations. The latter groups of donors are faced with formations of middlemen some of whom interfered even in the donors

grants and their distribution, becoming a burden on donor and the recipients. Because this problem has become very big as a result of situations deterioration and decrease of honesty, it could be suitable for those individual donors to establish a club resembling Paris Club or a conference like the London Conference.

"The truth, the whole truth and nothing but the truth"

By: Sharida Mohamedjoesoef

With these words Lebanese tv-presenter May Chidiac concluded her pre-recorded video message at the Free Voice conference in The Hague on 7 June last. She was referring to the murder of former Lebanese Prime Minister Rafiq Hariri on 14 February 2005, after which hundreds of thousands of Lebanese took to the streets, protesting against the brutality of his death, and blaming Syria. All over the country posters, banners and buttons emerged with the following text: The Truth.

However, (dis)covering the truth is easier said than done, as it involves an idea which is often coloured along religious, political and cultural lines. This very much holds true for Lebanon, a country that not so long ago, was torn apart by a gruesome

sectarian-based civil war. The sectarian divide is still widely felt in the country's media landscape. Watch the Sunni Future TV channel and you are bound to get the Hariri version of events. The Christian LBCI (Lebanese Broadcasting Corporation International) is regarded as a platform for the Lebanese Forces (LF), linked to the Christian Phalange group. To jog your memory, it was the LF who, with the approval of Ariel Sharon, sent a death squad into the Palestinian camps Sabra and Shatila in 1982. That said, only a few days ago, LBCI indicated it may break with its LF founding fathers.

And then there is the Shia channel Al Manar. Here of course, it is the highly conservative Hezbollah hand that rocks the cradle, giving you endless details of the military tit-for-tats at the Lebanese-Israeli border. And of course, Al Manar would not be Al Manar if it did not hammer home its

view that the "Zionist entity" should be wiped off the face of the earth.

So, isn't there anything in between, anything more independent, more objective, that is, insofar as news can ever be objective. Mmm, difficult, even more so given the present anti-Syrian climate, for today it seems that one can only be considered a good, critical journalist if one is anti-Syrian. Fortunately, on the newspaper front there is the English-language goodie The Daily Star. But there is also this new internet kid on the block: Ya Libnan (www.yalibnan.com), which also makes for a fairly balanced news coverage. If, however, you are dead set on really getting a better grasp of what is going on in Lebanese society, it might be worth your while to check out the Lebanese blogosphere. Go to www.openlebanon.org, a portal of most Lebanese blogs and perhaps you'll get to "the truth, the whole truth and nothing but the truth".

SILVER LINING

Victory for democracy

I believe the decision of the Joint Meeting Parties opposition coalition to name a candidate for the upcoming presidential elections due for September is an important event in the history of Yemen's politics and democracy. It is a step forward for the democratization drive, laying the foundation for a better future. I will here remind you of what I said more than a year ago, that without real competition between the opposition and the ruling party, our emerging democracy will come into a standstill and people will lose heart in the possibility of making any change through democracy. They will hold the opinion that it was just a ploy.



By: Mohammed Al-Qadhi

attractions since they came up with their written initiative for political reform last year. However, good deeds require sacrifice.

The announcement of the opposition candidate Faisal Bin Shamlan last Sunday is considered a remarkable event for

Yemen's democracy. Robin Madrid, NDI country representative was right when she told me that it is something that you Yemenis should be proud of.

Now, it is the responsibility of both the ruling party and the opposition to take this step forward and show us a real contest and debate over genuine issues that are of concern to the people. However, the guarantee for a fair play to take place is particularly the main task of the government which is able to neutralize the army, the state-run media as well as accept the arguments posed by the opposition candidate with open heart as a basic element of any fair race.

The opposition has decided to challenge Saleh and it should, therefore, be ready for the consequences of this decision. It should not keep mute to any violations of the game rules and then start complaining. It should argue and defend its rights to have its candidates given equal opportunity to address the public through the state broadcast media and challenge him freely and fairly.

It does not matter who wins, but having fair play means a real victory for democracy. I hope this will be allowed to take place for the sake of Yemen and its future. Will you do it guys?!

Mohammed Al-Qadhi is a Yemeni journalist and columnist. (mhalqadhi@hotmail.com)

The people in Yemen and the diplomatic community used to laugh when they heard talks and mere talks from the opposition leaders who did not have ownership over their decisions. The compromises they used to make with the authorities have substantially halted democracy and even caused its drawback. But, it seems now the situation is completely different. We should tell them you have done a laudable job to boost the democratization drive ahead.

The question of naming a candidate for the presidential elections was really a hard and tough decision which the opposition was hesitant about. The opposition leaders have faced a lot of pressure, harassment and even sometimes

HRH Prince Hassan bin Talal to the Yemen Times:

“Let’s ask the world to stop thinking of the pipelines

He is a man of thought who continuously displays genuine interest in the welfare of humanity. Internationally renowned for his efforts on behalf of pluralism and human rights, His Royal Highness Prince Hassan bin Talal is the author of seven books and numerous published articles in various languages, as well as actively involved in a number of institutes and committees in Jordan and around the world. Prince Hassan also has been awarded numerous honorary doctorates from notable institutions worldwide.

Born on March 20, 1947 in Amman, Jordan, HRH is the son of King Talal and Zeini Sharaf bint Jamil. He is the brother of the late King Hussein of Jordan, was Crown Prince from 1965 to 1999 and is uncle to Jordan’s current King Abdullah II. In 1968, Prince Hassan married Pakistani-born Sarvath Ikramullah, daughter of Pakistani politician Shaista Suhrawardy Ikramullah, whom he met while they were studying at Oxford University. They have three daughters and one son.

Prince Hassan graduated from Oxford University with a Bachelor of Arts with honors and a Master of Arts in Oriental Studies. He enjoys and promotes many types of sport, including squash, scuba diving, swimming, mountaineering and skiing, and regularly plays polo, representing Jordan in international competitions. He also holds a black belt fifth Dan in Tae Kwon Do and he is a proficient helicopter pilot.

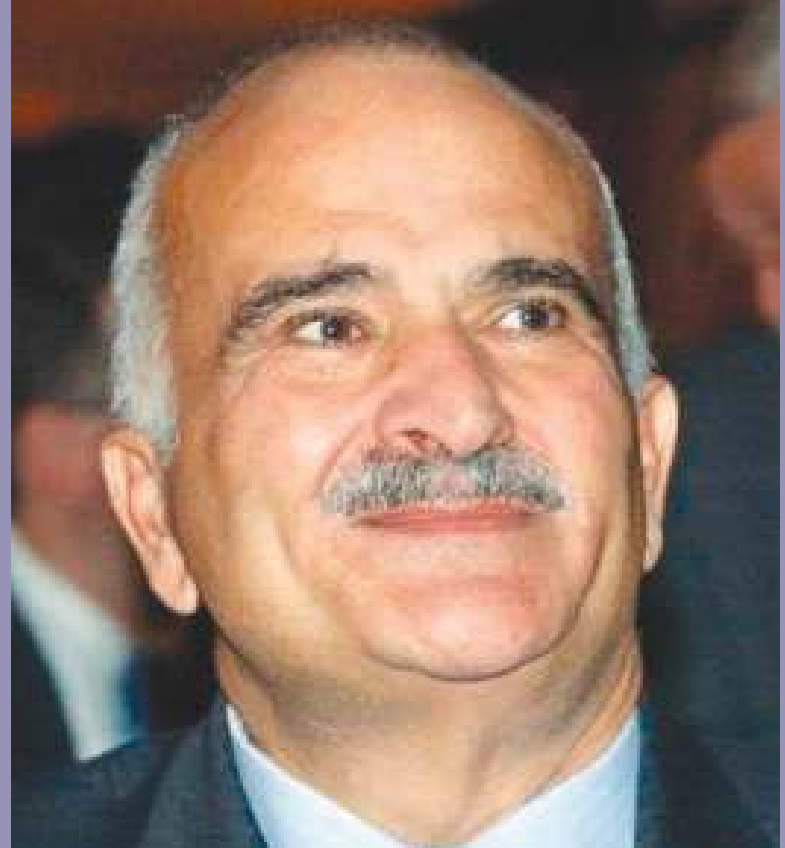
His Royal Highness has initiated, founded and is actively involved in numerous Jordanian and international institutes and committees. He is chairman of Jordan’s Arab Thought Forum and established the

Interfaith Foundation, the Islamic Scientific Academy, the tri-annual conferences on Jordan’s history and archeology, the Arab Youth Forum and the Jordanian Higher Council for Science and Technology. He also has established the Hashemite Aid and Relief Agency, the Royal Scientific Society, the Center for Educational Development, the Institute for Diplomacy and Al-Bait University in Mafrqa.

Prince Hassan served as the late King Hussein’s closest political advisor, confidant and deputy, as well as acting Regent during the King’s absence from Jordan. He is president of the Club of Rome, moderator of the World Conference for the World Intellectual Property Organization, a founding member and vice chairman of the Foundation for Interreligious and Intercultural Research and Dialogue (Geneva), a member of the International Crisis Group’s board of trustees and co-chair of the Independent Commission on International Humanitarian Issues. He also is a member of the Weapons of Mass Destruction Commission and a founding member and president of the Parliament of Cultures, as well as sits on the board of the Nuclear Threat Initiative.

In September 2003, Prince Hassan was elected chairman of an independent eminent experts group appointed by the United Nations secretary-general to implement the Declaration and Program of Action of the World Conference against Racism, Racial Discrimination, Xenophobia and Related Intolerance.

Through the Interfaith Foundation, he recently organized the second World Conference on Middle East Studies (WOCMES) in Amman, attended by more than 1,500 people.



His Royal Highness Prince Hassan bin Talal

Interviewed by: Nadia Al-Sakkaf

Yemen Times founder, the late Dr. Abdulaziz Al-Saqqaf, was a founding member of the Arab Thought Forum with whom you interacted closely in the past. What would you say in his tribute today?

I remember Dr. Al-Saqqaf (may his soul rest in peace) dearly. He was a rather witty contributor to our Thought Forum sessions. I also felt a certain affinity with him, as we both are descendants of the prophet (pbuh). We used to refer to each other as “ibn al-aam,” meaning cousin. I remember a conversation we had long ago about our ancestors and our history as such, especially in relevance to Al-Bait and the prophet’s descendants. We also exchanged many views about the region and traditions, food, weddings and culture.

What can I say of Abdulaziz (may his soul rest in peace)? “Inna al-kiram qalil” – “The righteous are but a few.” Dr. Al-Saqqaf was one of the few motivators of free thought. His legacy has been passed on to you, or at least part of it. I think a moment is going to come when presumably what I referred to as the silenced majority – and he agreed with me in that context – will need to speak out. And so we formed the Thought Forum in order to bury the chasm between people and decision makers. We thought we actually were confirming the generational or historical contract. In reality, what we found was that we unfortunately were blocked at every turn by vested interest – to my way of thinking and to Abdulaziz’s way of thinking as well – which was and is stronger than the public good.

The fundamental rule that joined us both was that public good is the aim of good governance. He also was a man who combined two worlds in one. He was in equity in his own local setting and in the international setting. He also had a great sense of humor. Not many people have the courage to laugh at themselves, a rare characteristic in our part of the world with so many pompous people around in the Arab world.

Speaking of the Arab world, what do you read in the future of Iraq? And would you comment on last November’s bombings at three Amman hotels?

As the bloody conflict in Iraq rages on, all of us who feel horror at the plight of the country’s battered population hope for a Parliament representing every Iraqi and for a strong government ruling with responsibility and accountability. Yet, we must recognize that Iraq’s Sunni Arabs feel excluded from an order shaped by Shia and Kurdish leaders under the Coalition umbrella. We saw that last year’s elections did little to solve this problem, nor did they end the bloodshed that spilled into Jordan the next month in a horrible cluster of attacks that reaf-

firmed Al-Qaeda’s agenda of inhumanity.

