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Inside:



The much-awaited



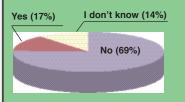
Previous local councils' performance was unsatisfactory



10

Yield of a woman's work

Last edition's question: In past elections, major Yemeni parties relied heavily on women to achieve victory. Do you think these parties will fulfill their promises to give women their fair quota of local council seats?



This edition's question:

The National **Democratic Institute** (NDI) offices was kicked out of Bahran. Do you think they are operating with a hidden agenda in Yemen?

- I don't know

Go to our website at: yementimes.com/#poll

Readers' Volce Election campaigning begins, presidential programs unveiled

By: Yasser Al-Mayasi

SANA'A, Aug. 24 — Campaigns for presidential and local elections began yesterday and will continue until the Sept. 20 election.

Most observers believe Yemen's presidential election will dominate and leave nothing for local elections. The practicality of this year's presidential election lies in the fact that it's the first one wherein real competition exists.

The Joint Meeting Parties (JMP) will inaugurate their campaign by holding a festival for their candidate, Faisal Bin Shamlan, at Al-Thawra Stadium today. Launched in Sana'a, such festivals will be followed by others across the repub-

Although yesterday was the official date to begin campaigning, electoral campaigns actually began weeks ago as candidates began planning their campaigns and spreading their electoral programs.

President Ali Abdullah Saleh's electoral program, entitled, "A new Yemen... a better future," focuses on

creating a new administration to serve citizens and enhance state institutions, thereby leading to a reformed and modernized government administration. Additionally, it seeks to increase wages, salaries and premiums for all state employees and reinforce transparency in all government transactions and pro-

The program also concentrates on eradicating unemployment, alleviating poverty, expanding social security's web and creating developed infrastructure for a strong national economy. It further proposes increasing electrical power generation, extending coverage and encouraging private sector investment in it, as well as extending and developing telecommunication servic-

Saleh's program highlights the importance of following new economic and balanced financial policies, including reducing taxes, improving collection mechanisms - particularly income taxes, optimally exploiting fish wealth, developing mining industries and activating the tourism sector. Additionally, it emphasizes having a proper environmental and water policy.

Regarding corruption, Saleh's program focuses on combating administrative and financial corruption by developing mechanisms and policies to combat corruption, as well as punish corrupt officers. The program also affirms the importance of having an appealing investment environment, in addition to encouraging qualitative education focusing on vocational and technical education, eradicating illiteracy, concentrating more on health, improving children's conditions, women's participation in the society and enhancing Yemen's defense and security capabili-

The program of Bin Shamlan, opposition candidate and Saleh's strongest rival, gives priority to political reform as to constitutionally organizing state authorities to ensure establishing a democratic and multiparty political system. It also emphasizes separating authorities and reforming judicial authority, as well as reforming and developing the local governance system.

Other important points in Bin Shamlan's program include reforming the administrative system, combating corruption and reforming economic policies by working to stop increasing prices, reconsidering economic reform programs and making the state carry the greater burden under such reform programs, not citizens.

Continued on page 2



Innovative ways are used in the Presidential Campaigning. Above a Jeep carries posters and photos of Saleh while driving around streets in Sana'a.

NDI voices concern over potential violent elections

By: Mohammed Al-Qadhi

SANA'A, Aug. 22 — The U.S. National Democratic Institute (NDI) is concerned that the upcoming Sept. 20 presidential and local elections could turn violent

"We obviously have concerns that in the transition process of democratic development, particularly in a highlyarmed nation like Yemen, there's



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always the potential for violence as tensions rise and conflicts between parties and individuals increase. We're concerned that there could be violence during the elections," NDI country representative Robin Madrid said.

Concerns mount particularly with the ongoing media barrage between the ruling General People's Congress (GPC) and the Joint Meeting Parties (JMP) opposition coalition.

"I think the two sides need to tone down their rhetoric. They spend more time attacking each other and attacking personalities." Madrid commented. Media clashes are expected to increase Today after the candidates' official campaigning begins.

A major step forward

Despite her concerns, Madrid voiced positive feelings about the upcoming election and its significance in boost-



Robin Madrid voices concern over potentially violent elections.

ing the nation's democratic drive. "We have positive feelings about it. I think it's a major step forward that there's a serious opposition candidate and there will be national debates around issues," she noted.

"For democratic development, it's critical that there be choices. You can't have democratic development if people see no real choices," she added.

Stressing that it's impossible to evaluate the two sides before their campaigns have begun, Madrid is hopeful that there will be "a real statement of different positions on issues from the two sides and a real debate.'

She mentioned that NDI has received positive response from the Supreme Commission for Elections and Referendum (SCER) media sector in terms of its plans to organize meaningful candidate debates on polices, which Madrid considers a major step in these elections, not only for Yemen, but for the Arab world at large.

Continued on page 2

SANA'A, Aug. 23 - Aiming to discuss the bribery issue in Yemen and enable candidates for local and presidential elections to learn the issue's details, the Yemeni Polling Center (YPC) held a symposium Tuesday at Hadda Hotel to discuss outcomes of a study regarding the bribery issue in Thirteen field researchers conducted

Bv: Yemen Times Staff

the study between July 5 and Aug. 5 in five Yemeni governorates: Sana'a, Sa'ada, Hodeidah, Taiz and Aden.

"The study's main goal was to unveil all aspects related to bribery and record them in a scientific manner by gathering the opinions of government office employees and workers regarding this phenomenon," YPC head Hafez Al-Bukari explained. "It also aimed to put the phenomenon before concerned authorities and decision makers in order to come up with right solutions to it," he added.

In collaboration with Sana'a University academics, the YPC conducted and supervised the study, which was financed by the Center for International Private Enterprise (CIPE), affiliated with the U.S. Chamber of Commerce in Washington,

Data was collected from various government institutions via direct questionnaire, selecting a sample from among employees and citizens, as



departments and takes many forms.

Study warns of

bribery risks in Yemen

YT PHOTO BY YASSER AL-MAYASI bribery in Yemen. More than 78 per-

those two groups are more attached to the bribery issue. Governorates were carefully selected in accordance with their relative importance as to population and economic activities, with Sana'a being assigned more importance because it's the capital and contains most state institutions with direct relations with citizens.

The study involving 699 individuals indicated that there's a consensus, although relative, over the existence of

cent of participants indicated that bribery dominates all government institutions.

According to the study, 70 percent of respondents attributed the reason for the phenomenon's spread in Yemen to low salaries, followed by 62 percent for absence of religious restraint and, finally, 50 percent for weak legal deter-

Continued on page 2





Election educational course for women candidates conducted

By: Yemen Times Staff

SANA'A, Aug. 22 — In collaboration with the All Girls' Society, Al-Jazeera Center for Human Rights (JCHR) organized a training and education course last Monday for women involved in upcoming local elections, aiming to help women candidates win.

The workshop specifically targets female candidates in the capital's local. The workshop is part of many workshops and awareness activities conducted around the republic in order to promote women in the local elections.

"Yemeni women took the right path and this has been reflected positively upon society. Yemen was the first nation in the area to adopt women's rights," noted Minister of Human Rights Khadija Al-Haysami.

She further mentioned, "The Ministry of Human Rights is collaborating with more than 30 civil society organizations to change the passive view men have about women.'

Numerous women were ambitious about the local elections, thus assuring women's ability to compete and participate in Yemen's development. One such participant, seventh constituency candidate Fathia Al-Aubidi said,



Minister of Human Rights Khadija Al-Haysami speaks at the workshop

"Women are able to create marvels and they should convince themselves that they have the ability to participate in creating development."

Fellow candidate Fatima Al-Da'ari asserted, "A woman able to manage her household affairs is also able to participate actively in political life."

However, some Yemeni citizens still consider look down on women's involvement in the political life and don't agree with them joining local councils.

"Though I'm for women's political rights, I still feel that the nature of local council members' work doesn't suit women because it involves field visits and project follow-up, which cause women to fail to perform their

duties." required participant Mohammed Hezam remarked.

For her part, JCHR head Bilqis Abu Aisba does not agree.

"Any entitlement a woman achieves is considered a social entitlement for both men and women alike. Yemeni women have achieved much success. but low social awareness is the reason hindering them from participating in political life. I hope to see Yemen develop with the participation of both men and women," said Aisba.

"Our aim is to encourage females whether candidates or voters, we believe that women should get more decision making positions because currently they are largely under-repre-

Al-Zandani: Al-Eiman University has a cure for AIDS

By: Yemen Times Staff

SANA'A, Aug. 21 — The controversial religious university is declaring a cure for the deadly disease AIDS. At Al-Eman University, the director Abdul-Majid Al-Zindani gave a speech to praise the quality of scientific and medical research carried out at the university claiming that they have treated many cases of leukemia and hepatitis B and C. The declaration came in his speech for the graduation ceremony on Monday. Also in attendance were President Saleh along with Arab and foreign ambassadors and diplomats.

In 20 AIDS cases Al-Zandani said the virus had vanished completely without any side effects. He called the UN, which "spends enormous amounts of money to fight the disease," to send "its senior scientists to see [the university's] findings".

He said the university was established to compensate for the loss of Islamic religious scholars.

On his part, President Saleh denied accusations against the university saying that the university was established solely



Saleh congratulates Al-Zandani for the graduation of new batches from Al-**Eiman University**

to create scholars of religion armed with science and Islamic teachings, in order to add to the great scholars of the past.

He confirmed the university never teaches extremism but rather focuses on religious values. "Al-Eman University is one of the Yemeni educational institutions. It graduates scholars and intellectuals and its students are part of the Yemeni people," he added.

Several intellectual people and doctors, who preferred to remain anonymous, told Yemen Times that they were disappointed by the declaration, describing it as a political move rather than a scientific discovery. They said Al-Eman University is not qualified enough to conduct such research and they don't think the discovery is real. They called Al-Zandani to organize a scientific conference to present the findings.

News in brief

Aden

Fire starts in market place for unknown reasons

Aug. 22 — Cloth stores in Crater were mostly burned after a 3 hour fire. Staffers and local citizens complained that there were no fire extinguishers or masks available and the whole neighborhood was in danger. An eye witness said the locals tried to extinguish the fire and an electrician who was passing by rushed to cut the power from the flaming building so as to minimize the danger.

Sana'a

Dhamar

40 inmates register at university

Aug. 23 — Sana'a University accepted the registration of 40 prisoners at the Sana'a's Central Prison for the academic year 2006/2007. The university president said the university drew a plan to consider the situation of these prisoners, in order to enable them to be integrated in society and contribute in the future. The university selected law, commerce and art as the faculties for their study:

22.5 billion dollars for development

in Dhamar

Aug. 23 - The Social Fund for Development implemented 310 projects between 2000 and 2006 with a total of US\$22,383,834 in Dhamar alone. The projects are mainly in education, water and health. There are currently 145 ongoing projects with total of USD13,247,404.

Early Childhood Center Opens

Aug. 21 - An early childhood development center was opened on Sunday in Dar Saad district by chairperson of Dar Saad local council and Triangle Organization Representative in Yemen. The center is for the development of children in their early ages, and to encourage their creative activities in the district, as well as to provide birth certificates for poor families.

Damages in Ahwar districts after

Aug. 21 — The high intensity of rainfall in Ahwar district damaged agricultural areas, valleys and small water barriers. The runoff eroded Ahwar wadi and extended to Ambasti village and then to Aden Gulf. The agricultural areas did not benefit from this rainfall for water supply to the drought and desert areas. The Ministry of Agriculture and Local council plan to rehabilitate Fouad dam to harvest rainfall for irrigation in the drought seasons.

Workshop on the risks of joining

Aug. 21 — The Yemeni Human Rights Monitoring Center in cooperation with the Arabic Network for Developmental NGOs organized a workshop concerning the social and economical impact of

WTO conventions in Yemen yesterday. This workshop was conducted during the quick movement of Arab countries to join WTO and signing bilateral conventions with USA and EU. The workshop highlighted the absence of civil organizations, specialists and academics and the lack of complete understanding of WTO policies and its effects on the countries that don't have safety mechanisms for the strategic and national sectors regarding open competition and strict global standards.

Sana'a

Sea environment protected in Bir Ali Aug. 22 — The Ministry of Fishery issued a decree to close between Bir Ali to Dhrbah Area to costal fishery boats in its effort to protect the aquatic organisms. The penalties will be applied for those who do not comply with the decree starting from yesterday Aug 23 until further notice.

37 handicapped get training

Aug. 23 — A training course on secretariat, computer and literacy started on Aug 21 for 37 handicapped female and male by Handicap Rehabilitation Association and Social Office in governorate. The governor emphasized the importance of integrating handicapped people in society after training and rehabilitation. This training aims at improving their livelihood opportunities, and the governor asked businessmen to support the program.