The core of the Iraqi insurgency has too much support – both active and passive – to be defeated militarily. Only the horror of an all-out civil war, with perhaps a million more dead, could bring an uncertain end by arms to this ongoing tragedy. Nor will insurgents be drawn into politics by inertia. Dialogue, negotiated agreement and compromise must be the tools to bring Iraq’s fragmented representation to the table. Only then can Iraqi nationalists be freed from a temporary and forced alliance with radicals claiming to represent them.

Many Iraqis welcomed the Coalition’s arrival and with good reason, as the invasion toppled a brutal and oppressive dictatorship. But the currency of goodwill quickly was spent. Security must be a vital part of nation-building, but it also must go beyond mere knee-jerk reaction to terrorism. Basic services have deteriorated further and order has disintegrated. In the absence of a contract of good governance, the Coalition today enjoys very little public support in Iraq. The conflict now is reverberating around the region and the world, threatening a wave of fragmentations and a global conflict of terror and recrimination wherein innocent civilians will bear the brunt of the suffering. The region’s domino-democratization predicted by Washington strategists has never seemed so distant.

It’s time to change course. The United States and Britain must examine the extent to which Coalition troops, despite their mission to guarantee security, are contributing to growing instability. We need a full and frank debate on how an inclusive, legitimate and secure order can be shaped in Iraq – and the wider region – in coming years. Success depends on an integrated strategy that must go well beyond the recent National Security Council document.

Regarding the Al-Qaeda bombings in Amman, as a Jordanian, I share the anguish of my countrymen at those who orchestrated such diabolical carnage in our capital. As a husband, father and grandfather, I can only imagine the pain and suffering felt by the families affected by this tragedy.

The attacks were not aimed merely at symbols of western influence in Jordan. Their targets reflect our population’s increasing polarization. Our future happiness and well-being depends not only on hard security of arms and intelligence, but on a soft approach to those who are victims without a voice. This is a time not only for good government, but more importantly, for good governance. We must face up to divisions blighting our world. We must all work together to defeat hatred and give hope. This isn’t a mission of optimism but one of necessity.

What about Iran’s increasing presence in the Middle East and international pressure against Iran’s possession of nuclear energy that could be used as weapons of mass destruction?

The populism of Abdul Naser, which is close to the populism of Yemen’s revolt, was a populism of slogans. On the other hand, [Iranian President Mahmoud] Ahmadinejad’s populism is somewhat more significant because Iran is a reality transcending the border. Of course, the Iranian Shia are significant in number and one increasingly sees signs of unrest in the Gulf region, especially since 70 percent and 40 percent of the world’s oil and gas respectively are present in the area from the Gulf to north of the Caucasus.

Clearly, Russian interest in providing solutions to Iran’s nuclearization also is linked to concerns over stabilizing the region. And of course, we’ve had Iranian support to the Armenians in their fight against the Israelis. Slogans aren’t specifically Islamic when it comes to populism. They also reflect a certain politiqué. Of course, as far as the focus of Shiaism, I wish that we can elevate religion above state.

What I would like to emphasize is that all Islamic schools meet on the fundamentals. There is also a broader frame,



“Dr. Al-Saqqaf was one of the few motivators of free thought...The fundamental rule that joined us both was that public good is the aim of good governance.”

which is humanity. As far as codes of conduct on weapons of mass destruction are concerned, I have hosted and participated in numerous occasions that included Iranians, Pakistanis, Indians and Israelis.

In our case we have our own country, i.e., Israel, which refused to participate in any open discussion of weapons of mass destruction. I find that extremely dangerous from a subjective point of view, because we are obviously in the middle of a danger zone. And when I say I see smoke here, I’m not talking about nicotine. This is why I believe unilateralism or the desire to import oil and gas from the region have dominated the supply-demand relationship between indus-

trialized countries and regional countries for so long, that they don’t see the value of conversing with the region in multilateral terms.

So, what should be done to stabilize the Middle East?

You mean the “Muddle” East, as I’d like to call it, because it’s so confused that I think we need to redefine ourselves. We need to redefine the region in the sense

the ajim (foreign)-Arab divide and the Sunni-Shia divide are beginning to get the better of us. And I would say that coming close to international good governance, that is to say, defining regional problems in their context, means we must recognize that we are a region lacking any effective superstructure.

We have the Arab League, which is a historical reality originally formed of five countries, including Yemen and

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of the context of West Asia, to which you as a Yemeni and I as a Jordanian, as per the U.N., belong. Moreover, Middle East nations as such don’t have a common political feature, as the region includes Turkey, which is heading toward Europe; North Africa, which has its own African alliance, and Israel, which wants to be its

Jordan, but which today unfortunately doesn’t completely represent the so-called Middle East or “Muddle” East, which, according to the U.S., extends from Casablanca to Calcutta. This is the world’s poorest, most populous and dangerous region. So, I think as far as West Asia is concerned, it’s time to recognize that we’re the only part of the Asian continent that doesn’t have a defining feature. South Asia is defined by increasing cooperation, such as the South-South cooperation, and the balance of powers now with nuclear realities slowly are entering these countries.

So, you’re saying we need to define our identity and perhaps have representation of it?

We do have an identity superimposed on us by the U.N., but we don’t have our own, unfortunately.

Speaking of the United Nations, among other activities, you co-chair the Independent Commission on International Humanitarian Issues to promote world peace, so to speak. Don’t you think the Muslim world needs to have stronger representation on the Security Council to promote its interests, as is happening with BRIC countries?

As far as discussion of the BRIC (Brazil, Russia, India and China) is concerned, there’s no reference to religion. I think we have to realize that there’s a difference between geography – such as Southwest Asia, which includes a huge Muslim presence; for example, the country with the highest Muslim population after Indonesia is India – and Islam as a faith.

You’d like to represent yourself in the U.N. structure as Islamic but there’s a certain lack of vision in that because anyway, we are quite heterogeneous. There’s a difference between a Muslim who is Senegalese, Sudanese, Malaysian or Bosnian, for example, just as between a rich man, a poor man and different continents. How can we talk about ourselves as a geographical entity? After all, when we talk about Muslims, we talk about faith. I don’t think it helps in the sense that it’s like putting ourselves in a box.

But still, the Security Council isn’t representative of the world today and we’re disadvantaged by not having our interests highlighted through representation in decision making.

That’s exactly my point. For example, if wealthy Arab nations would develop a communication strategy for public diplomacy whereby such wealth – \$1 trillion in bank deposits – actually is seen to be doing something to improve the Muslim world’s lot via empowerment and concern for the poor, then you’d see an evolution. Our concern then would become super-national, whereby the issue wouldn’t be to try to beautify our image in the eyes of others, i.e., the West, but rather to promote ourselves not by words but by deeds. But unfortunately at the present time, nobody is taking the initiative toward this super-national thinking. For example, I don’t see why there isn’t an international fund for zakat (alms), even until now.

Because we don’t have the vision?

Because we don’t have the desire to think multilaterally. Because such countries’ vested interest financially and unilaterally is tied to superpower and G8 realities and not yet prepared to think of the challenges we face. Look at poverty; look at the 35 million employment opportunities needing to be created within the next year in West Asia alone. Do we see us getting anywhere near that?

Our total productivity is less than 50 percent of Spain or Italy. Our collective contribution to scientific research is less than 1 percent of the entire world. What weight do we bring? The weight of our bank deposits that we’re not even using? What are we doing for the betterment of our people? Slogans like, “Arab oil for Arabs,” which is a very hollow slogan?

To quote you, “Globalization no longer is an option to be accepted or rejected, but rather a fact and facts must be faced squarely.” As an example, is joining the WTO part of facing this fact? What can we do in this context to protect the local labor market and small economies?

Why didn’t we negotiate this cumulatively? Jordan joined the WTO in 1974 and at that time, it was only Egypt, Syria and Jordan, then followed by Lebanon and even Israel.

Has there been any recent talk of the WTO’s cumulative affect on our countries?

Other than unilateral agreements by Arab nations, no. Thankfully, Tillawi, Egypt at least tried to promote regional infrastructure projects, water pipelines, roads and so forth. But natural thinking between Arabs isn’t permitted.

So, for us, is joining the WTO simply following global trends?

It is following the trend. It’s strictly unilateralism and continued recognition that politiqué outside players have certain terms of reference to offer. And we accept it as it is. There’s no critical mass.

But is there a way back or a way around it?

Yes, I think there’s a way forward and that’s for oil nations to enter into inter-land relationships. There can be no stability for oil or resource-rich nations without inter-land stability of human resources. I think that’s a visionary statement by the 1998 Japanese Parliament. But what have we done to develop inter-land relationships? I believe in anthropology, not tetro-policy. I believe in putting humanity at center stage.

Please put this into practical terms.

In practical terms, let’s ask the world to stop thinking of the pipelines and start thinking of the people living around them.

Do you think the first step would be to create jobs?

The first step would be to revisit what began in the 1980 Arab Thought Forum and that was the Arab Development Strategy, the Arab development decade. We attempted to address heads of state and had the opportunity to arrange a short meeting. One of the heads of state, my late brother King Hussein, asked me which time would be convenient to bring them together, but commented, “I sleep after lunch,” to which I replied, “The Arab world has been taking a siesta for centuries. Will half an hour make a difference?”

I haven’t attended a single Arab conference wherein analysis takes place and I’ve attended most of them in the past two decades. So, practically, why don’t

and start thinking of the people living around them.”

Arab ministers or West Asian ministers meet quarterly, culminating a ministerial meeting and taking matters into our own hands?

To devise a common plan?

Exactly, where is, the Economic and Social Council for West Asia? We all gravitate toward World Bank meetings and to U.N. meetings around the world, but we never talk to each other before arriving at any international meeting so as to go prepared. So, our identity romantically, historically and poetically is Arab, but it's not so scientifically. As I keep saying, development is investment-led.

Today, the whole world is investment-led. You see historic buildings and ports being built for no other reason than the feeling that somehow, if such money isn't spent, it will undermine the economy. In reality, if you look at Norway, which created a fund for future generations, it is realizing exactly the opposite. If you have excess money, you don't create development. The fiction of development is putting the money into process. It's a conscious legal contract with children not yet born.

In your view, what were the wasted opportunities of 2005 and what are the potential opportunities for the Muslim and Arab world in 2006?

I'm involved with a number of discussion groups contributing to U.N. multilateral debates like the Helsinki process, for example, which led to creating the council on good governance, the Tanzanian-Finnish Initiative. I'm a member of the Commission on Weapons of Mass Destruction, a member of the group formed by the U.N. High Commission to develop the quality of life index and many other groups.

Within a network, I'd like to contribute advisory statements to the U.N. body, but once they're been turned into U.N. speed, that is to say, diluted by discussion of 65 governments, they lose their relevance. I think as far as the Arab world is concerned – again let me focus on West Asia because I don't think it's helpful to generalize – I may be wrong, but I don't see any behind-the-scenes conceptualization of threats that we face. Israel's occupation of Palestinian territories, the question of Iraq, the future of Syria and the question of Iran – how are these issues interrelated? Why don't we discuss these issues in a crisis-avoidance mode to see how can we contain such crises?

Do you think every one of those crises was an opportunity for the Arab world?

We don't want to take them one by one, but for example, I don't understand why Arab nations hosting Palestinians that could have voted didn't open ballot boxes in the same way that happened for Iraqis. If you look at the Iraqis, I don't see why regional initiatives aren't forthcoming because you see international initiatives forthcoming. For example, did anyone direct a cultural affinity initiative directed at addressing the Iraqis? You have bilateral missions from Amman or Saudi Arabia but is there bilateral concern about what's happening around those terms, which may lead to a nuclear strike at any moment?

Where is collective responsibility? I just want to put forth my conscious question and ask if this is happening. I don't see how that's very logical.

Do you think the 2005 scenario is going to be repeated in 2006?

If the 2005 scenario is going to be repeated, then I think we are not going to reach a dead end; rather, we're going to hit through the wall. The state system itself won't stand the possibility of further aggression.

Is Syria an opportunity and is Lebanon a starting place?

Well, I think all of these issues you mentioned are interrelated. If you want to develop a harmonious strategy, Egyptians and Saudis concerned with mediating should convince the Syrians of the merits of accepting an international investigation with reassurance of some type of diplomatic strategy attached to other issues. You have the question of Hamas, which has begun, and the spell was broken by the Russian government's initiative. Now was that initiative from any Arab diplomats?

Obviously, the Russians have solved the Hamas issue earlier but what's happening today in Gaza is collective punishment against Palestinian people and should be stopped immediately. If the

PLO revoked its charter well after negotiations with Israel and achieved international support, then why can't Hamas do the same or be invited to do the same? But what are the impulses? Do we just make it as we go along? Do we treat special cases with more special cases?

Maybe the solution today isn't to depend on leaderships but rather to go below that level and depend on thought forums and intellectuals for change. What do you think?

I don't think it's a question of below or above; it's not a question of hierarchies. All countries use think tanks and all have civil society forums. Unfortunately, I think we neglected public opinion by creating a vacuum, particularly after Sept. 11, 2001. Hard security considerations seemed to be at the top of the agenda. But soft security, in terms of relating to how people feel and inviting them to present their views and talents through open channels, is neglected. I think it would be an investment in governance and an investment in responsible citizenship and would lessen the monopoly of extreme platforms if we encourage citizens' conferencing.

What about media?

I think there should be an alliance between media and scholarship because media is courageous and needs good writing. We hear about embedded journalists who land by parachutes within the troops. But in our countries and in our region, there's a lot of expertise, which could at least present a case.

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For example, before the Iraq invasion/intervention – whatever you want to call it – by foreign forces, the most effective letters from people around the world were from archeologists. And yet, the Americans were asking me what's archeologically significant about Iraq?

As a journalist, I find that since Sept. 11, there are many more constraints to my profession around the world. Why?

As I told you, security now is the priority and that in essence is convenient because it restricts freedom of speech. I could say that the only free speech is that from on top of a mountain; the rest is editing.

When you talk about conversation in the sense of exchanging ideas, either you accept the realities and then turn inward, or you consciously try to develop a moral majority by inviting conversation between different groups, which unfortunately, is in the views of security services rather than suspects.

But what is media's role?

I think media's role is to intermediate views, whether written, seen or heard. I think this intermediation should be done by inviting conversation directly between citizens. For example, the Helsinki citizen's assembly invited citizen conferencing. Do we have citizen conferencing? For example, between Yemenis and Jordanians and Saudis?

Do people talk to each other directly other than on BBC World or talking heads invited by Al Jazeera, for example? We have 167 satellite channels and I say they produce info-tainment and info-terror. But do they produce info-wisdom and info-humanity? This is why I encourage creating an international media peace corps.

Tell me more about this international media peace corps.

There are a lot of journalists all over the world who are honored by something we call one world broadcasting class, founded in London 20 years ago. So we recognize the first story in the Philippines, South Africa or Chile and honor local

journalists. Many of these local journalists, possibly like yourself, would like to feel that they could be networked and effectively influence common debate by perceptions, not by a representative of BBC, CNN, Fox or whatever is on the ground. One comes for a few hours and becomes a self-styled expert or embedded journalist but influences by hearing from the local voice.

Wouldn't it be difficult to bring people from all around the world together for a common purpose and make them work collectively?

Did you see the Middle East Citizens Assembly (MECA)? We've been meeting for the past two years and have 24 nationalities from Pakistan to Morocco. Many have begun to feel that we must recognize the diversity of our often diametrically opposing views. We have Islamists, nationalists, Communists, whatever it may be – we even have Jewish Israeli peace activities as well.

What about the Interfaith Foundation and the World Conference?

The World Conference has been around for two to three decades. It's basically nine faith groups, not only Muslims and Christians. I was elected moderator, so that's why I do what I do. I visited the Holocaust site a couple of years ago and was criticized by Muslim world extremists as to why I'd want to do such a thing. I replied that I'm confident that Jewish and Christian values are a creation of post-World War II guilt, but these values actually are Abrahamic, not Euro-centric or Holocaust specific.

When I arrived there, Catholics thanked me for triangulating a conversation between Jews, Muslims and Christians, while Jews thanked me for reminding the world that genocide continues in the Balkans. Jews and Muslims being the target, after all, we were expelled from Spain after the so-called Roman inquisition. We arrived in the Balkans to an open-armed invitation and hospitality from the Ottoman world. But of course, after World War II, the world had it with Jews and Muslims.

In the field of religion, I initiated a series of contacts and meetings that evolved into a systematic interfaith dialogue. These consist primarily of three separate, albeit complimentary, ongoing consultations with the Orthodox Center of the Ecumenical Patriarchate (Chambesy), the Pontifical Council for Interreligious Dialogue (Vatican) and the Independent Commission on Christian-Muslim Relations (Deanery of Windsor).

So, is there dialogue?

Is there dialogue? You must go through the number of different initiatives I've been involved in to know the answer to that. It's not only the World Conference, but it's also Saint George's House, where we produce educational material and present to British Educational Authorities specific teaching by analogy, for example, a documentation for children. We work in terms of the most knowledgeable level with the three holy books in a historical context to develop an analytical concordance of values. But I don't touch metaphysics. What you believe is your belief and I respect your right to that and expect the same in return. But when it comes to humanitarian values, I don't care whether you believe or don't believe. For a humanist, it's how we can partner in our shared humanity.

We are living in what they call it no-war no-peace. They call it low intensity war term. But in reality what has to dignify it by making it a war. So to speak sarcastically.

We recently hosted the WOCMES (World Congress for Middle East Studies) and it was the first time they'd met in the region. They involve the four Western Hemispheric Centers for Middle East Studies, including the Middle East Studies Association. I thought that rather than bring scholars to congratulate each other, maybe we could begin to develop practical steps out of it.

For example, an alliance between scholarship and media could be one, and translating and publishing great books could be another, both from traditional and new Muslim languages. For example, English is a new Muslim language



Nadia Al-Saqqaf, Editor-in-Chief of the Yemen Times with HRH Prince Hassan bin Talal.

because Muslims are using it. When we produced the Mohammad Abdulhalim transliteration of the Qur'an Kareem published by Oxford University Press, many British Muslims came to say, "We hope you don't consider us blasphemous, but we now find it easier to understand the Qur'an."

What about a solution for today's violence?

We've had four or five initiatives contributing to world peace. Most important is publishing customary universal humanitarian law. I'd like to see a new international initiative emphasizing the importance of calling for a law of peace, a charter that can promulgate minority rights, emphasize the rights of protected peoples within complex religions and within cultural autonomies. In short, I'd like to see an approach that brings this troubled region a step further from impending Balkanization, ethnic and sectarian in-fighting and rather offers a concept of humanitarian pluralism.

Is this feasible?

If the WTO is feasible, why can't an international humanitarian law be feasible? Why can't we network humanity instead of just networking commodities?

Would it be supported?

At the present time, I feel that if we can talk about economic order, security order and political order, then why can't we talk about humanity order? It's totally hypocritical, because on the one side, Americans talk about American values and the American way of life, while we Muslims talk about Muslim values and so forth. Nobody's reinventing the wheel, for heaven's sake. All of these values are in parables 2000 years ago. The book of Job is a parable, Genesis and so on. So, what's new?

It's not about saying something new; it's about taking seriously what's being said.

I totally agree with you. It seems we're heading toward a situation when mass destruction finally is going to hopefully create a blinding flag of the obvious indicating that we must move from mass destruction to mass survival. A win-win situation can be developed.

I'd like to invite your attention to the times in which we live, times of crisis. In times of crisis, as in war, the Torah urges leaders to act mercifully and make a final effort to avoid conflict: "When approaching a town to attack it, first offer them peace."

Where does this place our call for a law of peace? Where does it place the Swedish proposal for fundamental rights of humanity? Canadian and Norwegian proposals for Human Security? Our call, in the context of the Commission for Human Rights, for a Racial Equality Index?

Sometimes, I must confess my frustration at feeling that one can speak of a world order in terms of technology, investment or security, but where is soft and human security in this scheme of things?

One of my most recent efforts in trying to communicate what I believe is Islam's true message is a conversation with a Jewish Italian friend, Alain Elkann. Together, we produced a book, "To Be a Muslim." He's had similar conversations

with Rabbi Rene Sirat and representatives of the Holy See. I'm aware of similar conversations between Buddhists and Hindus. I wonder whether a roundtable conversation couldn't be held to emphasize once again the importance of producing an analytical concordance of human values that we share to develop a partnership in our common humanity.

Do we have to reach the edge of a third World War to realize that we need world peace?

That's what I can say. Sometimes, I feel that the third World War already began with the Cold War, which was a proxy war. Vietnam was a proxy war and Korea was a proxy war.

Are we living in a war today?

Yes, I think we are. We're living in what they call no-war no-peace. They call it a low intensity war term, but in reality, what has to dignify it by making it a war, so to speak sarcastically.

Who are the sides in this war?

The haves and the have nots. It's a power conflict, in the broadest possible way. For example, the struggle for civil rights is a war between those withholding them and those demanding them.

What about democratic movements, campaigns and elections?

I believe in the ballot, but at the same time, I believe the electorate must reflect public realities. This is what I think electoral laws are designed to promote – the public good, I understand. But if they're designed to promote the interest of a ruling minority or that of a particular group or ideology, then I think we're missing the point. This is what I find frustrating with the Sharanski thesis. He wrote this book that was very world thumbed and there's a whole article on his meeting

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with [U.S. President George] Bush.

Sharanski says the basic problem with Arabs is that there's no democracy. So, you have all these democracy institutes in the U.S. and in the West trying to export democracy as if it was a commodity – basically, what I'd call a monologue about mutual dialogue.

The result is that there's no interactive discussion. Even Arabs who've migrated to the U.S., for example Edward Said, for whom I have much regard, are saying more freedom, more equality, more participation and so forth. My question is why can't we see more of these voices within the Arab world itself if the ground is so fertile? The answer is because security has been taken over by hard security, prisons and police security rather than soft security, which means communicating with people and providing information.

I started a development plan in the early '70s when a minister wouldn't speak because he knew that knowledge is

power. If he knew about the next project or so, why should he talk about it? Similarly, the other secretary wouldn't speak. Finally, we had hundreds and thousands of hours of public discussion and people were obliged to say that the environmental impact of the next project is xyz so people could prepare themselves. You don't create a huge environmental scheme and not talk about the impact of what people are going to suffer.

Sharing knowledge is a break from the patronizing past because patronizing won't improve people's lives. People, more practically locals, must be allowed to express their views, which is why it's best to choose the one from the local community who best represents the locality.

What do you say about women's rights?

What's important is that we stop this self-styled defensive advocacy of our understanding of women's rights in Islam, as if we're doing the world a favor. Unless it's in practical steps, to quote historical incidents where women defended in historical steps, we would be missing the point because today's civil society is about how we as human beings – whether men or women – enjoy equal rights in life.