Parliament, Shoura approved third five-year plan

SANA'A, Aug 23 — The parliament and Shoura council have approved a third five-year plan approved by a joint meeting.

They have called creating a suitable environment for investments to achieve the desired economic growth and create job opportunities for more unemployed youth.

The meeting to come up the plan running form 2006 to 2011 was chaired by Abulaziz Abdulgani, chairman of Shoura council with the attendance of Prime Minister Abdul-Qader Bajammal and fellow cabinet members.



the shortcomings of earlier plans,

In the third plan they aim to avoid according to Yemeni News Agency,

Continued from page 1

Election campaigning begins, presidential programs unveiled

His program further reaffirms the importance of rearranging priorities, concentrating more on growing and developing promising economic sectors and creating real partnership between the state and the private sector. It also reiterates the importance of creating a suitable investment environment, supporting savings, creating a reasonable administration for public funds and redistributing financial resources justly and fairly.

Bin Shamlan's program gives more attention to Yemen's electricity and water crisis and adopting many ways to address their shortage. It also deals with education, suggesting various methods to reform it, such as increasing the education budget to 25 percent of GDP (gross domestic product). It further assures the importance of maintaining Yemen's Arab and Islamic identity, encouraging girls to receive their educational and employment rights and spreading computer literacy.

Regarding health services, Bin Shamlan's program seeks to improve and develop such services by paying more attention to the demands of all social groups and collaborating with legislative authority, local councils and civil society organizations.

Additionally, his program focuses on caring for security, the armed forces, children, farmers, fishermen, students, teachers, doctors and other occupations. It also emphasizes implementing serious measures and policies aimed at improving Yemen's investment environment. Bin Shamlan's program also mentions foreign policy.

Other candidates are preparing to organize festivals and spread their electoral programs in upcoming days.

Al-Magidi, Al-Azab and Saeed begin campaigning around the republic On another front, independent presidential candidate Ahmed Abdullah Al-Magidi began his first campaign events in Al-Mahara governorate, where he was governor before 1990 unification. He's campaigning under the slogan "For the nation, not for the political par-

Al-Magidi told media that his program focuses on corruption and problems citizens suffer, as well as the nation's infrastructure. He also stated that he'll focus on the historical achievement of Yemeni unification, as well as rectifying problems regarding

Simultaneously, Fathi Al-Azab, the second independent candidate, began his first campaign events today in Amran, where he expects to have strong popularity.

Opposition National Council candidate Yasin Abdu Saeed, who also is recommended by the General People's Congress (GPC), began campaigning today in Sana'a. However, as he didn't receive much response, he's planning to begin again in Taiz on Monday.

NDI voices concern over potential violent elections

She refuted allegations that elections and democracy add a heavy burden to the country's already weak and fragile economy, observing no contradiction between elections and development. She pointed out that Yemen faces many problems and that democratization and decentralized state institutions enable citizens to address such problems.

Madrid stressed that corruption is a major problem in Yemen that also chaldemocratic development because "You can't have corruption and good democratic development; they contradict each other," asserting that corruption can be addressed only when government officials are held accountable by

She thinks both the presidential and local council elections will be contested, but what matters to her at the presidential level is "that both sides have good media access and can really state their positions clearly and that there's no bias or favoring of one side over the other. This is the most important part of the presidential election," she said, adding, "We care that balloting, polling and counting are done cleanly and fairly.

Complex election system

Despite praising the SCER for administrating 2003's parliamentary elections, Madrid was quite critical of Yemen's election system, which she describes as complex. "On paper, the electoral system constitutionally and legally is pretty good, but there are some problem areas.

"All international parties were disappointed and couldn't understand why a decision wasn't made to make some changes following the 2001 elections," she observed, adding that one of the system's loopholes is that "it tends to go for the most complicated solution rather than the simplest."

Madrid believes a simple system is suitable for a nation relatively new to elections and with a high rate of illiterate citizens. "The election process is going to be complex and this worries all international parties because with complexity, you get mistakes, which opens the door to accusations of bias and unfairness on the commission's part because it may not have understood a very complex system. From my perspective, it's a big mistake to be complex."

She asserted that the SCER's insistence on complexity will make it very difficult for it to run two races at the same

Opposition complaints and "yelling" Concerning opposition complaints that the GPC is manipulating state-run media to propagate its candidate, Madrid pointed out that opposition worldwide complain about disadvantages, adding that what's going to matter is when the official campaign period starts.

"What happens with the media, opposition access to it and their ability to organize rallies where they will place their posters, etc., will be judged during the campaign period," she remarked, responding to opposition complaints.

She said she'd be extremely surprised by any opposition decision to boycott the election, advising them to remain in it. "I don't think boycotting elections produces any good results. It's not the way to go. It's much more important to remain in it and struggle to change the way election procedures are carried out. Opposition and the ruling party need to monitor the election, as well as campaign so they can document any problems they face," she proposed.

Regarding opposition's previous criticism of NDI for siding with the government, Madrid responded, "NDI's role is to be responsible, recognizing that we're guests in this country and our role is to advise, train and comment.

"We need to be clear when we see problems and we need to be clear when we see improvements. Along with the government, opposition and the GPC, we need to look more toward change. Maybe you journalists can stand and yell, but that's not our role."

A good agreement

Madrid describes the June 18 agreement between opposition and the GPC as good. "It's a good agreement that NDI takes seriously. We're working very hard to help the signers and the SCER meet its terms, as it addresses all of the standard elements of free and fair elections, she noted, adding that she can't judge what percentage of the agreement has been fulfilled, as opposition claims only 10 percent has been met.

She confirmed that parts of the agreement have been achieved, such as adding two opposition members to the commission and achieving targeted percentages concerning the commissions that will run the elections - 54 percent for the GPC and 46 percent for opposition.

Madrid pointed out that NDI is involved in a number of activities up until 30 days before the elections, counseling and training the parties. Approximately 1,000 men and women have been trained in campaigning, while some NGOs were trained to monitor. NDI also plans to monitor the elections using 1,200 domestic and several international staff.

International monitors previously were criticized for being stationed in Yemen's main cities while most problems occur in rural areas. Madrid attributes their inability to access rural areas either to rugged roads or security situations; however, she stated that the 80 European Union monitors likely will go outside the main

Political parties fail women

When asked about support for women candidates, Madrid's facial expression changed and she voiced regret at political parties discouraging women. She said the June 18 agreement's articles regarding women are disappointing because they don't contain any commitments on the signers' part.

"It's all platitudes that women are sisters of the nation and should be involved. But there's no commitment by either side in the agreement to nominate women or create closed constituencies. It's all talk and this is disappointing to us because all sides in the lead-up to elections talk about what they're going to do for women, but when they must put resources toward it, they suddenly see that they can't do it. We're keeping a skeptical eye on the women's issue," she

Madrid is confident that there are competent Yemeni women for whom citizens would vote and that the political parties' pretext that citizens won't vote for women is not true. "This isn't true. The parties won't nominate women because they don't want to deal with their people, she maintained.

She continued refuting the parties' groundless allegations and their shaky stance toward nominating women. "Both sides claim to be the one able to bring development and reform to Yemen, but if they can't stand up to their own people about nominating women, then I wonder if they can stand up to those involved in corruption. Nominating women is where they can show that they have the strength and courage to really stand up to local interests," she concluded.

Study warns of bribery risks in Yemen

Other reasons related to routine complexity and lack of bylaws weren't considered easons for such spread.

The study pointed out that most individuals bribe employees to complete their transactions as soon as possible, further hinting that corrupt officers delay such transactions to force people to pay bribes, according to 70 percent of participants.

According to the study, bribery exists greatly in financial affairs departments and takes many forms because it either can be demanded by a mediator or spring from individual initiative as he or she bribes an employee directly. The study also indicated that family members view those who exploit public funds or public work as clever, thus encouraging the phenomenon's spread.

Bribery is dominant within Yemeni administrative apparatuses, particularly the police and judiciary, which are meant to secure justice and apply law. The study recommended uniting efforts to correct the situation, as such will have a positive impact to limit the phenomenon and

Because bribery-related laws aren't applied, the phenomenon continues expanding, with employees receiving bribes usually enjoying protection from those above him/her. Further, the phenomenon is widespread in Yemen because society has a passive position regarding corruption afflicting the government administrative system. Finally, the study requested increasing public awareness about bribery and its risks to their

Kidnapped Fox journalists in Gaza shown in video

GAZA (Reuters) - Two Fox journalists who were kidnapped in Gaza last week said they were in "fairly good health" and appealed for help to secure their release, a video released on Wednesday showed.

A previously unknown militant group, the "Holy Jihad Brigades," earlier claimed responsibility for the kidnapping nine days ago of the two journalists and demanded the United States release "Muslim prisoners" within 72 hours.

Fox News Channel correspondent Steve Centanni, a 60-year-old American, and New Zealand cameraman Olaf Wiig, 36, were shown sitting on a mat on a floor. No militants could be seen.

"We're in fairly good condition, we're alive and well, in fairly good health," Centanni said.





American Fox News Channel reporter Steve Centanni (L) and New Zealand cameraman Olaf Wiig (R) are seen in undated photos.

"Just want to let you know I'm here and alive and give my love to my family and friends and ask you to do anything you can to try to help us get

The "Holy Jihad Brigades" did not say what would happen if the United States did not meet their demand to

release Muslims in American prisons by the time the deadline expires on

The video bore many hallmarks of videos of captives issued by militants in Iraq, and the rhetoric of the group also seemed to mirror the heavily religious language of Iraqi insurgents.

Italy provides up to 3,000 troops to UN force

By: Nadim Ladki

BEIRUT (Reuters) - Italy said on Tuesday it would contribute 2,000 to 3,000 troops, about one third of the European contribution, to a U.N. force for Lebanon provided Israel did not violate the truce.

Foreign Minister Massimo D'Alema said Italians would be supported by Spain, the Netherlands, Belgium and other nations in the force which Italy has offered to lead.

"In the end our troops, between 2,000 and 3,000, will represent about a third of the total sent from Europe," D'Alema told the newspaper La Repubblica in an interview.

"From Israel, we expect a renewed effort, this time truly binding, to respect the ceasefire," D'Alema said. "It's fair to expect that Hizbollah put down their weapons, but we cannot send our troops to Lebanon if the (Israeli) army keeps shooting."

The U.N.-backed truce has been jolted by an Israeli commando raid in eastern Lebanon's Bekaa Valley on Saturday which the United Nations described as a violation.

European Union countries are meeting on Wednesday to discuss concerns about clear rules of engagement for the force. European contingents are considered vital if the United Nations is to get an advance party of 3,500 troops on the ground by September 2.



A man salvages belongings from an apartment, which was damaged during the recent conflict between Israel and Lebanon's Hizbollah, in Beirut's southern suburbs August 21, 2006.

The U.N. Security Council resolution that led to a fragile truce on August 14 to end the 34-day war called for 15,000 U.N. troops to join a similar number of Lebanese army troops that are already deploying in the south.

Italian Prime Minister Romano Prodi said on Monday he had told U.N. chief Kofi Annan his country was willing to command the force. He said Annan would make a decision by this weekend.

Beirut government has

welcomed Italy's offer of 2,000 troops, the biggest commitment any country has yet made. Israel has said it would be happy if Italy led the force.

According to a source close to Prodi, Lebanese Prime Minister Fouad Siniora told his Italian counterpart on Monday that there was the "unanimous backing" of the Lebanese cabinet for Italy to lead the U.N. force. Hizbollah has two ministers.

Italy's right-wing opposition warned the deployment could prove a "kamikaze" mission.

UK may cut Iraq force in half by mid-2007: Commander

By: Peter Graff

LONDON (Reuters) - Britain may cut its force in Iraq in half by the middle of next year after handing over security responsibility for the south to Iraqis within nine months, a senior British commander said on Tuesday.

Speaking to reporters on condition he not be identified, the commander said Britain would leave "quite a significantly smaller force than we've got now, but probably in the region of 3,000 to 4,000 people based in a single location."

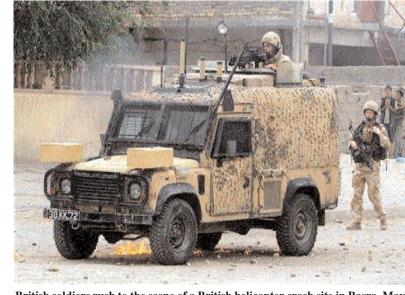
Britain handed over responsibility for one of the southern provinces it controls to Iraqi forces in July, and the commander said it hopes to hand over a second province next month.

Most of Britain's 7,000 troops in Iraq are based around the second city of Basra, where the commander said a transition to Iraqi control could take place in the first quarter of 2007.

"These are all conditions-based, subject to a variety of factors, but in terms of the tactical plan and the competence of the Iraqi army, it is perfectly feasible," he said.