To quote you again, you said in 1998, "I've worked for over 30 years to help create a world in which dialogue, cooperation and peace are so commonplace that they excite no comment...but the world I seek still eludes me." Do you think that under the current insecurities and cultural mistrust, interfaith or cultural dialogue is possible? And if so, how?

I say it even more today in the sense that I walked through the looking glass like Alice in Wonderland. I was in public service part of my adult life and now, having walked through the looking glass, I realize how suffocated public life is by the absence of the oxygen of free thought. I'm very fortunate in that I have the personal hobby or interest in meeting with people like your father and dozens of people all over the Arab and Muslim world and the world as a whole. The humanitarian initiative, peace initiative and inter-faith world are what kept me sane.

Today, if you look at official meetings, official discussions and communiqués, you'd ask where is the vision? I believe in the power of the meetings of minds. If you have a mind, I'd like to meet it.

Is that where hope comes from?

Yes, I think so, because after all, if the Arabic word *karam*, meaning generosity and kindness, is not of the soul as much as money, then why are we living? Where is hope's space? And why would you bother to come see me if not with the desire and duty to communicate?

After all these years of struggle, do you think it was worth it?

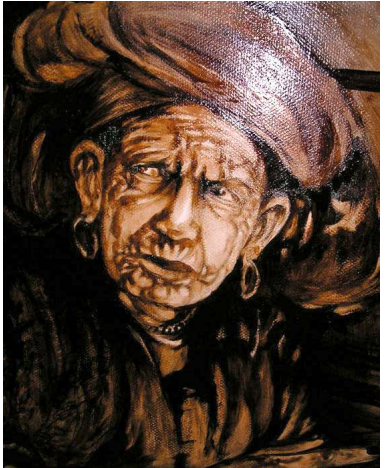
Considering the alternative, which would be a total reverse of the cycle of building to destroying, I'd say yes, if you really believe that this region is going to be taken over by revisiting the ruthless self-seeking mosaic of ethnic sectarian blood. That's what I see is the alternative, so you must develop an edifice of responsibility and civilized behavior by involving human beings.

Al-Yemeni: A devoted artist

By: Walid Al-Boks

Contradictions do not meet as they do in the portraits of artist Mohammed Al-Yemeni, a plastic artist with a different brush.

Through his fantastical drawing room on the second floor of a building in Sana'a do not object to flirting with the city with all its contradictions: nature, people and the hidden details concealed between them which you cannot find only there, where Mohammed spends the bulk of his time surrounded with wooden faces begotten by wood carving. The faces look at you and the mouths almost speak. I can find them now clutching at the prominent hard words. It rains at the sunrise. No doubt these are some of the paradoxes seen in the portraits of Mohammed.



Old Lady's Face, one of the artist's paintings

"The nature of the idea I would like to express dictates to me the artistic style I should adopt," says Mohammed who tends to be impressionistic.

Kicked into the building by the Ring Road that circles the center of the town, you find yourself in the drawing room, a workshop that produces a community in miniature, depictions that suit beautiful eyes.

Sensing beauty does not require philosophization and hallucination, says Al-Yemeni because this capacity is an original human instinct.

"However when the audience gets deceived by an absurd color chaos under the pretext of modernism, that enhances the concept of visual pollution held by viewers," he adds.

The artist is addressing the most superb human feelings. Therefore the artist must burnish his personality and elevate his character to qualify for the challenging task.

Talking to artist Al-Yemeni, you could discern that Al-Yemeni does not lack such a quality. His portraits introduce themselves as an evidence.

The face of this girl tears a once level surface; her facial expressions are full of misery; she may be an orphan; she seems so; dumb; that misery and sadness has torn the one level plane which the artist colored blue. Asked about the secret of the portrait that meets the eyes of visitor first, he replied that "the true artist depicts the cares of his society and chronicles life."

Mohammed Al-Yemeni belongs to an old generation of plastic artists in the country and most of his works give you the impression that this artist is old. They hold you back in old times.



Mohammed Al-Yemeni in his workshop

Another portrait shows the face of an old woman. It is haggard with detailed features as though bearing witness to a coup against history. That face may mislead you to think that the artist is old. However you estimate shrinks as you know that Mohammed is in the middle of his third decade.

He knows well where his portraits were originated and the way to add colors appropriately. He dexterously architects the drawings.

"The artistic portrait is not merely canvass and paint. It is however human emotion. I declare my respect for the Yemen's master of artistic movement Hashim Ali as well as prominent artists Abdul-Jabbar No'man and Fuad Al-Futaih."

Al-Yemeni does not hide his reverence of other artists abroad such as Fa'iq Hassan, Dhia' Azzawi, Jamal Qutb, Ja'far Abboud, etc.

The name of this artist has become a common feature among the publications of many international organizations working in Yemen as well as of

Yemeni NGOs.

He, however does not remember when he drafted his first painting. "I cannot remember (smiling). I cannot really remember. What I can remember is this fantasy atelier I established in 1997."

The atelier aims at fostering the capabilities of young talented individuals. The number of trainees has reached over 300.

Standing in the center of the atelier, you eye the colors and clutch at their carefully stitched lines. You become surrounded with windowless walls where nature is architected partly with color-mixed wood and partly with black and white mosaic.

There, one enjoys the friction between brushes and paper and canvass. The delicate feeling feeds the eyes by virtue of the fingers of an artist respecting art. The artist depicts magnificently the sunset and conveys into your soul the desire for beauty camouflaged in the eyelashes of a lass on the shore unperturbed by sea or people.

Comedian Al-Adhru'i: Prison is gloomy

Popular comedian Mohammed Nasser Al-Adhru'i has gained popularity particularly in the city of Sana'a for his politically-charged comic sketches and parodies. He performs at private parties and produces his works on cassettes as well.

Last month, he was abducted by security. He was arrested for a couple of days and then released. The Yemen Times visited him at his home to discuss several things related to his career and recent arrest.

Interview by: Saddam Al-Ashmouri

Q: When did you start your career as a comedian? When did you discover your talent?

A: I considered myself an artist since I was born. I may claim that I was a born comedian. However, I started performing in 1992.

Q: Which comedians influenced you both in Yemen and in the Arab World?

A: I have not been influenced by national comedians. However, I am particularly struck by the performance of popular Syrian comedian Duraid Laham (publicly known as Ghauwar Al-Tooshah).

Q: What difficulties do you usually encounter?

A: The major problem was a domestic one as my family objected to my job as a comedian. They, however, succumbed to reality eventually. Another main problem is that of the Ministry of Culture in terms of licenses. If we have adequate support, we will outperform ourselves and establish an interesting comedy theater.

Q: Some accuse you of being politically driven as you are a member of the Islah (an Islamic opposition party) and that you exploit art for political purposes. How do you react?

A: I was accused of graver offences! Yet, I would like to tell you that everybody is free to affiliate with any party they like. Nevertheless, you should not necessarily have to be a member of any party either. I may be a member of the Socialist Party intellectually. It must not be a reason for apprehension and intimidation. A citizen should have the choice to affiliate with any political party, whether Islah, Socialist, etc. It is no business of anybody but me. What matters is what I say: do I say something that benefits Islah or the whole people? This is the most important point. Such charges against me are nothing but forms of dictatorship. We are supposed to have democracy, plurality and freedom. The whole Yemeni people used to be one party and there wasn't anything like partisanship. The President himself proposed the idea of being parties and then everybody became a member of one party or the other. This is right but democracy and freedom are inextricably linked. If I am a member of Islah, what does this mean? Does this imply that I am non-Yemeni or non-Muslim?



Comedian Mohammed Al-Adhru'i (left) with Yemen Times reporter

Q: Why have you limited yourself to cassette production and party appearances? Why don't you participate in a TV production?

A: We cannot get what we want. Imagine that when I want to produce a cassette, it has to undergo a tedious procedure and sustain corrections and the scissors of the censor. It is yet more difficult to have TV productions and even if I become a TV actor, I have to be dictated and instructed. I will not have liberty to express myself freely. They will not approve of my ideas. This is the problem.

Some of my fellow comedians previously proposed certain ideas of theirs to the TV people but they were plagiarized. Then part of the problem is plagiarism. We may develop our own scenarios but they might get stolen.

Q: Who sponsors you?

A: I am self-sufficient. I make use of the money I make at parties and weddings. Nobody ever sponsored me. Official authorities are supposed to sponsor and support the artistic staff regardless of their political affiliation. The point is that such staff should serve the country. It is not important that they be members of the ruling party. The country is for all.

Thus the politically-biased actions may make us dislike the ruling party. One has the right to be a member of the ruling party but this must not be an obligation. Even if you were satisfied with the performance of the ruling party, you may end up hating it because of such prejudice.

Q: It is said that you charge high fees for your participation in parties especially university graduation ceremonies. How do you react?

A: On the contrary. I especially consider the status of university students. The maximum amount is thirty thousand riyals per party. Now, if a group contains, say, fifty persons, then they will pay about five hundred riyals each. It is usually less as groups usually contain a hundred students.

Q: Certain commentators say that your recent works are full of old jokes and that you reintroduce the same clichés. How do you react?

A: This is not true. Such claims are usually rumored by failed competitors.

Q: Another claim against you is that you plagiarize melodies and use them in the songs you perform in the context of your role-play. What do you say?

A: This is a mere claim. I usually perform at parties and parody or imitate certain famous songs using the original melodies. We don't mean to sell them but some people record them secretly and sell them while they are not our intellectual property. I warn people against that.

Q: What kind of relation is there between you and popular Yemeni comedian Fahd Al-Qarni?

A: It is competitive in terms of certain professional aspects. We have not been involved in one work. Each one of us has his own realm of activity but our objectives are perhaps the same.

Q: We heard a couple of weeks ago that you were abducted and put into prison. How and why?

A: The account of the incident is as follows: I was intercepted by a carload of plain-clothed armed men on my way back to my home from a party. The elec-

tricity was off at that time. They intimidated me with weapons. If I had a heart problem, I could have died out of fear. I thought that they were a gang and I might have fought back had I got access to a gun. However, it turned out that they were security personnel.

They took me to the political security bureau and searched me and I was blindfolded and led me into a prison cell.

I had no idea why they did this. They told me it was because I imitated the voice of the President. People know that I don't mimic the voices of individuals.

Q: How did you find the prison and how long did you stay incarcerated?

A: Prison is gloomy. However, the prison was clean and I was detained for three days. It was a good chance for me to rest as I had been working continually at parties. God sent those good people to snatch me out of my tiresome job.

The investigation was normal but they blindfolded and chained me up, may be in order to not be distracted by anything else and to recollect things properly.

My advice for those who have a premonition that they may be arrested by the security is to replace their expensive mobile, if they have one, with a cheap one!

Q: Will your arrest change or in any way affect the course of your profession?

A: Not for the worse. It has of course given me an impetus to go on and continue doing what I did although I feel that I am being watched and my telephones wiretapped. I feel also a little bit of fear since I was arrested because you cannot tell who is who when plain-clothed armed men overpower you with their guns. You cannot tell their identity at that moment.

Q: Do you have a last comment?

A: I do thank everyone who showed solidarity with me: my audience, the public, political parties and press. They wrote about my ordeal a lot and stood by me steadfastly.

Through your paper, I convey this message to the citizens: You have the choice to peacefully change the situation at the upcoming elections.

Short profile:

Mohammed Nasser Mothanna Al-Adhru'i is a teacher by trade. He is from 'Ans district, Dhamar province, 100 kms to the south of Sana'a, and is currently residing in Sana'a. He is married with three children: two sons and a daughter. He is acting now as a director of Al-Hadeel Artistic Band. He has produced several cassettes including "I am Free," "Viewpoint," and "Denmark."

The Rubaiyat of Omar Khayyam 37

Translated by Edward FitzGerald

The moving finger writes;
and, having writ,
Moves on: nor all thy piety
nor wit
Shall lure it back to cancel
half a line,
Nor all thy tears wash out a
word of it.

Literary Corner

By: Abu Al-Kalmah Al-Tayyibah

Yemen: The People and Culture (VIII)

Author: Qadhi Abdullah Abdul-Wahhab Al-Shamahi
Language: Arabic
Publisher: Dar Al-Hana Printing
Year Published: 1973
No. of Pages: 370

Amro Bin Ali Bin Rasul declared himself king

The Bani Rasuls ruled from 628 – 858 AH. They are actually followers of the Ayyubids only being Arabs who had emigrated to the Levant in pre-Islamic times (they established a vassal state of the Byzantines known as Ghassan).

We now come to a period of Yemeni history in which Turkomen or affiliate conquerors had an active part in Yemeni history and the wave of invasions began with the Kurdish followers and descendants of Salah Al-Din Al-Ayyubi (Saladin). Upon hearing of the vast turmoil that had engulfed Yemen during the latter part of the Sixth Century, Saladin decided Yemen was ripe. He allied the Ayyubids with the Rassieen and Suleiman Alawis and sent his brother, Torah Shah with a force of 3,000 men to back them up.

After some fighting the Himyari Mahdis were defeated and Zabid was taken in 569 AH. It was said that the Mahdis had stockpiled the weapons and ammunitions of 25 other states in Yemen they had fought with. Then Torah Shah went on to take Aden. When he head North, he met little resistance until he reached the withering heights of Summara, where he was confronted by Sheikh Abdullah Al-Janby, the Sultan of Janb. After fierce fighting, Torah Shah was reconciled to a settlement. He proceeded further north to be only confronted by the tribes around Dhamar. He entered the city of Dhamar and proceeded northward to Sana'a.

There he was unable to confront Sultan Ali Bin Hatim and the tribes around Sana'a were able to loot and plunder his forces as they retreated to Zabid. Torah Shah left Yemen on 571. This was might be considered the first Egyptian invasion of Yemen, since the Ayyubids had taken control of Egypt.

However, the Ayyubids were not let to rest in Yemen, for the successors to Torah Shah confronted fierce fighting with some of the local rulers, especially Al Hatim, who fiercely fought against Torah Shah's brother. In addition, the Ayyubids fought with each other for the governorship of Yemen. The brother of Torah Shah (Daghtakeen Bin Ayyub) was able to control a sizable part of the country. He is noted for having constructed the Wall of the City of Sana'a and founded the City of Al-Mansoura in Al-Hugariah region, where he died in 590 AH. His son Al-Aziz Ismael Bin Daghtakeen ruled from hence to 598 AH, when he was killed in Zabid, but was a strange ruler as the author states, with most of the authority laying with his mother. The latter then married Suleiman Bin Sa'ad Al-Din and turned over the authority to him.

The latter was cruel and probably had homosexual tendencies and he ruled to the Year 612 A. He was followed by King Masoud. By the end of the Ayyubid rule, the Ayyubid influence in Yemen ended when Nur al-Din

The second wave of Turcoman invasions of Yemen came with the Circassian Dynasty of janissaries that were under the Turkish flag. They were able to gain a foothold in Yemen, according to the author because they possessed firearms, which were then unknown in Yemen. These included shotguns, and artillery. They also allied themselves with Imam Sharaf Al-Din and the Ashraf of Jaran. The Circassian state was a mixture of Circassian and Ottoman rulers and lasted from 923 AH to 945 AH.

Their period of rule in Yemen was rife with internal squabbling amongst themselves and internal rebellion. The end of their period of rule left two competing forces in Yemen: the Yemenis led by Imam Sharaf Al-Din and his son Al-Mutahhar and the Ottoman Turks

The First Ottoman rule of Yemen (945 AH to 1045)

This was a period of difficulty for the Turks in Yemen and the brief periods were they dominated Yemen were met by fierce resistance of the Yemenis led by the Hashemites, which the author says went on for hundreds of years to the point that Yemen was called the graveyard of the Turks. Thus the Yemenis and the Hashemites found themselves in perpetual alliance, which was primarily set off by foreign invasions. Here the author delves into the great influence of the Zeidi sect in Yemen which he considers a sect that brings Islam back to the piety and purity of the Orthodox Caliphs that followed the Prophet Mohammed (PBAUH), which is why many Yemenis followed them, especially when turmoil prevailed in the land and the country was left with a vacuum of authority to be only filled in by these pious Imams who produced a fine example of justice and advocacy for the discontent.

There was one period of female Fatimid rule under Fatima Bint Al-Hassan Bin Salah, who deviated from the normal Zeidi doctrine along with her son. We were not given the date of her rule.

Among the leading Zeidi Imams of this period was Imam Mutahhar Bin Sharaf Al-Din, who was able to overtake most of the internal small states that had evolved alongside the Turkish rule and eventually kicked out the Turks from Aden and were left with a small foothold in Zabid. The author notes that this was at the time that the Turks were at the zenith of their power, yet they found inhospitality in Yemen that was not easy to reckon with.

REPUBLIC OF YEMEN
MINISTRY OF WATER AND ENVIRONMENT
SANA'A BASIN WATER MANAGEMENT PROJECT - IDA CREDIT 3774 -YEM

INVITATION FOR PREQUALIFICATION -IFP NO. SBWMP 1/2006
Civil Works

CONSTRUCTION WORKS FOR THE REHABILITATION OF TEN (10) EXISTING RECHARGE DAMS AND THE CONSTRUCTION OF FIVE (5) NEW RECHARGE DAMS

This invitation for prequalification follows the general procurement notice for this project that appeared in Development Business Issue No. 660 dated 16 August 2005).

The Government of the Republic of Yemen has received a credit from the International Development Association (IDA) toward the cost of the Sana'a Basin Water Management Project (SBWMP), and it intends to apply part of the proceeds of this credit toward payments under the contract for the rehabilitation of 10 existing recharge dams and the construction of 5 new recharge dams, Contracts No. NCB W1/002, NCB W2/002. Interested Contractors may apply for prequalification for one or more of the contracts. Bidding will be governed by the World Bank's eligibility rules and procedures.

The Project Coordination Unit (PCU) of Sana'a Basin Water Management Project (SBWMP) intends to pre-qualify contractors and/or firms for the following works

No	Description of Contract's	Contract No.
A	A - Construction of the following 5 new recharge dam and appurtenant works:	
1	Bahman (series of 2 m high check dams - 10 off)	NCB W1/002 a
2	Shib Al-Ma'adi (about 18 m high)	NCB W1/002 b
3	Al-Melaah (about 8 m high)	NCB W1/002 c
4	Al-Sinn (about 8 m high)	NCB W1/002 d
5	Beryan (about 25 m high dam)	NCB W1/002 e
B	B - Rehabilitation works for the following 10 existing recharge dams:	
1	Al-Masham (17 m high earthfill dam)	NCB W2/002 a
2	Eial-Husseini (16 m high earthfill dam)	NCB W2/002 b
3	Mahali (12 m high CFRD)	NCB W2/002 c
4	Beni Naji (11 m high earthfill dam)	NCB W2/002 d
5	Al-Hayathem (17 m high earthfill dam)	NCB W2/002 e
6	Arisha (13 m high earthfill dam)	NCB W2/002 f
7	Thumah (18 m high earthfill dam)	NCB W2/002 g
8	Al-Ja'ef (19 m high masonry dam)	NCB W2/002 h
9	Tozan (25 m high CFRD)	NCB W2/002 i
10	Al-Lujma (16 m high CFRD)	NCB W2/002 j

It is expected that invitations to bids will be made in the September, 2006.

Prequalification will be conducted through the procedures as specified in the World Bank's Guidelines for Procurement under IBRD Loans and Credit, January 1995, revised January and August 1996, September 1997 and January 1999, and is open to all bidders from eligible source countries, as defined in the guidelines.

Interested eligible bidders may obtain further information, and inspect the prequalification documents, from the PCU of SBWMP at the address below from 08:30 AM to 14:30 PM on normal working days. A complete set of prequalification documents in English may be purchased by interested bidders on the submission of a written application to the address below and upon payment of a nonrefundable fee of Yemeni Riyal 10,000. The method of payment will be cash only. The document can be collected from the address below.

Applications for prequalification should be submitted in clearly marked envelopes and delivered to the address below at 12:00 Noon of July 30th, 2006 and be clearly marked "Application to Prequalify for NCB No. W1&2/002 (CONSTRUCTION WORKS FOR THE REHABILITATION OF TEN (10) EXISTING RECHARGE DAMS AND THE CONSTRUCTION OF FIVE (5) NEW RECHARGE DAMS. Component 2 - Supply Management and Recharge Improvement Project". Late applications will be rejected.

Ministry of Water and Environment
Sana'a Basin Water Management Project
Attn: Eng. Mohamed Harmal, Project Director, SBWMP
PO Box 11014,
Western 60 M. Road - Sana'a ROY
Tel: +967 1 469159/6/7
Fax: +967 1 469158
E-mail: sbwmp@y.net.ye

الجمهورية اليمنية
وزارة المياه والبيئة
مشروع إدارة مياه حوض صنعاء

دعوة لتأهيل مقاولين لتنفيذ أعمال مدنية لإنشاء عدد خمسة سدود جديدة وترميم عدد عشرة سدود قديمة في منطقة حوض صنعاء
- دعوة تأهيل رقم (SBWMP 1/2006)

تعتبر هذه الدعوة الخاصة بتأهيل مقاولين لتنفيذ الأعمال المدنية المذكورة أعلاه إلحاقاً للدعوة الأولية المنشورة في مجلة التنمية التابعة للأمم المتحدة في العدد رقم (١٦) خلال شهر أغسطس ٢٠٠٥م حصلت الجمهورية اليمنية على قرض من هيئة التنمية الدولية لمواجهة نفقات مشروع إدارة مياه حوض صنعاء قرض تنموي رقم (٣٧٧٤ يمن) وسيتم استخدام جزء من عائدات القرض لمواجهة تكاليف إنشاء عدد خمسة سدود جديدة وترميم عدد عشرة سدود قديمة في منطقة حوض صنعاء للمناقضتين رقم (NCB W1/002, NCB W2/002) وعليه تدعو وحدة تنسيق المشروع الشركات والمقاولين المتخصصين في تنفيذ المنشآت المائية والأعمال المدنية المماثلة لتقديم طلباتهم للمشاركة في عملية التأهيل لتنفيذ أي من أو بعض العقود المذكورة أدناه وهي:-

رقم المناقصة / العقد	المناقصة	م
	بناء عدد خمسة سدود جديدة في منطقة حوض صنعاء كما يلي:-	أ-١
NCB W1/002 A	سد بهمان - نهم	١
NCB W1/002 B	سد شعب المعادي - نهم	٢
NCB W1/002 C	سد الملاح - بني حشيش	٣
NCB W1/002 D	سد السن - بني حشيش	٤
NCB W1/002 E	سد بريان - بني حشيش	٥
	ترميم عدد عشرة سدود قائمة في منطقة حوض صنعاء كما يلي:-	ب-
NCB W2/002 A	سد المشام - أرحب	١
NCB W2/002 B	سد عيال حسين - نهم	٢
NCB W2/002 C	سد محلي - نهم	٣
NCB W2/002 D	سد بني ناجي - نهم	٤
NCB W2/002 E	سد الهياثم - نهم	٥
NCB W2/002 F	سد عريشة - نهم	٦
NCB W2/002 G	سد ثومة - نهم	٧
NCB W2/002 H	سد الجايف - همدان	٨
NCB W2/002 I	سد طوظان - همدان	٩
NCB W2/002 J	سد اللجمة - بني بهلول	١٠

وستتم عملية التأهيل الأولى وإجراءات المناقصات وفقاً لدليل إجراءات البنك الدولي. وتعتبر العملية مفتوحة لجميع الشركات والمقاولين المهتمين المحليين والأجانب من الدول الأعضاء في البنك الدولي. ويمكن للشركات والمقاولين المهتمين الحصول على مزيد من البيانات والمعلومات من مقر وحدة تنسيق مشروع إدارة مياه حوض صنعاء المبين في العنوان المبين أدناه خلال ساعات الدوام الرسمي. كما يمكن شراء وثائق التأهيل الأولى (بالغة الإنجليزية) ولجميع المواقع من مقر وحدة تنسيق مشروع إدارة مياه حوض صنعاء مقابل مبلغ لا يرد وقدره (١٠٠٠٠ ريال) فقط عشرة الف ريال لا غير نقداً. وآخر موعد لتسليم طلبات وثائق التأهيل وهو نفسه موعد فتح المظاريف يوم الأحد الموافق ٢٠٠٦/٧/٣٠م في تمام الساعة الثانية عشرة ظهراً. ولن تقبل أي طلبات تأهيل ترد بعد هذا الموعد.