He said the first thousand British troops could start returning home in the next 4 to 6 months, in part representing forces being drawn down from Maysan province, where Britain has already begun moving out of its main base.

The 3,000 to 4,000-strong British force would remain in the Basra area after the handover "to protect our investment" in security in the mainly-Shi'ite south and show support for U.S. troops still facing security problems in



British soldiers rush to the scene of a British helicopter crash site in Basra, May 6, 2006. Britain may cut its force in Iraq in half by the middle of next year after handing over security responsibility for the south of the country to Iraqis within nine months, a senior British commander said on Tuesday.

other parts of Iraq.

"We anticipate there is not going to be a political appetite to saying 'alright, we're done' while there is still unfinished business in the center of the country," the commander said.

Britain has maintained a force of between 7,000 and 8,000 troops in southern Iraq since the U.S.-led invasion in 2003.

The mainly-Shi'ite south has been far more peaceful than Sunni-dominated and ethnically mixed provinces in the

center of the country. But Basra has seen a surge in vio-

lence over the past year, which British officials blame on rival Shi'ite factions battling for control of the city, which is at the heart of one of Iraq's main oilproducing regions.

The British commander said the main security concerns are local militia, such as offshoots of the Jaish al-Mehdi -- the Mehdi Army -- of cleric Moqtada al-Sadr.

"The mainstream Jaish al-Mehdi are not a particular worry, but there are rogue elements, some of them rather alarmingly close to government struc-

"Dark matter" is real: scientists

BOSTON (Reuters) — A team of U.S. dark matter particles themselves, scientists has found the first direct evidence of the existence of "dark matter," a little-understood substance with a huge influence on gravity, the team's leader said on Tuesday.

Scientists still do not know what exactly dark matter is, but have theorized it must exist to account for the amount of gravity needed to hold the universe together.

They estimate that the substance accounts for 80 to 90 percent of the matter in the universe. The more familiar kind of matter, which can be seen and felt, makes up the rest.

Now researchers led by University of Arizona astronomer Doug Clowe say they have evidence to back up their

Using orbiting telescopes, the researchers watched two giant gas clouds in outer space collide over a 100-hour period. As the clouds clashed, they said, the visible gas particles slowed, pulling away from the invisible dark matter particles.

The researchers said they could detect the dark matter particles by their gravitational pull on the surrounding visible particles.

"This is the first time we've been able to show that (dark matter) has to be out there, that you can't explain it away," Clowe told Reuters. "We haven't actually been able to see the

but what we have been able to do is ... image the gravity that they're generating.'

Some skeptics have argued that dark matter does not exist.

They assert that scientists err in assuming that gravity exerts the same pull whether holding a plate on a table or influencing the travel of stars. Revising the laws of gravity at the interstellar scale would better explain the universe's structure, they argue.

"Strongest evidence"

Smithsonian Center Massachusetts. and telescopes operated by NASA.

issue of The Astrophysical on Tuesday. Journal Letters.

Rachel Bean, a professor at Cornell University who specializes in dark matter and was not involved in the research, called the results convincing.

"It is certainly the strongest evidence we've seen to date that actually solves this dark-matter problem," Bean said.

She said the finding should encourage scientists to concentrate their efforts on determining what dark



The research team also included This Hubble Space Telescope image scientists at the Harvard- released by NASA and the European Space for Agency on February 28, 2006, shows the Astrophysics in Cambridge, spiral galaxy Messier 101. A team of U.S. used scientists has found the first direct evidence of the existence of "dark matter," a Their research is scheduled to little-understood substance with a huge be published in an upcoming influence on gravity, the team's leader said

> matter is, rather than developing revised rules of gravity.

> "It's very difficult to explain these observations with anything other than particle theory," Bean said. "The dark matter quandary to some extent is helped by these observations, because it helps target the theorists to try and look at particle physics, rather than

Iran set to reject key demand

By Edmund Blair

TEHRAN (Reuters) — Iran, due to reply on Tuesday to a proposal by world powers aimed at defusing a nuclear row, insisted it would not stop enriching uranium as they demand.

Refusing to suspend the work, which Iran says is aimed only at generating electricity but which the West sees as a disguised bid for atom bombs, would be tantamount to rejecting the package of incentives offered in return, Western diplomats

But refusal would not yet trigger immediate action by the U.N. Security Council, which passed a resolution last month giving Iran until August 31 to halt enrichment or risk sanctions.

"We are not treating (Tuesday) as a deadline because it is not the Security Council deadline," one Western diplomat said. "If Iran flatly refuses to suspend enrichment, then there will, fairly soon, be more talks in the Security Council."

A senior Iranian official said Iran would hand a written response to the package, either to EU ambassadors in Tehran or more likely to Javier Solana, the European Union's foreign policy chief, in Brussels.

Tensions rose further as diplomats close to the U.N. nuclear watchdog said its inspectors were denied access to an underground site under construction where Iran plans industrial- scale production of enriched uranium.

A senior diplomat said blocking inspectors this way could be a violation of the nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty since the U.N. inspectors have a right to verify design information during the construction of a nuclear facility.

Iran denied hindering access to the

Atomic Energy Agency team visiting to gather information for an August 31 report to the Security Council.

The United States, France, Britain, Germany, China and Russia offered a package of economic and other incentives in June, aiming to persuade the Islamic Republic to stop work that the West says is helping build nuclear warheads.

Iran, which has denounced the deadline as illegal and worthless, said it would reply by the end of the Iranian month of Mordad, August 22. The world's fourth largest oil exporter insists it will not abandon what it calls its right to enrich uranium for use in nuclear power stations.

Iranian hard line

Supreme Leader Ayatollah Ali Khamenei, who has the final word in Iran, vowed on Monday that Iran would not be deflected from

its pursuit of nuclear energy. President Mahmoud Ahmadinejad has also been a vociferous opponent of compromise.

Other Iranian officials have stated plainly that Iran will not stop enrichment.

Iran has said its reply will "multi-dimensional," suggesting no simple 'yes' or 'no'. Officials have also said Iran wants more talks to resolve the dispute.

Such an approach, say diplomats, could lay bare divisions in the Security Council where the United both key trade partners of possible sanctions.

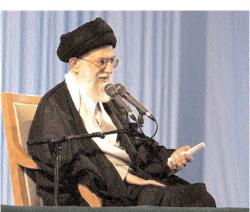
"If they reject suspension, that's rejection of the package (for Western capitals)," said another Western diplomat. He added that Russia and China might take a different view.

"If they said suspension was negotiable, there would be pressure on (the six powers) to think about it."

Analysts say Iran is probably calculating that any move toward sanctions would start with modest steps, such as travel bans on officials or asset freezes, which it could tolerate because the country's coffers are brimming with petrodollars.

President Bush said on Monday the international community should "work in concert" over Iran. Washington has previously warned of swift U.N. action if Iran fails to meet U.N. demands.

United States says it wants a diplomatic solution to the standoff but has refused to rule out military action.



Iran's Supreme Leader Ayatollah Ali Khamenei States, France and Britain in Tehran, June 4, 2006. Khamenei said on back sanctions but Russia Monday Iran would press ahead with its pursuit and China, the other two of nuclear energy, indicating it will not heed a veto-wielding members and U.N. demand it stop enriching uranium or face

Israel must be ready for any Iranian attack: Minister

JERUSALEM (Reuters) - Israel should prepare for the possibility of a missile attack from Iran, a cabinet minister said on Tuesday.

"We are liable to face an Iranian missile attack. The Iranians have said very clearly that if they come under attack, their primary target would be Israel," Rafi Eitan, a member of the decision-making inner cabinet, told Israel Radio.

Iran could fire missiles at the Jewish state "therefore we must prepare for what could come, and prepare the entire country for a missile strike attack, to prepare all the civilian systems so they are ready for this," Eitan said.

The radio said Eitan, a former spymaster, meant that Israel should prepare its bomb shelters to protect against a possible Iranian attack.

It quoted Eitan as alluding to the current international standoff with Iran over its uranium enrichment, saying if the situation deteriorates, Israel would be the first to come under attack.

Iran's President Mahmoud Ahmadinejad has called for Israel to be "wiped off the map." He has said Israel "should not assume" its ceasefire with Iranian-backed Hizbollah guerrillas last week means an end to the crisis.

Hizbollah fired 4,000 rockets on

northern Israel during the war.

Iranian cleric Amad Khatami has said that Iran would hit Tel Aviv with medium-ranged missiles it came under attack. Arms experts say Iran's Shahab-3 missiles are capable of striking Israel.

Eitan's remarks also came as tensions rose between Iran and six world powers led by the United States, who have sought to persuade Tehran to halt its uranium enrichment program, with an August 31 deadline for Tehran to face possible sanctions from the United Nations.

Israel is widely believed to be the only nuclear power in the Middle

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Required Entry Qualifications and Competencies Formal Education

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Experience

Minimum of 1 - 3 years in similar occupations

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At least 1 year of work experience in a similar position

Other Qualifications

- Excellent working knowledge of modern telecommunication systems (telephone, fax,
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All applications are to be submitted in a closed envelope clearly marked as the following: "Application for Administrative Assistant"

Human Resources Officer, GTZ Office Sana'a GTZ Office Sana'a

P.O. Box 692

Sana'a, Republic of Yemen

Final date for submission of applications will be the 01.09.2006.

Only short listed applicants will be contacted and invited for interviews.

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arrangement of appointments and meetings, acting as an interpreter when required and/or taking minutes.

Preparation of high quality briefing materials for supervisor for appointments, meetings

missions & maintenance of protocol procedures. Management of supervisor missions and representation schedule, preparation of

- informal translations.
- Maintenance of rosters of high-level partners, telephone lists. Preparation of correspondence, directives, comments on behalf of RR/RC for his/her
- signature and making follow-up when required. Use of automated office management systems for effective functioning of the RR/RC
- Ensures provision of effective communications support to the office focusing on maintenance of the filing system ensuring safekeeping of confidential materials. Use of automated filing system.

 Coordination of the information flow in the office, follow up on circulation files.
- Facilitation of information sharing between the Office of the RC and the UNCT.
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- 5 to 7 years of progressively responsible secretarial, administrative, programme
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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

UNDP, P.O.Box 551 Sana'a/Fax: 448841/E-mail: (registry.ye@undp.org)
The deadline for receiving applications is Wednesday, 6 September 2006

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The much-awaited prickly pear

By: Salim Al-Majidi

rickly pear season is welcomed warmly in Yemen, particularly by the poor. The fruit has its own market that doesn't allow any other fruits to come close to it. As cheap fruit with a gratifying return, prickly pears are bought by all men, women and children.

Prickly pear season is from June to August and during that time of year, various zones and locations are full of street vendors selling prickly pears by cart, while women sellers use baskets. All sellers – men, women and children alike – hold a small knife in their hands, not for slaughtering, but for removing the prickly pear's outer covering, which has small thorns. If the outer covering isn't removed carefully, the small thorns may mix with the fruit causing injury when eaten.

In an area allocated for flood drainage caused by rain, one can find many people and cars filled with prickly pear boxes. Most of the fruit comes from AlHayma, where prickly pear trees grow abundantly.

Haj Sa'eed Naji is a prickly pear distributor in the wholesale market. When asked where the fruit comes from, in addition to its price, Naji noted that Al-Hayma is the area famed for growing prickly pears, as well as other crops like coffee, corn, millet and qat.

"Once prickly pears are ripe, we remove them from the trees and put them in plastic boxes, which I then transport in my car for selling in Taiz," Naji explained "Prickly pear trees aren't planted; they grow naturally and cost farmers nothing – just some stings when they pick the fruit! A box of prickly pears costs YR 300-YR 400. I transport approximately 100 boxes a day," he added.

Inaccessible fruit

Prickly pear fruit begins growing from a small, soft bud at the tips of large, thick leaves covered with thorns. In time, the bud grows, taking on its usual egg-like shape.

The fruit is sheltered by a thick cover-

ing full of small thorns which are harmful to the eyes. They also cling to the body as soon as one touches the prickly pear fruit and they can move through the air.

Harvesting prickly pears requires gloves. When one wants to eat a prickly pear, he must get rid of the thorns and use precise tools like small forks to cut out the fruit. Prickly pear is a tasty, palatable fruit filled with sugar and a small percentage of water.

A season anticipated by all

Prickly pear season is a rich season celebrated by all – young, old, men and women, who patiently await it. As it is the case with other fruits, prickly pears arrive in summer. They are the only fruits sold separately and not with other fruits. Basically, they're not given that amount of attention required to grow other kinds of fruit, as to planting, irrigating and fertilizing. Further, they don't require much effort or money, so the price is low in comparison to other fruits

When asked why he sells prickly pears

for YR 300 per box, Naji replied, "Transportation costs play a role. Additionally, some children help pick prickly pears and they need promotional sums of money to make them work with you. fill this cart," Mohammed said. "I sell them to customers at the pears for YR 10, if they're larger or three pears, if they're medium Each box holds approximate approximate to 150-180 pears. I earn between

"After their peels are removed, three prickly pears sell for YR 10," Naji added when asked about the price to the final consumer.