عنوان المشروع:- شارع الستين الغربي - ص.ب. رقم (١١٠١٤) صنعاء
تلفون رقم: (٠٠٩٦٧-١-٤٦٩١٥٩/٦/٧) ، فاكس رقم: (٠٠٩٦٧-١-٤٦٩١٥٨)
بريد اليكتروني bwmp@y.net.ye

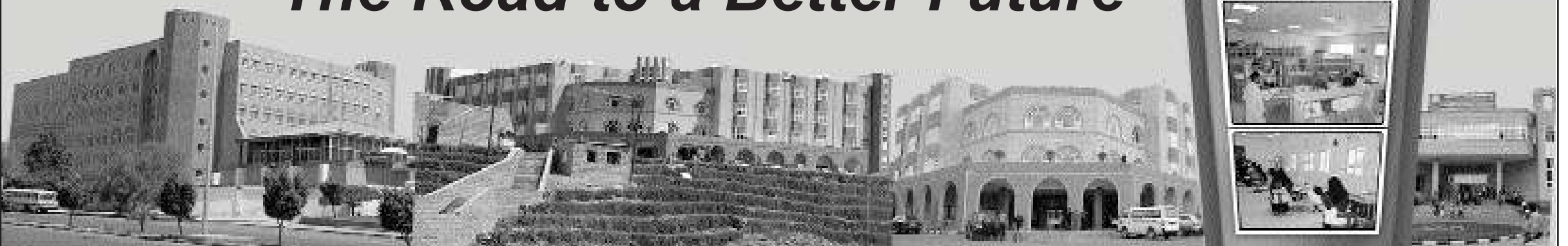
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Amran hospitals lack specialists

By: Saddam Al-Ashmori

“We found a piece of gauze inside my wife’s wound,” said Najeeb Ahmed Saleh, talking about his wife’s last operation.

According to Saleh, his wife went to the government hospital in Amran governorate, where they reside, suffering pain due to appendicitis “After immense efforts and paying bribes, I was able to admit my wife to the hospital for appendectomy surgery,” he explained. “A week after the operation, my wife suffered pain, swelling and separation at the surgical site,” he added.

Saleh and his wife returned to the hospital that gave her antibiotics. “However, my wife’s condition became worse, so we traveled to Sana’a. We went to a hospital where she had a second operation at the same site of the previous one. The doctor performing the operation was shocked at the medical gauze he

found inside her, disbelieving that the operation was done at Amran Hospital and saying it was a random, unsanitary operation,” Saleh confirmed.

Saleh’s wife wasn’t the only victim of medical malpractice at the hospital. Ali Al-Miqadhi confirmed that he too suffered pain and inflammation after surgery at Amran Hospital. “I decided to go to a private hospital in Amran after my state became so bad following the surgery. Doctors there said I was near death. They told me the equipment used in the previous operation wasn’t clean and that’s what led to such pain and inflammation,” he recounted.

Al-Miqadhi insisted that since that incident, he has refused any treatment at Amran Hospital. “If I or one of my relatives becomes sick, we often ask anyone with the same symptoms about the medication used and we pay for it. It’s better than going to that hospital,” he stated.

Incredible deterioration

Amran resident Yousef Qaid described the governorate’s medical

state as “incredibly tottering.” He said Amran Hospital, considered the governorate’s only government hospital, lacks specialists, beds and equipment.

“Patients having no relations with powerful people inside the hospital are ignored and most of the time, doctors don’t show up,” Qaid said. “I once had to relieve one of my relatives. When we arrived at the hospital’s emergency room, we found no one. Do you believe that?” he wondered.

Regarding the governorate’s private hospitals, Qaid said the main aim of such hospitals is profit. “These hospitals ask patients to undergo many and various medical tests just to get more money,” he said.

Abdullah Hamid agreed, saying, “When I went with my sick wife to one of the private hospitals, they asked us to do many medical tests. They then diagnosed her illness as a blood infection and we had to buy medication. But she didn’t feel well, so we went to another private hospital, where she underwent new medical tests. They diagnosed her illness as typhoid and prescribed new medication. She didn’t recover and the last diagnosis was malaria. We don’t know who to believe or where to go. I tried to return the medication and get my money back, but they refused,” he explained sadly.

A pharmacist is better than a doctor

“I believe anyone who goes to Amran Hospital is out of his mind because we all know what’s going to happen at this hospital!” another Amran resident Yahya Ali Yazeed declared. “More recently, pharmacists are better than doctors who work in the hospitals,” he added.

Yazeed confirmed that many governorate citizens prefer going to the



Amran hospital is the only governmental hospital in Amran governorate.

pharmacy, describing their conditions to the pharmacist, who in turn prescribes them medication. “However, in the hospital, we get illness instead of treatment,” said Yazeed, who refuses to go to any hospital, particularly in Amran governorate.

From a center to a hospital

According to 2003-2004 statistical health indicators, Amran governorate is home to 1,085,259 Yemenis. There are only 45 physicians, 82 nurses, one government hospital with 100 beds and six rural hospitals with 210 beds. This makes 0.50 physicians, 0.76 nurses and 1.94 beds per 10,000 residents.

Amran Hospital manager Dr. Khalid Al-Kobati explained that the hospital was a medical center in the 1970s. When Amran was declared a governorate, the center became a public hospital. He said the number of beds in the hospital aren’t enough and additionally, the building is small and old.

He also confessed that the hospital

lacks specialists, but added, “We’re better than the past. In the past, we had no medical personnel at all, so we established a medical institute in the governorate for training. Now we have medical personnel in all of the governorate’s provinces. However, our big problem is lack of doctors and specialists.”

Al-Kobati confirmed that there are orders to build a central hospital in the governorate with a 250 bed capacity. Another hospital will be established in Hamda region, providing 120 beds. “We expect that these hospitals will begin operating in the next two years.”

Amran Governor Taha Hajer confirmed the same. “The central hospital will cost a billion Yemeni Riyals. A hospital will be built in Khamer city and will cost YR 600 million and a rural hospital in Al-Sawd province will cost YR 200 million,” he added.

Six medical centers also will expand to become hospitals. Besides that, 75 medical units will be established, with 35 ready by the end of

this year, according to Hajer. “Two hundred will graduate from the medical institute and they’ll cover the governorate’s existing medical staff shortage,” he added.

Private sector for competition

Dr. Mohammed Al-Makhathi, general manager of Al-Makhathi Hospital, said Amran governorate’s medical state has developed. “When the governorate expanded and the government hospital became unable to cover all of the medical services, the government opened the door to medical investment so private hospitals were established to create a type of competition to offer citizens the best.”

Regarding high prices at private hospitals, he explained that the reason for such prices is, “The distinguished medical services offered in the private hospital.”

According to Al-Makhathi, doctors in government hospitals aren’t always available for their patients, who also may not receive a room or a bed in public hospitals; whereas in a private hospital, a patient is under constant medical care by a nurse devoted to each patient, who also enjoys his own room and bed.

However, he pointed out that some private hospitals are directed by inexperienced and unqualified individuals. “Mostly, the executive manager of a private hospital is the one who decides the pricing. But this executive manager may not have the qualifications or have no medical career, so he has no experience in this field. This is very dangerous, as any hospital manager should be a doctor,” Al-Makhathi said.

He confirmed that the Ministry of Health now is leading intensive campaigns to evaluate medical services Yemeni hospitals offer, wherein doctors undergo interviews and medical tests to evaluate their knowledge and ability to treat patients.



A child is looking at his father that underwent operation in Amran hospital

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“A switch in time”: A new strategy for America in Iraq

There is no greater foreign policy challenge for the United States today than the reconstruction of Iraq. For this reason, in November-December 2005, the Saban Center for Middle East Policy at the Brookings Institution brought together a small group of experts on Iraq, on the process of political and economic reconstruction, and on military affairs, under the direction of its Director of Research, Kenneth M. Pollack, to consider U.S. policy toward Iraq in all of its dimensions. Pollack then took the fruits of these discussions, along with findings from trips to Iraq and to U.S. Central Command headquarters in Tampa, and crafted them into a new report from the Saban Center entitled *A Switch in Time: A New Strategy for America in Iraq*. This monograph details a comprehensive, alternative approach to current U.S. military, political, and economic policies in Iraq. Here is an interesting interview conducted by Taqfir Washington with Mr. Pollack on the report.

Kenneth M. Pollack is the director of Research, Saban Center for Middle East Policy, and Senior Fellow, Foreign Policy Studies. He is an expert in the Middle East; Military and security affairs; Persian Gulf. Currently Mr. Pollack is working on Iraq alternate reconstruction project.

TW: What are you hoping that this new analysis paper, “A Switch in Time,” for which you are the principle author, will actually achieve considering the fact that we have heard so many people say previously that the way the United States is handling the situation in Iraq is not working and that there are better ways of doing things, yet arguably things have not changed that much? Do you have any reason to expect that this paper may produce some positive changes on the ground?

Well first, it may. In some ways our purpose in doing so stems from the first point that you made. There is a pretty good consensus that the way the United States has been handling the situation in Iraq has not been successful. That begs the question, what would a strategy that could be successful look like? It is something that has been noticeably absent from the public debate. Other people are willing to say that there are better ways to do things and then when they are asked, “well, what are those ways?” they say “Let me get back to you.” So this was an effort to bring together a non-partisan group that would draw up what a strategy that would simply be a baseline for debate. It is important for policy makers to have before them an idea of what would be required if they were to sign up for this policy. So that’s the first goal. In response to your second question, I think that there is evidence that there are elements within the US government that are willing to make changes, that have made changes over the course of time, and in some cases have had some success with the changes. Typically, these people are at lower levels in the military, in the State Department, and a few other places. They tend to be working-level officials who actually have some understanding of things, such as counter-insurgency or stability

operations and they do make changes. Some of the changes have actually been helpful changes, though not always. Sometimes they’ve changed from one unsuccessful policy to another unsuccessful policy. But there are people who make changes and there are other people who I think are open to change, who understand that what we’re doing isn’t working and therefore they are willing to look at alternatives. Now, is this going to change the way that the Bush administration does things? Probably not right away, but perhaps over time, it may. And that too I think is helpful. Because I’ll say while it would be very helpful for the United States to adopt this policy in toto, there are lots of solutions and suggestions in there and even if they don’t adopt it in toto there are probably a bunch of things they could pull out of it and if they start doing them it would help.

TW: In “A Switch in Time” it is suggested that a political solution is the most viable solution to the problems facing Iraqis. Why should they have faith in this affirmation?

I think the most important reason is unfortunately the negative one – that turning to the militias is probably the

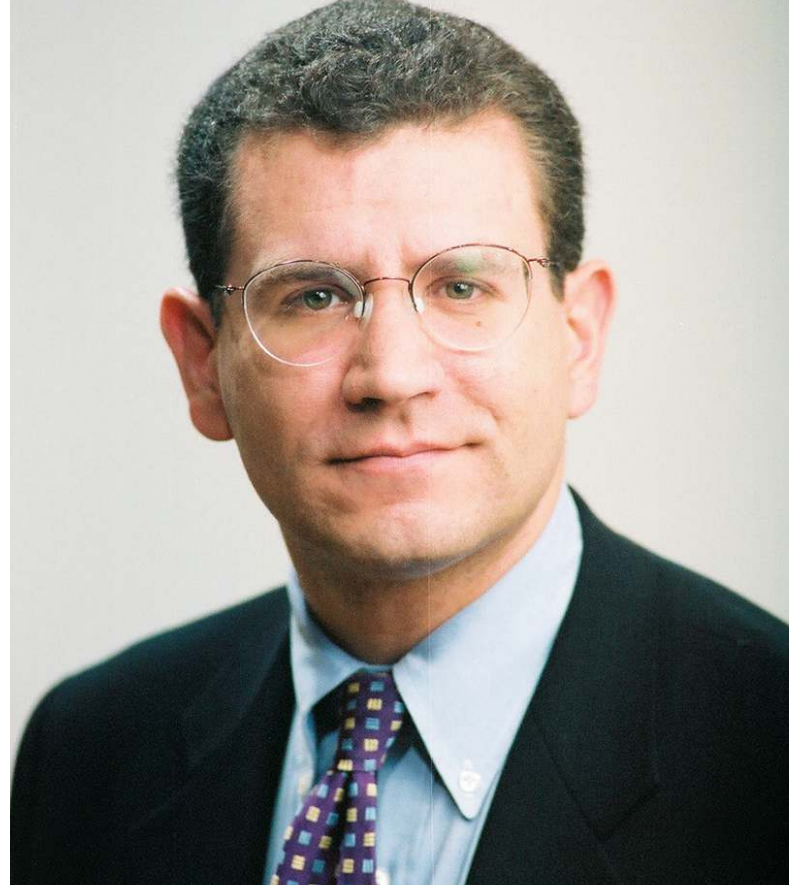
What is actually incumbent upon the United States and the new government of Iraq is that we actually have to start delivering because we have failed them so many times.

fastest route to trouble. The militias are not forces for stability and I think that the vast majority of Iraqis do understand that.

They have remained hopeful. What is actually incumbent upon the United States and the new government of Iraq is that we actually have to start delivering because we have failed them so many times. The hope is out there and it will remain for some period, we don’t know for how long, and we shouldn’t assume it will remain forever. There has been a progressive hope when each government in Iraq has come to power, followed by unfortunately fairly rapid disappointments. So, the curve of popularity for these governments tends to start at a certain level and then plummet.

TW: “A Switch a Time” says that the United States has spent vast sums of money fighting insurgents and not enough money working on reconstruction in areas where it is welcomed. But even in areas such as Kurdistan, where people are more amenable to reconstruction, there has been violence. Does this mean that even these areas of the country have their own issues to work out?

Yes, I would agree with that. The problem is that Iraq is extraordinarily diverse. The rioting in Hallabja in some ways could actually be helpful because, quite frankly, there are a lot of Kurds, even Kurds in the leadership, who will tell you that the Kurdish government is itself corrupt and far from democratic and those things themselves need to change. The riots in Hallabja could be a very useful source of leverage for an American administration that wanted to press the Kurds for reform. Absent those riots, the Kurdish leaders are able to say that the people love them. The riots are a way of saying to them that they do have a problem and that they need to solve it. Now this presupposes an American administration that is aware of these root problems and that doesn’t just want to come up with a fig-



Kenneth M. Pollack

leaf government and walk away from the problem.

TW: The report mentioned that a premature departure of coalition troops from Iraq would be an encouraging sign for Salafi jihadists. It seems that America’s presence in Iraq is also encouraging for these same people. Do you agree that this sort of catch-22 exists and how might we get out of it?

I do believe that that catch-22 exists. I believe that there are people who are angry with the United States and as long as we stay there that becomes a force for greater anger. If we were to leave it would be a source of recruitment and triumph. I think the only way out of that catch-22 is to actually fix things. The most important thing is that we are actually going to have this short-term problem. If Iraq falls into chaos, America’s reputation in the Middle East is garbage. If we can actually make Iraq into a stable place and into a real country, then I think that will burnish the image of the United States. It will also help to detract from the arguments of the Salafi jihadists, who say that the United States is there to colonize, and to get oil. I would also say that one of the great problems of American policy making is that we do

focus on the short term. In this case the violence and the fact that we are inspiring people to join the resistance with our presence.

TW: “A Switch in Time” uses the phrase “sustainable stability” in describing what the goal Iraq should seek to attain. Could you please elaborate on what this phrase means?

It is a term that we came up with that basically means that Iraq needs to be stable and needs to remain a cohesive entity. We need an Iraq that is able to keep the peace without relying completely on us. What has to be our

For better or worse, if things go wrong in Iraq, no one is going to want to listen to the United States.

principle goal in Iraq is the creation of these institutions that can provide this stability. But it takes time to build these institutions.

I would disagree that building these sorts of institutions is impossible. Studies by the Rand Corporation point to instances where this has been possible.

TW: Why do you think that the United States has decided to sit down with Iran to discuss the issue of sectarian violence in Iraq?

It’s important to remember this idea is an Iranian one. The U.S. made that decision in the fall when Ambassador Khalilzad was able to persuade his superiors to allow him to meet with the Iranians. He essentially said that you can’t keep the Iranians out of the situation as they have a great deal of influence inside of Iraq. They could be helpful to us and, frankly, we need all the help we can get. I think this was one of those no-brainers out there. It was one of those practical things.

TW: Do you think there is any credibility to the theory that Iran and the United States are working together to exercise control over Iraq?

I think that that’s highly unlikely. I think the US and Iran do have some common interests but I would never exaggerate those common interests too far. You would also have to assume that the US-Iran nuclear confrontation was made up. This is a very serious issue.

TW: Do you think that Iran is in any way fearful of the United States since we have reemphasized the preemptive strike strategy in the National Security Strategy?

I don’t think they are. What I have seen from the Iranians over the last few years is that they typically seem to be maybe a bit overconfident. They think that America’s presence in Iraq is greatly constraining our military options, which is not untrue. It is not quite constraining our military options to the extent that they may think it is.

TW: How do you feel about the place of Iraq in terms of the future of American democracy promotion in the Middle East?

I think it’s very important. For better or worse, if things go wrong in Iraq, no one is going to want to listen to the United States. I think that even the American people will say that it was a mistake to try. If we succeed, people may think that we can succeed anywhere in this. In terms of Arab opinion, I have heard people who support reform see success in Iraq as important. Those who are less supportive are afraid that if reform in Iraq works, that the U.S. will get carried away without understanding what it will mean on the domestic scene in the Arab world.

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Sha'ab Ibb downs Ta'awen Ba'adan 3-1, maintains second place

By: Ismail Al-Ghabiri

Concluding the Premier League's 23rd round, Sha'ab Ibb thrashed Ta'awen Ba'adan 3-1 on Friday at Al-Kibsi Stadium in Ibb. A credit of only 17 points is the harvest of the defeated team that ranks last in the tournament.

With this victory, Sha'ab Ibb increased its points to 42 to maintain the Premier League's second place.

Striker Nashwan Al-Hajjam opened the scoring for the second-placed team in the 12th minute of the first half while forward Rashad Mohamed Abdullah answered for Ta'awen Ba'adan. Scorer Fekri Al-Hubeishi added the second goal for Sha'ab Ibb and Nashwan Al-Hajjam placed home the third.

At the 22 May International Stadium in Aden, Al-Telal tied with its guest Ahli Sana'a 3-3 in a strong and dramatic match. Two early goals from veteran Ali Al-Nono ended the first half with the visiting team ahead while the Congolese professional player Ampyano and



Sha'ab Ibb team

national forward Khaled Bale'id equalized the result in the second half.

The guest team went ahead once again via striker Ala Al-Safi while Ampyano answered within minutes. Now Ahli Sana'a stands third with 39

points and Al-Telal fifth with 36 points.

In Hadramout, Al-Shu'ala from Aden drew its host Sha'ab Al-Mukalla 1-1 to raise its points to 28 in ninth position while the host team remained in the seventh position with 32 points.

In Taiz, Al-Rashid team defeated its guest Tadamun Shabwa 2-0 to advance to the tenth position with 28 points while the visiting team dropped to eleventh with 26 points.

In the capital city, Al-Yarmouk downed its guest Hassan team from Abyan 3-0 to jump to the eighth place with 31 points while the loser remained in the sixth position with 34 points.

Shabab Al-Jeel from Hodeida played its guest 22 May from Sana'a in a game, which ended goalless helping the host team to raise its points to 24 in the twelfth place while the visiting team fell to the penultimate place with 19 points.

The 23rd round competition kicked off on Thursday with Helal Al-Hodeida delaying the announcement of Al-Saqr from Taiz as titleholder of the season for the first time in its history in a 1-1 draw. The host team raised its points to 37 in the fourth position while Al-Saqr maintained its top place in the tournament with 51 points and still needs only one point to win the trophy.

Premier League standings

Team	Games played	Wins	Draws	Losses	Goals for	Goals against	Total points
Al-Saqr	23	15	6	2	40	14	51
Sha'ab Ibb	23	12	6	5	42	29	42
Ahli Sana'a	23	11	6	6	40	31	39
Helal Hodeida	23	10	7	9	43	34	37
Al-Telal	23	11	3	9	36	33	36
Hassan	23	9	7	7	24	23	34
Sha'ab Hadramout	23	9	5	9	29	37	32
Al-Yarmouk	23	8	7	8	28	28	31
Al-Shu'ala	23	6	10	7	28	27	28
Al-Rashid	23	8	4	11	23	30	28
Tadamun Shabwa	23	8	2	13	27	38	26
Shabab Al-Jeel	23	6	6	11	23	28	24
22 May	23	5	4	14	28	44	19
Ta'awen Ba'adan	23	4	5	14	32	47	17

F1 plans to get rid of third car



The use of third cars on Fridays could be abolished next season

Formula One's governing body is planning to abolish the use of third cars during Friday practice sessions for next season.

The FIA also wants to reduce the length of qualifying sessions by five minutes, starting as soon as next weekend.

The proposals will be put to a fax vote of the FIA's World Motor Sport Council.

"If agreed, changes which affect the 2006 regulations (length of qualifying) will come into force at the French Grand Prix," the governing body said.

The biggest change is the proposal "to eliminate the possibility for certain teams to run a third car on Fridays" in 2007.

Teams which finished outside the top four in the overall standings in the previous season are allowed to use a third car in Friday practice at present, but those drivers do not race on Sundays.

"Fans get a raw deal on Fridays as a lot of the race drivers don't even run and they're the guys they have paid to see," Honda team boss Nick Fry told Autosport magazine.

"When they do (run), the times they set are nearly always pretty meaningless. Secondly, the savings for us are potentially huge. We could almost halve our testing spend."

The change to qualifying would mean three equal 15-minute sessions from next weekend, rather than two 15-minute knockout sessions followed by one 20 minute shoot-out for pole among the top drivers.

The next Grand Prix is at Magny-Cours in France on 16 July.