Farmers' fruit

"Prickly pear is farmers' fruit and is awaited patiently. Its season lasts for about two months," Abdullah Al-Kawkabani asserted, "Most poor families utterly depend upon this season for their livelihood. It's a source of income for many children and youth, who can earn money by picking and selling prickly pears."

Fifteen-year-old Mohammed, a thin street vendor with hands stuck by thorns, uses a small knife to remove prickly pears' outer covering, thus receiving customers with fruit ready to eat. "I pay YR 350-YR 400 a box for prickly pears and I need three boxes to

"I sell them to customers at two pears for YR 10, if they're large, or three pears, if they're medium. Each box holds approximately 150-180 pears. I earn between YR 200-YR 300. It's a chance to come up with my pocket money and my family's during prickly pear season instead of sitting with no work or wandering in the streets," he added. Rayhana, who's sold prickly pears for years, commented, "I like to buy this fruit rather than other fruits because it's profitable and requires no more capital, as is the case with other fruits.

"I support a large family selling this fruit because we don't have a man to support us," Rayhana added.



The prickly pear tree is a strange, yet surprising tree at the same time. It's strange because it's thorny, beginning from its trunk and stems and ending with its leaves. Its thorns are thick and sharp, becoming thicker at the stems, and its leaves are thick and large, some of which are 40-50 cm.

Approximately 80 to 90 percent of a prickly pear tree consists of leaves, which are a food source for some animals who feed on them, not caring about the thorns. Prickly pear leaves are rich in protein, minerals and water.

Close relationship

What's surprising about this tree is its ability to endure long periods of drought and its ability to adapt itself to the environment in which it exists. It grows in hilly areas with heights and

valleys, particularly rocky areas. No one knows which is tougher: the rock or the prickly pear and no one knows the nature of the relationship between them.

Prickly pear trees grow by themselves and are of secondary importance, despite the fact that everyone likes prickly pear fruit. Poor and fixedincome families recently have paid great attention to prickly pear trees.

In order to grow, prickly pear trees completely depend upon rain falling over intervals of time – man has nothing to do with their growth, as they store water in their leaves. When prickly pear fruit ripens, rural area residents collect them in baskets to be marketed in towns. Such locals can receive a good return with little effort or pain.





Baskets of prickly pears arrive in Sana'a daily and they immediately get loaded into wheel-barrels to be sold on the street.

Blogs on the Middle East crisis

When more than just weapons speak

The internet knows no borders – this is illustrated nowhere better than in discussions among Lebanese and Israeli bloggers about the war in Lebanon.

By: Ingmar Kreisl

ebanese and Israeli bloggers are writing about their experiences and views on the war. They write from bunkers in Israel, high-rise apartments in Beirut, and internet cafes. Often they elaborate not on politics but on the everyday consequences of the war, broken dreams, and their hope for a quick end to the fighting.

Lebanese artist Zena El Khalil, for example, began keeping a blog when Israel started its offensive, describing her feelings every day since the bombing commenced.

Two weeks after the bombing began, her entries expressed resignation and despair. On the second of August she only wrote: "I feel so helpless."

Many Lebanese feel their lives have reverted to the state of things during the civil war, when power outages and long lines at the supermarkets were normal. Zadigvoltaire wrote in his blog about the supply situation in Beirut when the bombings began: "No antibiotics, no electricity, and less and less gasoline."

The blogs often express a conviction that internal Lebanese problems must be put aside in the face of the crisis and a united front maintained against the "enemy." According to a study by the Beirut Center for Research and Information, 87 percent of Lebanese support Hezbollah's resistance against the Israeli army.

Growing support for Hezbollah

One of them by the nickname of Gaztastic writes: "Let us Lebanese forget our domestic political problems for the moment and try to unite in order to defend our country... It is time for us to join together and protect our country."

In a blog called Beirut.spring, begun after the murder of former Lebanese prime minister Hariri, Mustapha writes that he understands Hezbollah as his political enemy, but nonetheless as part of the Lebanese political system and thus a part of his country.

On the other side of the conflict, in Northern Israel, people are likewise living in fear of the next missile and the next air raid alarm. After the Israeli army left Gaza and the possibility of a retreat from the West Bank arose, many Israelis began to feel a glimmer of hope for the peace process.

The escalation following the kidnapping of two Israeli soldiers came as a shock to many Israelis. One blogger from Northern Israel described his feelings upon his return from a long vacation:

"I left a country that had been relatively quiet... just a month later I have returned to find a country in the grip of drama and tragedy all over again."

Life under constant attack

Similar to their Lebanese neighbors, Israelis living within the reach of the Katyushas describe the fear of living under constant attack.

At kishkushim.blogspot.com, a group of students describes their life in Haifa since the beginning of the attacks. "The sirens sound again and we run out into the hallway, which is the only place in the apartment without a window, wall or door to the outside."

Although politicians on both sides are not talking with one another, the people are starting a dialog. Many



Bloggers use the internet to communicate with the other side – for Israelis and Lebanese weblogs are the only way to make contact.

bloggers use the internet to communicate with the other side – for Israelis and Lebanese it is the only way to make contact.

"Hello Lebanon, hello Israel," writes Israeli Ben Basat in his blog. "I don't know what will happen, but we should use the advantages and the power of blogging to create a forum for everyone."

More and more commentary from Israeli bloggers finds its way into Lebanese blogs – and vice versa.

Contact despite the war

One example of the contact being established between the people of both sides is the Israeli-Lebanese blog arabisraelipeace.com, which was initiated by an Israeli and a Lebanese. The site's purpose is to facilitate an exchange between the two sides and "bring together Arabs and Israelis."

Israeli soldiers also seem to perceive blogs in Lebanon as a source of information. Sachar wrote in a blog: "Hey, I am an IDF soldier stationed at the Lebanese border (...).We can't see all the bombing on Lebanon here from Israel (naturaly we're focusing on bombs at Israel), so you're pretty much updating me on what's going on. (...) I don't want to start arguing about who's right and who's wrong, the finaly word is that it's not right that civilians get hurt in the process, from both sides.."

Because people can write commentary on any entry at a given site, many discussions have been carried out directly between Israelis and Lebanese in which individuals explain their views.

Despite these positive developments within the community of Middle Eastern internet bloggers, it must be remembered that they represent only a small fraction of society. Most bloggers are young, well-educated academics who chat with each other in English. Shiite refugees in emergency shelters who had to leave everything behind are not among them.

Whether or not the bloggers really are who they say they are is another question. Theoretically, anyone can claim to be Israeli or Lebanese in a blog, but no one's identity cannot be verified.

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Young leaders' conference winds up

By: Saeed al-Batati

fter five days of intensive discussions, meetings, workshops, the first conference of young leaders came to an end.
"I'm happy with the declaration of this successful gathering. Now you are required to offer everything to your

this successful gathering .Now you are required to offer everything to your country," said Hadramout's Governor Abdulgader Ali Hilal at the closing ceremony. The governor asked the audience to take lessons from the Japanese, Chinese, and Malaysian young people.

To keep the excitement for youth programs Hilal announced an initiative for a youth club with a contribution of YR400 million which will be supervised by Hadramout University and the Youth Association for Development and Creativeness (YAIC).

During the camp tomorrow's leaders took part in lectures and presentations from university staff, government officials and the private sector.

Canada's Nexen Petroleum was one of the representatives from the private sector and their two members brought positive messages for the present and the future.

"We would like to describe to the youth the opportunities the oil industry presents to the young people of Yemen. We also like the idea of meeting members of the local community to share ideas and items of mutual concerns. It is a great opportunity for us to meet and talk with our future young leaders," said Nexen's Alan Phillips following the conference.

"My intention for coming here is to convey the scope of change to people's lives and to our world over the past few years. The world is radically different today than 20 years ago with changes in geopolitics, globalization of business, advances in technology, environmental issues and health. The world of tomorrow will experience accelerated change and the youth will be in the midst of –and drive –many of those changes. It is a time of dangerous opportunity and a time to be aware to

make change," said David Yates, also

For university staff there is more concern about the state of youth at the

moment.

"Yemen is in dire need of such youth conferences which strengthen ties and bonds," said Salim Bin-Qadhi, the Dean of the Seiyun Community College, suggesting these conferences are held annually and in different areas of the republic.

The participants have somewhat the same feelings of their teachers.

"This is the first time in my life to participate in a conference. During our meetings and workshop, we knew the features of the successful leader," said Saleh Askul, who came from a remote area in Hadramout.

The conference lso gave girls a chance to participate actively in the discussion and play leading roles along with boys in arranging the conference.

"It really turned my life. Before attending the presentation of the lecturers I knew nothing about reproduction health and other important subjects," said Entisar Omer, a member of YAIC.

The next conference of the young leaders to be held under the motto of "Youth for Development."

At the end of the conference, the participants came out with the following main recommendations which were read by. Adeeb Hassan, the General Coordinator of the conference,

-Urge the government to implement the proposal of YR20b for youth projects.

-Welcome the inauguration of the Yemeni Youth Consultative Council which brings together young leaders from different governorates of the

-Spread health awareness and activate the role of NGOs

-Support minor projects for individuals and families which increase their living standard.

-Promote education especially in the rural areas.

-Supporting and encouraging girls' education.





Presidential Campaigning kicks off

pen season for electoral campaigning started in earnest on Wednesday. The month-long campaigns have been long in the making, but Wednesday marked the first official day of this year's dog and pony show.

Leading up to the Sept 20 election the five presidential candidates will each attempt to win the support of

President Ali Abdullah Saleh's, of the General People's Congress, has posters and billboards to drum up his support while the Joint Meeting Party's Faisal Bin Shamlan hopes to get his face and name in people's

The three remaining candidates Yassin Abdu Saeed, National Opposition Council candidate and the independent's Ahmed Abdullah Al-Majeedi and Fathi Al-Azab are hoping to compete with the two front

The two leading candidates started their campaigns with posters spread around Sana'a.

The Yemen Times sent Mohammed Al-Jabri and Glyn Goffin to gauge the support for the presidential candidates as the countdown begins.



Cars are adorned with the president's face. During the campaign Ahmed Saleh says it's time to show his support. "Ali Abullah Saleh is the man who built the country. I only know Bin Shamlan as a bottle of water. I know nothing about him more than this," says.



With his ice cream stand plastered with Saleh photos Walid Abdullah, ice-cream says he is very proud of Saleh on his handcart. "We are happy with President Saleh. I want him to win the elections because he has vast experience. We encourage him to go ahead," he adds. Abdullah is one of many Yemeni's with the newspapers on their mind.



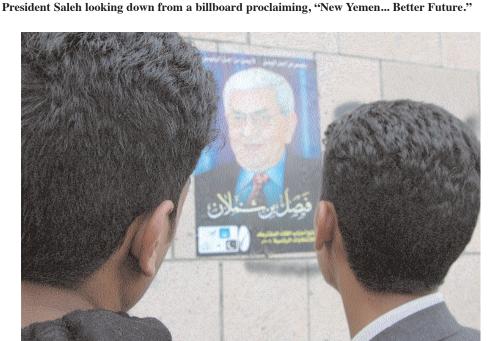
"Bin Shamlan is a good man, whose file is still honest. He is an honest man," says Mohammed Saeed, "I just know Bin Shamlan and Ali Abdullah Saleh. The others are nothing comparing to them."



Al-Amrani a chance to consider his options. "Bin Shamlan is socialist and so is not useful. He is good man, but I shall not for him for that very reason, being socialist," said Al-Amrani.



Taxi drivers receive the word of the people, but Abdul-Ghani Al-Weshah says he doesn't know anything about the election campaign although he favors President Saleh. "It is better to elect a person you know than a person you don't know," he notes while driving near a Saleh portrait.

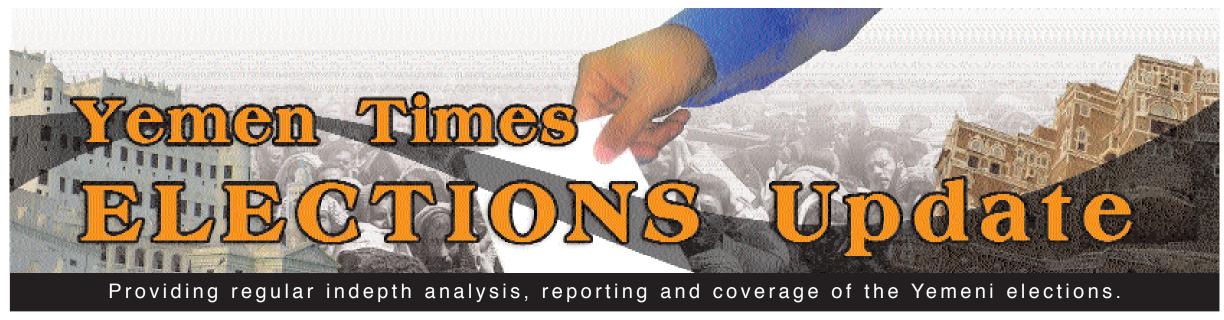


Happy to see the Bin Shamlan posters on the walls Majed Al-Hakimi, a young man from Taiz says, "Bin Shamlan is an educated man, one who has experienced life. He is patriot as well. He deserves to rule the country."



For Mahmoud Yahya there's only one person who can run the country and his support is firmly planted behind President Saleh. "Bin Shamlan lacks popularity," he says while holding up son and wishing his son was old enough to also vote for Saleh.





Citizens, local council members and candidates say:

Previous local councils' performance was unsatisfactory

Yemen waded into its first local council elections in Feb. 2001, aiming to fiscally decentralize the Yemeni government by increasing local budgetary autonomy. The Yemen Times investigated the opinions of citizens, local council candidates and local council members in Sana'a, Aden, Hodeidah and Hadramout about Yemen's first local council experiment.

By: Yemen Times Staff

"What local councils?!" exclaimed Marzouk Abdulnour of Hodeidah, who was surprised at the question about the local councils and their performance, explaining that he hasn't heard about such councils except on election days when street walls are filled with photos of candidates he's never known. He affirmed that such councils have failed to offer citizens

Aden resident Saleh Abduh Ali of Aden expressed his opinion, saying, "Although it's been five years since the first local election in 2001, the local council experiment didn't yield anything because they weren't based on right standards.

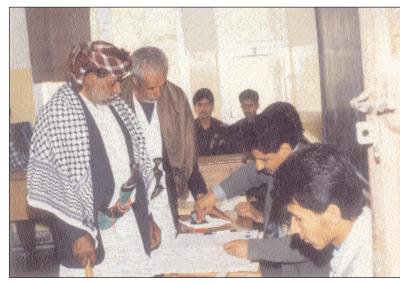
"Many candidates were supported by their parties throughout the election campaign; however, they found facing difficult themselves experiences because they couldn't keep their promises they made in the election campaign," he added, further describing some local council members as ignorant of local authority

While Abdulnour and Ali believe the reason for the local councils' failure is due to council members unable to keep their promises to voters, other citizens referred to powerful and influential figures, who directly affected the councils.

Hodeidah computer programmer Mohammed Al-Hamadi insisted, "Although they were provided financial capital, the councils didn't do anything mentionable." He blamed "influential individuals on some local councils, who were the main reason for their failure," without explaining

However, Al-Hamadi didn't deny that forming and establishing such councils is the right method for reformation, noting, "Some local councils in some regions were able to work because their members were honest and active." But Al-Hamadi didn't hide his pessimistic feeling regarding the upcoming election: "I always read and watch the conflict that's going on among powerful men in the government, who run this election like it's a trade whereby they can gain more.'

Fellow Hodeidah resident Khalid Abdul Fatah Al-Qubati was more open, remarking, "We can't say the local councils achieved anything for democracy or development. In my point of view, such councils were established to practice 'legalized theft' – taking people, power and more taxes and seizing citizens' rights. Decentralization is absent in our country due to absence of law, order and discipline, as well as unbalanced



Two voters in the former local councils.

"Additionally, our rulers can't keep ruling the country by their ways, which aren't based on order or the law, but on personal relations and

Citizens: local councils contain unqualified members who couldn't keep their promises. Local council members: some members have no idea about the Local Administration Law.

intelligence using the army to run their business, which is against most people's interests," he added.

Al-Qubati pointed out that all authority is given either to the district director or governor, both of whom are appointed by republican resolution, 'which reflects the fact that all authority and power is in the president's hand."

Havedh Al-Buqari, also from Hodeidah, agrees with Al-Qubati, noting that the local councils faced many obstacles preventing them from achieving their goals. "For example, local council law didn't define the council's competence and authority. Additionally, the political system, which is based on military thought, didn't comprehend the local council experience, which aimed to support decentralization and society's participation in the development process," he explained.

Unlike his fellow countrymen, Mohammed Khamis of Sawan in Hadramout believes Yemen's local authority experience "succeeded 50 percent and that's a good start."

However, he said voters themselves erred in the previous elections because "Many citizens voted for uneducated and unqualified candidates who neither knew nor comprehended local authority law. How do you ask someone to enforce a law that he himself doesn't understand?" he wondered.

"We can overcome such difficulties by setting voting conditions, including reading, writing and knowledge. The law mentions such conditions, but it never has been applied," he added.

Mabarak Salem Baqader of Hadramout agrees that the local authority experiment is succeeds somewhat upon financially and administratively implementing the decentralization concept, particularly on councils whose members are recognized for their honesty, activity and competency and who were given authority to deal with local area issues such as projects.

authority Overlapping decentralization

"Citizens aren't the only ones complaining about local councils' performance, as there are complaints from local council members and even from councils' leaders," noted Adel Ali Al-Dhubhani, a local council member in Sana'a.

He explained that the councils' institutional system didn't complete the budgets, which were insufficient, to operate the councils. He also mentioned obvious inconsistency and contradiction between numerous legal articles and local authority law.

Al-Dhubhani added that many council members are unaware of Local Administration Law legislation and articles. Additionally, although they voted for them, many citizens still are unaware of such council members' roles.

A March 1999 national conference on decentralization helped provide the



adopting the Local Administration Law, which presents the present model for national decentralization.

The Local Administration Law seeks to fiscally decentralize Yemen's government by increasing local budgetary autonomy. Before 1999. central government tightly controlled fiscal allocations, thereby delaying local development projects. Most local revenues raised via taxes and fees

"Most local councils lack offices where their members can do their daily work. Moreover, such councils' budgets were too small to perform their tasks."

were transferred to the capital, Sana'a, with virtually all local budgets coming from fund transfers from the national government.

The new law provided that local authorities will keep revenues collected at the local level, while portions of funds collected by the central government will be distributed to municipalities based on population

However, some groups like the National Democratic Institute (NDI) have criticized the Local Administration Law for not extending popular elections to include governor and director-general on the provincial level, as those positions, which are assigned by presidential resolution, are executive managers of the local council boards at the governorate and district level.

In this regard, local council candidate Saleh Abdullah in Hadramout governorate's Dawan district asserted, "I believe the decentralization concept hasn't been applied due to overlapping authority between the governor, the district director-general, the council's director and local council representatives, which leads to competition between

preventing the Local Administration Law's enforcement and disfiguring the councils' performance. I believe the answer to this problem is raising awareness and defining each one's responsibility."

Local council representative Nabeel Al-Sana in Aden governorate's Al-Tawahi district believes Yemen failed when it declared the local councils' establishment and turned from centralization to decentralization before formulating and enacting all laws and legislation. "The Local Administration Law hasn't been activated yet, so the local councils didn't conduct their duties properly," he proposed.

Al-Sana alleged that the local councils couldn't perform their duties of supervising projects and controlling local personnel and financial sources independently due to conflicts between local council representatives

and ministry office personnel. "There are no prepared administrative departments; most local councils lack offices where their members can do their daily work. Moreover, such councils' budgets were too small to perform their tasks. Besides that, many yearly plans and investment budgets the districts raised

"Influential individuals on some local councils were the main reason for their failure."

never were approved," he explained. However, Al-Sana pointed to some successful local councils, which were able to "grab their authority and prove their existence in reality by directly

Upcoming local election nominee Abduh Kutaif of Hodeidah agrees with Al-Sana, insisting that local council representatives must be given complete authority to perform and achieve their duties without stress.

supervising projects and helping

Women and local elections

"Some councilwomen observe a major traditional constraint, that is, the inability to attend qat sessions. Hence, they can't learn more about discussions and talks occurring during councilmen's gat sessions, thus limiting their active role in deciding local council issues," said engineer Fatima Huraibi, Secretary-General of Tahrir district's local council.

"Women can't learn more about discussions and talks occurring during councilmen's gat sessions."

She confirmed that only 36 of 125 women candidates won local council elections in 2001, including two at the governorate level in Aden and Abyan. At the district level, three women won the post of secretary-general: in the Capital secretariat, Ibb and Lahj.

"The Local Administration Ministry and the Capital secretariat mayor assigned me the post of directorgeneral of Tahrir district, which is the only Yemeni woman in such a post. The remaining 30 councilwomen are ordinary members of local district councils," Huraibi explained.

"The presence of women as district director-generals, secretary-generals of local district councils and council committee heads allows them to participate in the decision making process and observe implementation of council resolutions. Additionally, women can deal with both men and women in society, thus enabling them to discover society's comprehensive needs and concerns from all walks of life," she pointed out.

Huraibi insisted on donors' role in making local councilwomen more successful by supporting capacitybuilding programs, funding study tours to countries with similar experiences, like India and Tunisia, and providing financial aid to women's election campaigns.

You break it, you own it

n his book 'Plan of Attack'. Bob Woodward wrote that Colin Powel George warned Bush of the consequences of occupying Iraq. Powell called it the pottery barn rule, 'you break it, you own it'. But then, military generals advising politicians is anathema, especially draft dodging

politicians. One wonders how General John Abuzaid manages around Bush, Cheney, and Rice. Especially with American laser bombs falling on Lebanese children. They say blood is thicker than water. Some blood anyway. But if you are busy killing Iraqis,

killing Lebanese shouldn't bother you.

Anyway let's go back to the pottery barn rule. Three years after the invasion, America seems to have failed in Iraq. Now America has broken Lebanon. What else Bush intends to break before he leaves office is an open, scary question. Assuming he does not create a crises of such magnitude that it 'justifies' calling off or postponing the next elections. After all, under the two terms limit, it is impossible to steal another election. You think I am crazy? Under the 'new world order' everything goes. Think about the scary London news. Granted, there might have been an attempted 'terrorist' attack. How big? We don't know. What we do know is that it has diverted attention from Israel's atrocities in Lebanon. Nicely timed. Makes you wonder about the motives of both, ter-



By: Munir Daair

rorists and big brother. Big terrorist and big brother now sound and behave so similar that it is hard to know whom to believe. One has sleeper cells the other Guantanamo sleep deprivation cells, one uses suicide bombers the other smart bombers, both tell us "if you ain't with us. you are against us". Isn't

Tony Blair the guy who claimed Saddam could launch a WMD within 45 minutes? That lie contributed to the mass murder of 100,000 Iraqis and counting. How crazy was that? Maybe we should call him Tony B-liar. I wonder sometimes what's more stupid. The fact these lies are believed again and again, or the fact that the liars are elected, again and again. Now they tell us terrorists tried to blow us up to kingdom come. However, we should not be intimidated. Instead, just empty all our pockets, get rid of all our hand luggage, including your grandmother's milk of magnesia, strip when asked and then, have a pleasant flight. Yeah, sure! More terrorist threats, real or imagined, more power to the intelligence organizations. In the past few years big brother taped our phones, snooped at the wife's housekeeping bank account, read our mothers-in-laws' medical records, checked on our kids' school reports, emptied our pockets in more ways than one. But it doesn't seem enough. Think about it. How much money do these guys need to hijack or blow up a plan? A small wad of whatever banknotes and a few smalltime credit card frauds, that's all. But what does big brother do instead? Big time global banking espionage. You think your local terrorists boys go about their business making big time bank transactions? And now after the London scare, what else? Need I spell it out?

Anyway, back to Lebanon and the pottery barn rule. How does America plan to mend this one? American hand picked government ala-Iraq, Arab money, American contracts, business as usual, different address. But, for those weapons flights, will Blair get a piece of the action for British business? After all, Tony has been telling anyone who has a moment to listen about his special relationship with George and how seriously he is regarded in Washington. Didn't do him any good in Iraq. Why? Because it's all in Blair's imagination. But one cannot blame Blair for desperately wanting to hangout with the big boys. It would of course help if Blair occasionally read a bit of history. The page about Churchill's 'trusted' friend Roosevelt during the WW2 race to Berlin is interesting. That's how the big boys play Tony.

Back again to the pottery barn rule. Having broken Lebanon, what's the next address. Syria? Neo-con's wishful thinking blueprint is no secret. Stage one. Iraq divided into American oil pumping fiefdoms, Palestine annexed by Israel, in practice if not in words, Syria and Lebanon part of one colony. Iran? Junior Shah is waiting in the corridor. Does this look like a "new" Middle-East? Looks like an old one to me, only new players. No Sykes-Picot here. Its Neo-con-Zionism, America and Israel. Should be called Middle-East of the "new" instead. No wonder good old Jacques Chirac is mixed up. tion in Lebanon. Sorry friend Jacques, you shot yourself in the foot. Again. You should read the same history page

in Lebanon. Hezbollah will make sure everybody's party is pooped. Including all those who quietly encouraged Israel, hindsight crocodile tears notwithstanding. They knew Israel's brutality. They saw it in Palestine and in Lebanon in 1982. Yet their misplaced fear and hatred of Hezbollah blinded them. Now America and Israel have cheated them by going beyond the agreed red line. Had they bothered to ask, I would have recommended they read the same history page I recommended for Tony and Jacques.