Source: bbc.com

VACANCY ANNOUNCEMENT

The United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) invites **Yemeni Nationals** to apply for the following position with its project "Environment Protection Authority (EPA)"

Post Title: Admin. Finance Assistant
Duration: 06 months (renewable)

Responsibilities

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- Checking outgoing correspondence for conformity with established procedures and accuracy of statements before being signed by the NPC.
- Meeting arrangements and minute taking.
- Office administration.
- Preparing correspondence in Arabic/English related to protocol/administrative issues.
- Maintaining the filing system on general operations matters.
- Screen telephone calls, answer routine queries with discretion, route phone calls to appropriate colleagues while applying service oriented approach.
- Providing assistance to the NPC as requested.
- Preparing and maintaining NCSA document templates and forms.
- Supporting the National Project Coordinator by prepare the regular financial reports for presentation to the National Steering Committee.
- Ensuring financial reports are transparent, accurate and representative
- Report any unplanned or unaccounted for expenditure to both the NPC
- Taking responsibility for the veracity of the programmes financial records.
- Ensuring that government and UNDP accounting procedures are followed.
- Assist National Professional with financial plans for programme activities.
- Perform other duties as deemed necessary.

Qualification

- University degree in accounts/finance; specialized training in accounting.
- Minimum of five years experience in finance and accounting field; full proficiency in computerized accounting systems;
- Good knowledge of internal accounting procedures and reporting systems;
- Computer skills in both Arabic and English Languages;
- Clerical and administrative experience.
- Good knowledge of Arabic and English Languages

Interested candidates are requested to visit our website at: <http://www.undp.org/ye/undp-vacancies.htm> for detailed term of reference of the position and may submit their applications indicating the title of the post applied for by mail to Human Resources Unit and response will only be made to short listed candidates.

UNDP, P.O.Box 551 Sana'a/Fax: 448841/E-mail: (registry.ye@undp.org)
The deadline for receiving applications is Wednesday, 16 July 2006

UNDP is an equal opportunity organization and qualified female candidates are strongly encouraged to apply.

U17s team camps in Cairo

Delegation of the national Under-17s football team headed for Cairo on Friday for an external training camp in Egypt under the local coach Abdullah Fadhl. The team prepares for the Asian Cup of Nations' Finals scheduled to take place September 3-17 in Singapore.

Delegation Manager Ghazi Mahrous indicated that the team completed its Sana'a training camp, which started on April 20. According to Mahrous, the teammates were given training programs

aimed at improving their fitness, capacity and harmony between teammates.

He pointed out that they made all the arrangements before the Yemeni Football Federation (YFF) approved the Cairo camp due to continue up until July 30. The team is to play a number of practice matches with reputable Egyptian teams and is scheduled to conclude the camp with a game against Egypt's U17 team, which is also preparing for the African Cup of Nations' Finals.

Sport reporters said the team has accepted an invitation from its Saudi counterpart, which is also preparing for the finals, for a friendly meeting in Saudi Arabia on August 10. However, the U17 team's coaching staff requested that the game's date be postponed by three days.

The Asian Nations Cup Finals' draw placed Yemen with Iraq, Iran and Tajikistan, thought of as a strong group, meanwhile the team is set to play Iran in the opener.

Germany 3-1 Portugal

Two long-range efforts from Bastian Schweinsteiger ensured hosts Germany overcame Portugal to claim third place. Germany took the lead when midfielder Schweinsteiger cut in from the left and drilled in a swerving shot.

The Germans went two up when the lively Schweinsteiger's free-kick was sliced into his own net by Armando Petit.

Schweinsteiger sealed the victory with another rasping shot from 25 yards and Nuno Gomes headed Portugal a late consolation after a Luis Figo cross.

Goalkeeper Oliver Kahn came in for his 86th cap, while Figo, who was rumoured to have had an argument with coach Luiz Felipe Scolari before the match, was relegated to the substitutes' bench.

The hosts started positively with Sebastian Kehl going close with a shot through a crowded box that appeared to strike Nuno Valente's hand, while Klose slashed a drive wide on the counter.

With only pride at stake, Portugal expressed the kind of freedom that has deserted their play in their previous two outings against England and France.

But apart from Pauleta's curling shot from close range and Kehl's deft lob, neither team could muster the enthusiasm needed to seriously trouble the opposing keeper.

The referee, who was officiating his first game for three weeks, made up for his inactivity by regularly awarding free-kicks for tame fouls.

But the quality of the resulting set-



The game will be remembered for Schweinsteiger's strikes

pieces were poor, with only Lucas Podolski's stinging left-foot strike causing any problems.

Michael Ballack's yawn from the bench summed up the first 45 minutes, but his boredom turned to delight 10 minutes after the restart when Schweinsteiger unleashed a fierce drive from long range.

Portugal keeper Ricardo will have felt he could have done better with the shot that was driven straight at him.

And five minutes later Germany were two up, with Schweinsteiger again at the heart of the attack.

The midfielder's low free-kick cannoned off Petit as he tried to clear and ended up in the back of the helpless Ricardo's net.

On 76 minutes the disappointing Pauleta made way for Figo who won

his 127th and final cap for Portugal.

But even he was unable to lift the despondent Portuguese and Schweinsteiger again found the net from outside the box with a sweetly-struck drive that gave Ricardo no chance.

Both Miroslav Klose and Podolski were then withdrawn, leaving France striker Thierry Henry needing two to tie and a hat-trick to win the Golden Boot in Sunday's final.

Figo's last act in his number seven shirt for Portugal was to lay on a goal for Gomes who headed in from close range.

But the night belonged to the hosts who deservedly claimed third spot to the delight of the home support and coach Jurgen Klinsmann.

Source: bbc.com



BRITISH
COUNCIL

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The British Council is the United Kingdom's international organisation for educational opportunities and cultural relations. Our purpose is to build mutually beneficial relationships between people in the UK and other countries and to increase appreciation of the UK's creative ideas and achievements.

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For a full job description, and application form, please email recruitment@ye.britishcouncil.org.

Closing date for applications: Wednesday 19 July 2006

Successful applicants will be invited for interview from 22 - 31 July.

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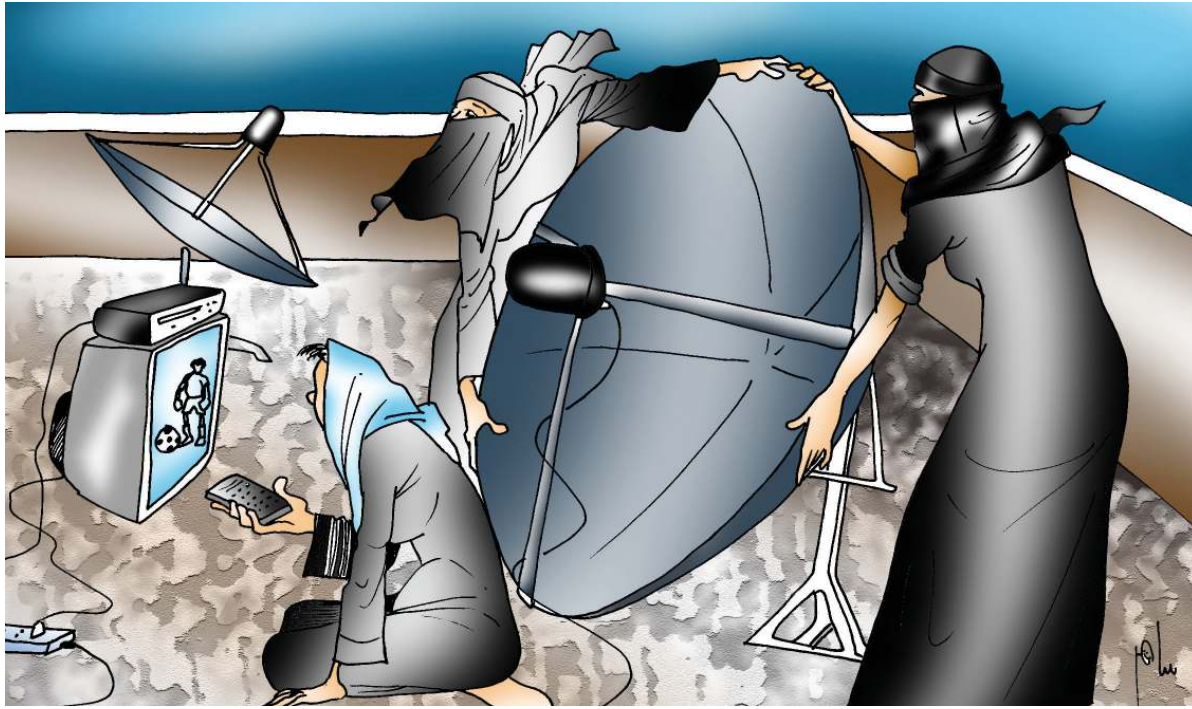
The Yemeni experience of the World Cup

By: Fatima Al-Ajel
Fatima_fjfr@yahoo.com

Wherever you go in the world, people talk about the World Cup. However, nowadays in Yemen, watching World Cup is limited to a few channels and only those who have them can follow the Cup. Nevertheless Yemeni men and women have their own ways of following the events and the matches.

Jamel Nasser, 21 years old says, "I go to Saban Park with my friends to watch the matches there. Thousands of men go there, so I go early to be near the screen otherwise I will not find a place to sit." Some people, however, are not interested in watching matches in crowded and noisy places; they prefer to relax whilst watching the World Cup. Majdi Al-Saqqaff said, "I go to a hotel and rent a room which has the channels that show the matches. I pay 2000YR every day to watch the World Cup."

Yemeni women are also crazy about watching World Cup matches, but unfortunately they don't have the same opportunities to watch the matches as the men do, so they look for ways to watch matches at home. Faten, with her two sisters, says, "On the first day of the World Cup my sisters and I went up to the roof of my house and tried to adjust the satellite to receive the channel that shows the matches. It took us hours to find the channel." "Everyday we go up to the roof and watch matches there," Faten added. Arwa and her friends collected money together and bought a new satellite to fix on to the existing one in Arwa's house. "My friends and I meet at my house to watch the matches together and have nice time," Arwa said.



However, some girls either don't have the channel or can't go out to follow the matches. They just have to wait for the matches' results without watching them. Samah Al-Fasiel commented, "I tried to find the channel by moving the satellite dish but I couldn't, and I don't have time to go to my brother's house to watch the matches there, so I have to call my brother during the matches and he gives me the latest news."

Many parents were also interested in watching the matches with their kids. Latifah Al-Azi, a mother of ten, said, "I don't know anything about football, but I like to watch with my kids and see them enjoy the matches, especially the World Cup."

Ahmed Al-Thabibi, a rich man in his neighborhood, bought a satellite dish and two TVs and opened up his house

for his neighbors to watch the matches. Tens of men went to Al-Thabibi's house instead of going to other places further away. When asked why he decided to do this, he replied, "I know how fond my neighbors are of the World Cup and they have been looking forward to this event, and as it is difficult for many people to watch the matches, I promised them I would buy a satellite dish to show the World Cup."

Due to the electricity cuts, some people bought electricity generators so they would not miss any action from the matches, especially when their favorite team was playing.

Reactions after the match

When watching the World Cup, friends are often divided by the competing teams. At the end of the match, the divide widens. The defeated group

starts to make excuses for their team whilst the winning side starts to show off about their team's performance. Haif Al-Saqqaff commented, "I was watching a match with my neighbors in the street and we split up into two teams. At the end of the match, the two groups fought each other and started to shout because the losers said that the winners didn't deserve to win after their unconvincing performance."

Others made light-hearted wagers whereby the one correctly predicts the match's result can order the other to do whatever he wants. Brothers Yusif and Hassan support different teams, and they made a wager that if Hassan's team won the match, Yusif would have to run around the neighborhood for two hours. At the end of the match, Hassan's team won and Yusif did as Hassan had ordered him.

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