Pottery barn rule? Yes, America will

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The Middle-East of the new is not good for France. In the past France had only Syrian influence in Lebanon to contend with. Chirac went along with America to kick out the Syrians, thinking it will help France regain its posi-

I recommended for Tony. Anyway, back again to the pottery barn rule. It won't work American style

mend Lebanon, just after they mend Afghanistan and Iraq. Might take years and a lot of bloodshed, just like Afghanistan and Iraq. But that's the American pottery barn rule for you.

writer. His articles appear in a number of publications. He can be contacted at

Hiding behind a golden cloak

is told that the famous Mongolian commander Tamerlane (Timur Lenk) retired to rest in a big tent erected for him after the end of a fierce and hard battle. Poles of the tent were decorated with gold and embedded with jewels.

Lining the sides of the tent were piles of silver and precious stones extravagance to appear strong and and Timur Lenk sat amidst the grandeur of riches and prestige wearing most expensive and beautiful clothes. Lenk then ordered a poet to be brought before him to listen to his praise portraying the display of wealth and glory around the Mongolian leader.

Pointing to the riches piled inside the tent, Lenk asked the poet, "If I am offered for sale, how much would you pay for me?

The poet looked deeply at the face of the Mongol conqueror and looked around the tent and slowly replied, "I will buy you for 16 dinars." With sur-



the belt but you are worth nothing. Throughout ages rulers

have protected themselves from the monitoring of their peoples. They spend money with boundless

prise and anger Lenk said

16 dinars are not worth the

price of his belt around his

waist. The poet answered,

yes, I meant the price of

feared. With those appearances they measure the status and position of the countries they rule. Many contemporary rulers who have safeguarded themselves against accountability of their peoples are still expending their riches to gain loyalty, but not paying attention to the poverty and deprivation their behavior causes to their people.

In a way, democracy was a great human invention not only for the peaceful transfer of power, but also to radically reduce the expensive despotic rulers, whether they kings or presidents. The democratic ruler is very cheap; not

Free and transparent elections

because he is virtuous, but rather because he cannot unilaterally spend the national wealth of his country or to use it for his personal ends or self-serving goals to permanently stay in power.

Comparing the cost of an overt dictator and one pretending to uphold democracy, the latter's cost is higher. The first example spends a great portion of the national wealth on his personal things and his and his family security and its is the same thing done by the second type, but the remaining national wealth is used to buy loyalty and to play with democratic policy so they protect their legiti-

macy and appear to uphold democracy. Yemen's bad luck in political development led it to be of the second type of leader, the despotic under a cloak of democracy. Here there are strong impediments practiced to prevent the progress of the emerging democracy. The mechanisms of despotism prevent democracy from becoming a tool to create change.

As Yemen is a poor country and with little resources, despotism hiding behind democracy has consumed all the national wealth and precluded its investment in

serving development leaving total stagnancy. One must wonder about the destination of Yemen's wealth and there is a clear answer seen in the network of illegitimate interests and forces of corruption dominating this country. They are the basis for strengthening the seat of power. It means that the corruption existing in Yemen does not proceed from weakness in the moralistic formation for practicing corruption but rather depends on serving certain political interests making an inseparable relationship between the monopoly of power and the forces of corruption. This alliance between despotism and corruption has created what can be described as a black hole in the sky of Yemen, swallowing its wealth, absorbing potential from its people, frustrating their expectations and blocking the change and reform that

President Ali Abdullah Saleh's stay in power for 28 years has deprived them of development opportunities provided by successive discoveries of oil and natural gas along with scientific developments and regional and international changes. However all opportunities have been squandered. Thus Yemen moves backwards as the and human development deteriorates. As the world around develops, Yemen's problems have been increasingly. Some political circles have estimated the money allocated for financing the president's electoral campaign at YR1 trillion against a substantial increase from the YR25 million the parliament approved for each of the five recommended presidential candidates. In addition to this difference in financial support the commercial circles, under pressure from the ruling force, have colleted YR1 billion for the president's campaign with promise to double their

Regardless of the circulated figures

Meanwhile, we cannot overlook the of the president's campaign, including

than 20 years. appear before them every now and then. The Yemenis have to realize that

other news coming from some areas speaks of money being carried in trucks to buy the loyalty of voters. The lavish use of money in the president's campaign can be seen with the General People's Congress approving the printing of 5 million Saleh photos and that mean one picture for every 25 people.

cost of using the state apparatus in favor

COMMON SENSE

The cease fire is not there yet

es, the heavy fireworks are over in the Levant, but for how long and what can one expect in the days to come? We have a fragile cessation of hostilities, or at least it seemed that way, for already Israel has violated this by making another futile effort to save face amidst the growing adverse repercussions of its defeat at the hands of Hezbollah and the brave Lebanese people, who stood behind their resistance movement to the last man. There can be no doubt that the Lebanese have sacrificed literally



their entire infrastructure and the dwellings and workplace of most of the population of the country. But it should be borne in mind that the end result of this sad conflict was that it catapulted Lebanon into the forefront of regional power, not so much as a great military power, but rather as a country with a people that possess an iron will and unbeatable and fearless determination to maintain their independence and dignity, notwithstanding all the consequences and the might and fury of their enemy. More than that, the Lebanese, in their own way have shown that they can shove aside all their factional strife in the wake of facing up to a merciless aggression that has no misgivings about filling the valleys of Lebanon with the pure blood of its

Israel is now in a predicament indeed. Israel knows not what to do after having sought to project itself at the front line of a fictitious war on "terror", which it and no other has brought into this world. Israel's existence was the product of terror and its continuity is now being pursued by the creation of a mysterious world of "Islamic fascism" and Islamic fundamentalist terror. Never mind that the latter have been clearly proven to be the clandestine works of the Mossad, the International Zionist Establishment and the powerdriven mongrels of the New Right Establishment of the United States. Even if we can weakly assume that the latter are not the screenplay writers of this facade of gangsterism, which Islam is innocent of, surely as Robert Fisk and many other commentators have suggested (If You Want The Roots Of Terror, Try Here by Robert Fisk, The Independent, August 12, 2006), then for sure by feat, Israel has helped sow the seeds of terror by providing the grounds for the rise of terrorism. What else can be expected in a world where the avenues for seekers of justice have been closed and sealed from any genuine sufferers of oppression and aggression to pursue and the will of the mighty has been declared as the only justice that will prevail in this world. Undoubtedly, frustration and hopelessness are indeed roots that grow into chaotic displays of anger that seek their own means of arriving at justice and relief from the agonies of evil occupations and unholy alliances that seek to maintain a monopoly on the hold of the natural resources and the necks of

So, now we are at a moment of suspense, suspense that has turned into anxiety by the first and latest violation of Security Council Resolution 1701, by the very mob in Israel that sought help and relief from the UN. This is after Hezbollah (or Hizbullah as some would spell it) threw some powerful punches at the Israeli forces that have been playing amok in the beautiful valleys of Lebanon, only to find that they were up against a foe that knows well how to face the chauvinistic arrogance of this Zionist cancer that has been implanted in the land that was ordained by the Al-Mighty to be the Land of Peace. As if Israel was telling the world, there will never peace here unless all have succumbed to what their missiles and smart bombs dictate. With Hezbollah around still, we can expect the challenge to this arrogance to be formidable indeed and apparently sustainable. The ball game is now back in Washington again, and there, as usual, is where the danger really lies.

Hassan Al-Haifi has been a Yemeni political economist and journalist for more

the officials' external and internal political movements in service of their cam-

Nevertheless, money alone has not convinced them that the power they are using is enough for a considerable campaign because they are still control and govern the election process and the power to adapt its results. This represents an additional political and moral

You see how expensive the president is, but how much is the president worth?

Ali Al-Sarari is a Yemeni Journalist and a well-known politician. He is the head of the information department at the Yemeni Socialist Party.

Letters to the Editor

LNG Project This letter has reference to the

interview by the General Manager of YLNG Co. published in your issue of July 15,2006. First and foremost a close analysis of the YNLG Project shows that our country and the Government of Yemen would stand to loose billions of dollars in income realised from the sale of the country's natural gas in the form of LNG. The Governments (YGC) share of the profits from the sale of LNG is only 26% instead of about 70% as is in the case of other countries like Oatar etc. This decreased share of the Government translates into a loss of revenues amounting to billions of dollars during the 25-year life of the

Needless to say that such a huge loss to the Government of Yemen is against the country's national interest and economies security. Moreover if this

Project goes through in its present form it will deprive our country of the much need natural gas which is desperately needed by our expanding people and growing industries. These natural gas reserves are our national heritage and

depleted. Does it mean that we have to pay in dollars for importing the required gas in future from other countries? Yes, exactly.

are irreplaceable once they are

I think we should urge the present Government not to submit to this robbery of our natural resources by the foreign Multinationals whose only interest is to maximise their profits and exploit our mineral wealth for their benfit. It is time for the government and the people to wake up and protect our nation's interests before it's too late. I hope it is listening.

S.A. Abdul Wahab Sanaa, Yemen smileatlast@yahoo.com

S K Ε T C Н The Opposition Ε D 0 Ρ Ν 0

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What young British Muslims say can be shocking – some of it is also true

In a recently conducted poll, only half the British Muslims questioned said they thought of Britain as "my country". In his commentary, Timothy Garton Ash looks at why many British Muslims feel increasingly alienated from the country they live in.

or anyone who has hoped and believed, as I have, that the British way of integrating Muslim citizens is more promising than the French one, the last year has been discouraging. Following the shock of the July 7 London bombings, perpetrated by young Muslims born and educated here, we now have the results of two recent opinion polls, an excellent TV documentary by Channel 4's Jon Snow, and the sombre warnings of Britain's most senior Muslim policeman.

All convey the same message. Not only do many young British Muslims feel more alienated from the country they live in than their parents did - that's true of Muslims from immigrant families right across Europe – but the sense of not belonging seems to be even more acute in Britain than in France.

In a poll conducted for the Channel 4 documentary, only half the British Muslims questioned said they thought of Britain as "my country", whereas nearly a quarter said they thought of it as "their country" - meaning someone else's. The younger respondents were, the greater the alienation. Shockingly, one in three British Muslims aged between 18 and 24 said they would rather live under Sharia law than under British law.

In a Pew poll of Muslims worldwide, a gob-smacking 81 percent of British Muslims said they thought of themselves as a Muslim first and a citizen of their country only second. This is a higher proportion than in Jordan, Egypt or Turkey, and exceeded only by that in Pakistan (87 percent). By contrast, only 46 percent of French Muslims said they were Muslims first, compared with 42 percent who felt themselves first and foremost citizens.

The background of French and British

Why is this? Here are a few possible explanations, none of which are mutually exclusive. It may have something to do with the different regions from which French and British Muslims come. I find it suggestive that the only country to top the British score was Pakistan. And to where do most British Muslims trace their origins? Well, nearly half of them have their roots in Pakistan, and another quarter-million or so in India and Bangladesh. A very large number hail from just one region: Kashmir.

Is there something about the particular religiosity of Kashmiri, Pakistani and more broadly south Asian Islam, and the way it develops in interraction with a European host culture, as opposed to the Islam of the Maghreb, from which most French Muslims come?

Then, and most obviously, Blair's Britain has been the most prominent ally of Bush's America in the Washingtonstyled GWOT (global war on terror), seen by many young Muslims as a GWOI (global war on Islam). By contrast, Chirac's France has positioned itself, from Afghanistan to Iraq to Lebanon today, as an opponent of the GWOT/I and in some measure a friend (or appeaser, to American and British neocons) of Muslims in general and Arabs in particu-



"Perhaps a more demanding civic-national identity, like that of the French Republic, has its advantages after all, giving a stronger sense of identity and belonging," Timothy Garton Ash surmises.

The role of British troops in Afghanistan and Iraq

There is now overwhelming evidence that Blair's foreign policy, and especially the role of British troops in Afghanistan and Iraq, has contributed very significantly to the alienation of British Muslims in general, and younger, better-educated ones in particular. In the Channel 4 poll, nearly one third of young British Muslims agreed with the suggestion that "the July bombings were justified because of British support for the war on terror". That's truly shocking.

This doesn't mean Blair's foreign policy has been all wrong. For example, I believe that the intervention in Afghanistan was entirely justified, because the al-Qaida terrorist network that demolished the twin towers was based in that failed state. The tragedy is that, instead of then devoting our resources to rebuilding Afghanistan, we rushed on to the neocons' war of choice in Iraq, thus creating two bloody failures instead of one possible success.

But, whatever you think of the policies in detail, there is no question that they have angered young British Muslims.

What is being British?

I have always thought that the very undemanding vagueness, the duffle-coat bagginess of Britishness was an advantage when it comes to making immigrants and their descendants feel at home here.

After all, what have you traditionally required in order to be British? An ability to talk about the weather at inordinate length. Being willing to mind your own business, to live and let live. A general inclination to obey the law of the land, more or less. Perhaps a mild interest in the royal family, football or cricket. That's about it.

The very idea of talking about ourselves as "citizens" has seemed to the British vaguely pretentious and foreign, more specifically French - and therefore bad. But perhaps a more demanding civic-national identity, like that of the French Republic, has its advantages after all, giving a stronger sense of identity and belonging. (Whether we can change this by state-ordered pep talks on Britishness and citizenship is another question; although I do think more can be done in

One of the most libertine societies in

Another possible reason is that Britain now has one of the most libertine societies in Europe. Particularly among younger Brits in urban areas, which is where most British Muslims live, we drink more alcohol faster, sleep around more, live less in long-lasting, two-parent families, and worship less, than almost anyone in the world. It's clear from what young British Muslims themselves say that part of their reaction is against this kind of secular, hedonistic, anomic lifestyle.

If women are reduced to sex-objects, young Muslim women say, I would rather cover up. Theirs is almost a kind of conservative feminism. Certainly, it's a socially conservative critique of some aspects of British society, particularly visible in their generation, in the urban neighbourhoods where they live.

And the critique is nuanced. Half those asked for the Channel 4 programme thought Muslim girls should make up their own minds whether to wear the hijab to school. Nearly a third of female respondents felt there was some truth in

the idea that Islam treats women as second-class citizens. (The men just couldn't see it. Now I wonder why ...) And a majority said that British society treats women with respect.

The terrorism and the backwardness paradigm

Whatever the mix of causes for this alienation, we need to escape from seeing British Muslims only through the prism of two currently prevailing paradigms: the terrorism paradigm and the backwardness paradigm.

The former starts from the question: how can we prevent our Muslims becoming terrorists? A reasonable enough question, but if this becomes the predominant way of looking at British Muslims (Muslim = potential terrorist), it risks contributing to the very effect it aims to avoid. The latter asks: how can we help these people to integrate better into our modern, progressive, liberal, secular society? Its implicit equation is: hijab = back-

The idea that these young British Muslims might actually be putting their fingers on some things that are wrong with our modern, progressive, liberal, secular society; the idea that rational persons might freely choose to live in a different, outwardly more restricted way; these hardly feature in everyday progressive discourse. But they should.

Articulate British Muslims, as encountered on Jon Snow's Channel 4 documentary and in magazines such as Q-News and Emel, are not merely telling us non-Muslim Brits a lot about themselves. They are also telling us something about ourselves. © Timothy Garton Ash 2006. This article was previously published in

the British daily The Guardian.

Waging war or winning peace

By: HRH Prince Hassan bin Talal

nce again, the region rings with the all-too-familiar cries of hatred, anger, violence and bloodshed. It seems we have been rendered unable to disable violence whether the perpetrators be state or nonstate players. Where is the voice of reason or the eye that sees beyond the immediate? Where is the ear that is prepared to listen?

historic statement that states have a primary responsibility to act to protect their own populations and that the international community has a responsibility to act when these governments fail to protect the most vulnerable among us. Yet what we are witnessing today in Lebanon, in Palestine, in Iraq and in Afghanistan is no less than the punishment of the powerless, escalating humanitarian crises of mammoth proportions, coupled in Lebanon with the destruction of the very infrastructure of civilized existence.

We are a dishonest lot in the Middle East. Maddened by grievances real and perceived, each of us clamors to call for peace when we have all, through trauma and intransigence, become mesmerized by war. We may fool our media allies from far away, or fulfill the requirements of sloganeers who do not share our air and soil, but we know, you and I, that lasting peace will only come when we look each other in the eve and translate hatred into words that begin a difficult

The people of Israel have made an easy decision not to talk to extremists. Perhaps the bravest step is to engage with moderates and acknowledge that our troubled neighborhood needs the courage of compassion and the wisdom of longer-term self-interest to undo the damage of macho militarism. The gunfire around us makes it even harder to hear the voices of our marginalized communities. Honesty is the only way to save our grandchildren from the fear and asphyxiation of hope, which we have all known for so long. Our clustered cities of Amman and Tel Aviv, Beirut and Damascus are too close to each other to avoid a tangled future.

We, the Children of Abraham, may claim to look in different directions for culture and custom, spirituality and succor, but this small patch of scorched. embattled earth cannot be divided by fences and false borders of the mind. If the political play does not allow us to admit this to those whose map of our region is distorted by self-interest and misguided strategic obstinacy, then at least let us have the sense to admit it to

Enlightened self-interest must compel Only last September, at the UN World us to foster human dignity and integrity repercussions are inclusive of all; surely Summit, world leaders agreed in a by addressing the full spectrum of basic human rights, spanning from the rights of children to full respect for the rule of law on a national, regional and international level.

> The events of the past three weeks have brought us to the edge of the abyss. They are the result not of timeless and inevitable conflict, but of intransigence, fear and a shocking lack of creativity by leaders in our region and beyond. The indiscriminate loss of life on all sides has polarized our populations and shown diplomacy for the devalued and scorned art it has become. The focus on polemics and the ensuing escalation of violence has sidelined the very real and dangerous concerns that underlie our region's spiraling decline.

> Aggressive ideology is nurtured by an increasing lack of economic equality, poor social mobility, a denial to many of human security, and the exclusion of the silenced majority. It is evident to us all that military might cannot cure the evils of our region. Violence begets violence, and the mass bombings of civilians can only result in increased use of terror tactics further down the line.

> It has become exceedingly clear that the current crisis requires the application of a two-fold solution if we are ever to hope for a secure and stable peace for all our citizens. The conflicts that rule our daily lives must be addressed on the political level, but we cannot afford to ignore the effects of military overkill on basic humanitarian issues. Human rights are the first casualties of war, and the degradation of human dignity in our region has undone generations of agreement and convention on the rights of civilians to protection and well-being. The anger and trauma created by hundreds of dead and injured and the

displacement of hundreds of thousands of civilians so far can only have violent repercussions for a hitherto democratic, pluralistic and multicultural Lebanon reality. The shockwaves are felt by our

A conference for security and cooperation in the region must be a priority for our leaders if human security is ever to become a reality. Diplomatic avenues must be opened and explored, and this arduous process should include Syria and Iran. War and it's tragic a model for peace should strive for such inclusiveness.

In memory of my late brother, His Majesty King Hussein, and Yitzhak Rabin, we must strive not to wage wars, but to win peace. Real peace must be built; it is not just the absence of war. We need to talk about the end-game, to develop regional understanding, to address the energy issue that is at the heart of so much instability, and to devise a multilateral approach to such thorny issues as the proliferation of WMD, together with a regional concept for human rights, prosperity and security.

Ideally, it could lead to a regional code of conduct and a cohesion fund that establishes principles of common interest, responsibility, transparency and a collective defense identity, reflecting the fact that interdependency is the reality today. Anthrocentric policies, policies where people matter, is the way to close the human dignity divide. Through good governance, we must empower the poor and dispossessed who find expression for their frustrations in extremist ideology.

The sooner a cessation of hostilities is achieved and international peacekeeping forces are deployed on both sides of the border, the sooner a collective strive toward institutionalized regional stability can begin. I cannot emphasize enough the need for diplomacy to transpose violence and this call echoes former U.S. president Eisenhower's appeal that the "table, though scarred by many past frustrations, cannot be abandoned for the certain agony of the

The writer, brother of the late King Hussein of Jordan, is president of the Arab Thought Forum.

Us vs. them: The basics of citizen diplomacy

By: Tamar Miller

ecause nearly everything in public arena framed as us vs. them, discourse takes on a defensively arrogant tone. There is little undisturbed public space to reflect on the deep fear about Israel "being wiped off the face of the earth" (as Nasrallah and Ahmadinejad declare) and, at the same time, express what we really feel -- grief and despair over dead Lebanese women, children and men and profound uncertainty about how to fight a fatal threat."

Cambridge - At the beginning of the 2nd intifada in 2000, there were simultaneous protests in Harvard Yard. On the steps of the library stood 50 MIT and Harvard members of the Arab Students Associations. Each wore black, silently holding signs with the names of the first 50 casualties in today's Palestine. On the opposite side of the Yard, a rally was under way supporting Israel for suffering yet another round of violence. I grew up an Orthodox Jew, spend a good deal of time in Jerusalem and identify deeply with my people. But with whom would I stand? Why were there separate rallies? In the end, I stood awkwardly in the middle holding a small sign that read, "I support life for Israelis and Palestinians."

Six years later, as people are wounded beyond recognition and dying beyond hope in Lebanon and Israel, I would rather not argue historical grievances, compare traumas, nor let my imagination run riot with messianic yearning. My temporarily defeated spirit wants to do away with public conversations that define Israel's war with Hezbollah as one between us vs. them.

At the core, most of us want to live in dignity and security. For the few pathologically evil people, there is little hope of repair. There are, teachers. There are hundreds more

however, many more of us than them and I cannot believe that war is inevitable. My aching heart knows that citizen diplomacy, among Christians, Jews and Muslims anywhere, would have helped limit the consequences of hate and fear by drying up the sea of sympathy around those who believe in violence. Framing the conflict in terms of us vs. them frustrates, if not completely kills, imaginative solutions.

lessened the likelihood of this war and now as it dies down. I would like to make attempts to reshape public discourse in ways that do not perpetuate polarization and unholy ideological traps. As my friend Yitzhak Frankenthal, founder of the Israeli and Palestinian Bereaved Families Forum puts it, "my son died because there is no peace."

Citizen diplomacy is not a collection saccharine inconsequential gestures but rather, they are powerful agents of confronting pain and then healing it. Recently, scores of imams and rabbis conversed and debated in Seville as part of a process sponsored by the French organization Hommes de Parole. Hartford Seminary offers newly created courses in Building Abrahamic Partnerships. The Coexistence Center of Amman just visited the Pluralism Project at Harvard University; Festive meals and text study at local mosques, churches and synagogues are increasing in frequency sponsored by the Center for Jewish-Muslim Relations in Boston. An American rabbi recently spoke before thousands of Muslims in Syria, and many Iraqi refugees who greeted him warmly even in the midst of war; Community service projects of the Interfaith Youth Core based in Chicago are catching on all over the US. The Israel Palestine Center for Research and Information provides peace education training for Palestinian and Israeli school

citizen initiatives like these that are the best kept secrets of peacemaking.

I know that privately many of my Jewish relatives, friends and colleagues are agonizing over Lebanese civilian deaths. Yet, most public statements by the Jewish community include only the slightest mention of Lebanese suffering. Because nearly everything in our public arena is framed as us vs. them, the discourse takes on a defensively Citizen diplomacy would have arrogant tone. A powerful air force does nothing to extinguish the existential terror of many Israelis and Jews. There is little undisturbed public space to reflect on the deep fear about Israel "being wiped off the face of the earth" (as Nasrallah and Ahmadinejad declare) and, at the same time, express what we really feel -- grief and despair over dead Lebanese women, children and men and profound uncertainty about how to fight a fatal threat.

Citizen diplomacy is not what my brother calls (with a funny mixture of deference and disdain) a "hug a terrorist program". It is rather an invitation to speak and act peaceably toward one another when the logic of war is so compelling. Citizen diplomacy is possible because nations are made up of people. Nations are not monoliths: "something large and immovable, something massive and unchanging and of uniform character and difficult to deal with on a human level" (Webster). Nations are a collection of many of us, the peaceable majority and, only a few of them, the irredeemably hateful minority. That is a root cause for hope.

Tamar Miller is a social entrepreneur in Cambridge, MA. USA; former codirector of the New Israel Fund/New England and former Executive Director of the Institute for Social and Economic Policy at Harvard University. This article is distributed by the Common Ground News Service (CGNews) and can be accessed at www.commongroundnews.org.

Yield of a woman's work

By: YemenTimes staff

omen play an integral role in the Development of

The legal framework and the sociopolitical environment of the country allows women to actively participate in productive activates with minimum complications. This legal framework includes civil service regulation, civil records, employment, social security, legal authorities and other government services that represent the legal basis to allow Yemeni women their political, economic and social rights as well as increase the participation of women in all aspects of civil life in the country.

However, studies indicate the participation of women in Yemen is far from its potential, mainly due to social constraints that limit the number of productive jobs women can take part in, as well as the high level of illiteracy among women reaching nearly 80 percent, Education and knowledge are the basis of value-added productivity, including primary and secondary education as well as higher education and vocational training, and women are being held back from reaching their productive potential.

Nevertheless, a national strategy administered by the Women's National Committee was laid out in order to develop women's roles in national economic development between 2003 and 2005. It was the first national strategy to integrate with various government agencies and sectors following the national population policies endorsed by the government. However, the outcome of this strategy was jeopardized by the demographic conditions of the country, as well as the economic deterioration which resulted in reduced investment in women.

Estimates indicate that female employment in agriculture reaches up to two thirds of all female employment, compared to the workforce average of just over 50 percent. In many locations of the country female labor in agriculture is considered free labor. Even in other sectors such as education and teaching, a profession deemed acceptable and popular among females in the Yemeni society, studies find that only a fifth of teachers in Yemen are

There are no official statistics on women's employment or economic output in Yemen, but employment in Yemen is divided into three main sectors. It starts with agriculture, 54 percent, followed by services, 34 percent

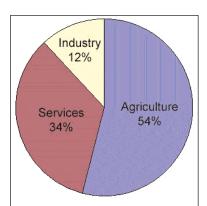


Chart: Workforce Employment

and lastly Industry, inclusive of manufacturing and oil-related sectors, at only 12 percent. However those statistics might be undermined by the fact that it does not take into consideration the employment of males and of females which might, in turn, portray a different picture on the economic activities of men and women and compare that to the yield of both genders.

Therefore, Yemen will not achieve the maximum potential if women are not encouraged to play a more active role in the economy, starting from increased investment in women's education and training to facilitate their work and active participation in the



Yemeni women working in agriculture may not get paid.

Yemen's housing industry

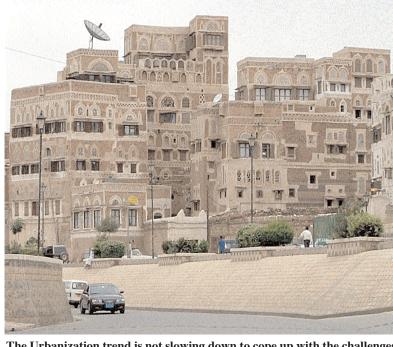
By: Raidan Al-Saqqaf

huge migrations from rural to urban in Yemen. demand for real estate is expanding rapidly and urban centers of the country witness tremendous growth as cities expand to host many new residents and expanding population. This reports aims at studying the trends in the Yemeni housing industry and the effects of its growth on real estate costs, land prices, constructions, infrastructure services, as well as investments and government policies in this regards.

The global trend of migration from rural to urban follows a number of complicated changes in economic activity, until four centuries ago the source of wealth was in land and through agricultural activity, thereafter the industrial revolution sparked considerable changes in wealth generation economics as activates in Iron and steel as well as manufacturing provided new means of wealth creation, creating with that hubs of industry jobs and income sources for many workers. This trend continued to develop in most of Western Europe and North America, followed by parts of Asia in the twentieth century, and now Yemen is catching up with the trend.

Forty Years ago, the main means of income generation was dominated by agriculture, with small numbers of people working in trade and services. However, with the emergence of new sources of income but those were limited to urban hubs which are the major cities in Yemen, such as Taiz, Aden and Sana'a, which attracted job seekers to work in various factories and in various services including the government. However, this issue wasn't planned for enough ahead of time, with that attraction came a fundamental problem, i.e. growth in the urban housing industry should at least accompany the growth of migration and population in urban centers.

The poor planning in Yemen's housing Industry results from lack of understanding of the size of the issue, as well as the poor coordination between the privet role and the public role in housing and



The Urbanization trend is not slowing down to cope up with the challenges of the housing industry in urban centers.

land market, and also in regulating the relationship between market players and owners of estate and those who wish to enter the market. This has resulted in making the housing problem a problem of affordability as a result of inadequate availability, making the cost of housing increase on timely bases due to the increased demand unmet by existing supply. Resulting in demand-motivated supply to exist through the purchase of new land and constructing new housing

Construction in itself will have a boom in turn, with the demand for civil engineers, construction workers and raw materials for construction increasing, prices of such materials in the view of the limited supply will accordingly increase, therefore increasing the size of the problem.

Another relevant issue is that construction works are rarely located at the areas that are most needed, as the center and more populous areas of Yemeni urban centers are in most cases misused by small and inefficient buildings of a few stories that can host a small number of residents with limited expansion space and capital to fund more efficient utilization of space.

Infrastructure is yet another obstacle to proper housing, as electricity networks and phone line services continue to expand, more fundamental infrastructure services such as sewage and proper roads are in short supply, seemingly the budgets allocated for infrastructure development are not enough to cope up with the increased demand.

The Urbanization trend is not slowing down to cope up with the challenges of the housing industry in urban centers; in fact it is accelerating and making those challenges even more complicated. What is needed are government policies in order to regulate the growth of the industry and also creating new housing projects to meet some of the demand. Regulation to ease financing of housing projects on the part of investors as well as to facilitate the purchase of houses for citizens.

Italy, first European country represented in SIE 2006

rade commissioners and representatives of companies different including Kuwait, Jordanian, Saudi Arabia, Egypt and other Arab countries were here in Sana'a to attend the second Sana'a International Exhibition last week. The exhibition, which was entitled "SIE 2006" was inaugurated by Minister of Industry and Trade and was also attended by international organsiations interested in trade and industry. It took place at the Apollo International Exhibition Co.between the 13 - 18 August, 2006 and was organised by the Indian Embassy in

The major goal will be to promote a better knowledge of Italy in Yemen companies to invest here, as agreed by the two governments on the occasion of the official visit to Yemen of the Italian Minister for Foreign Trade, Emma Bonino, at the end of June. During this visit it was also announced that the Italian Trade

Commission in Dubai will take charge promoting trade exchanges between Italy and the Yemen.

Italy was the only European country represented in the fair. Abdullah H. Al Sonidar & Sons, representing the Italian Caprari pumps; Adhban group, representing FIAT cars and the New Holland vehicles; Ashibami Corporation.

CVS Ferrari, CTE and the Green Power generators also participated in the fair and Al Bakri Corporation, representing the Lovato electrical products; Al-Radami Establishment, representing Angelica products. High-level executives International Steel Constructions were present at the fair.

The grand presence of Italian companies is an indication of the as well as to encourage Italian rising attention paid by Italian entrepreneurs to the Yemeni market and the continuously growing trade exchange between Italy and Yemen, whose significance is all the more exalted by the recurrence of the 80 anniversary of diplomatic relations between the two Countries.



Business in brief

Decree to force government officials to state their wealth

resident Saleh issued a decree to force government officials to state their wealth and total worth prior to holding any government posts. The decree is intended to result in reducing the widespread corruption within government circles.

714 cases of corruption in six months

he number of reported cases of corruption within the first six months of 2006 has reached 714 cases worth over YR1 billion. The Public Funds Court has also indicated that apart from the finances already known, the court has also frozen the assets of many other officials until enough evidence is gathered in accordance

Delegation to increase trade with South Africa

is Excellency Minister of Trade and Industry Khalid Sheikh has sent a Yemeni delegation to South Africa in order to study the possible export opportunities for Yemeni products. South Africa operates a Free Trade Zone to other countries in Africa especially those experiencing considerable economic growth.

Sugar Production Factory in Aden

he Hayel Saeed Anam investment and trade group has announced a plan to establish a sugar refining and production factory in Aden with established capital of \$US 100 million. The projected sugar production wil be annually one million tonnes. The project should create employment opportunities for local manpower as well as decrease Yemen's purchase of sugar from the international market, in turn saving foreign reserves.



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Yemen's natural gas: Who benefits?

reedom House recently noted the among world's most developing nations. With the personal interests of the ruling elite taking priority over national development, nearly half children are malnourished

Yemeni and out of school. Unemployment is high and medical services scarce. A looming water crisis threatens to destabilize the country. Claims of development are little more than government propaganda with the gap between the extremely rich and the extremely poor widening and infant

mortality remaining high year after

Atop the existing national crisis, experts predict Yemen's oil reserveswhich provide nearly 70% of governmental revenuesubstantially deplete within a decade. A natural gas project is under development. Yemen LNG (YLNG), the company responsible for producing and marketing Yemen's natural gas, will produce 6.7 million tons of natural gas annually for twenty years. Although the gas liquefaction plant and pipeline is 23% complete, concerns exist about sale prices, domestic allocation, and the project's local impact.

Sales prices

France's energy giant, Total SA is the major shareholder in YLNG with 39.6% and is in the lead on the project. Total has touted YLNG as "a giant gas project" and notes it as a main component of Total's future growth.

Yemen owns 21.73% of YLNG which estimates Yemen's profits to be \$10-20 billion over the twenty year span. US based Hunt Oil has a 17.22% ownership stake in YLNG. Assorted South Korean companies own 21.43%



Total SA had the concession to develop and market Yemen's gas

since 1997 but was unable to find any customers for nearly a decade. IN 2005 with worldwide demand for LNG surging, Total Gas and Power purchased two million tons of

natural gas per year for twenty years, about a third of proven reserves.

of YLNG.

Korean Gas Company (Kogas) purchased a 6% share of YLNG for \$104 million in a transaction negotiated by Yemen's Oil Ministry. Currently Kogas owns 8.88% of YLNG. Kogas (like Total) is also a customer, buying between 1.3-2 million tons a year. The remaining third of export production (2.5 million tons) was sold to Suez. Deliveries begin in 2008.

Yemeni parliamentarians have voiced concerns that the sales prices were under market levels. Joel Fort, the general manager of YLNG, dismissed those claims as "a legend." Mr. Fort at a press conference said Suez and Total Gas purchased the gas in accordance with international prices and the gas is intended for distribution in the US

Fears of collusion by YLNG, Total, it's subsidiary Total Gas and the Yemeni regime are not unfounded in light of the high level of regime corruption and Total's involvement in Iraq's massive "oil for food" scandal. Activists have charged Total uses forced labor in Burma and has wrought environmental devastation in the construction of Burma's Yadana

Total's corporate policy considers financial transparency "an absolutely fundamental issue" in developing countries. In keeping with this policy, Total notes on its website, "We disclose information on our activities in different countries." Yet Total has not

addressed the conflict of interest created by YLNG's sale to Total Gas nor has it disclosed the purchase price.

Another entity withholding information is the Yemeni government, which did not fully inform Parliament of the terms of the transactions. One member of the Parliaments Committee on Oil and Minerals said in a media statement that parliamentary members of President Saleh's ruling party, the GPC, were pressured to vote in support of the LNG sales without having full knowledge of the terms.

In a 2005 interview, Mr. Ali Ashal, Member of Parliament on the Oil and Minerals Committee, told the Yemen Times, "Total did not find us the best possible markets and prices as it is supposed to....It is said also that Total has bought also a share of our gas. How can it be a buyer and marketer at the same time? The Oil and Development Committee in Parliament has written to the Oil Ministry warning of the consequences of reaching any decisions regarding the gas project without Parliament being acquainted with the details."

While the sales to Total Gas and Suez are shrouded in mystery, Kogas has been much more transparent. International media have reported the purchase price to be just above \$3.00/MMBtu ex-ship. The price for natural gas in the US is around \$11/MMbtu for delivery January 2008. Current spot prices are near \$7/MMbtu according to the Henry Hub Index.

The South Korean Ministry for Commerce, Trade and Energy noted "the contract is 35-40% lower than existing contracts," with pricing at \$197-218 per ton, while current Korean contracts averaged \$322 per ton. Members of Parliament have also raised concerns about whether the contract's adjustments for exchange rate fluctuations are adequate.

While a few other LNG producers have sold their product at similar levels, Total's Gas Market Strategy



YLNG began constructing a new pipeline to run from the processing centers in Mahib to a liquefaction plant in Balhaf. The pipeline will run through 171 sites of archeological importance on its proposed 320km route.

prepared for stockholders in April 2006 predicts that demand for gas will increase at a rate of more than 2% a year through 2030. In fact, global demand for LNG rose 9% in 2005. Total's report predicts "a sharp increase in gas prices," noting "average spot gas prices multiplied by 3 since 2000." With Total predicting higher prices through two decades, YLNG's low price to Kogas is, at a minimum, poor marketing.

The government of Malta posted an article on its website calling the transaction "extremely favorable" to Kogas. The article noted the deal was struck at a time when oil prices were rising and Kogas's price is less than 30% indexed to the price of oil. Historically, the price of natural gas has been strictly indexed to the price of oil. It is a sorry state of affairs when the government of Malta has more details about the sale of Yemeni gas than the Yemeni Parliament or public.

Domestic consumption

Much of the gas being exported is needed for local consumption. Yemen's electric generating and distribution capacity is currently vastly deficient in meeting the Yemeni public's electrical needs. Less than one-third of households in Yemen have access to electricity from the national power grid. In rural areas, only 13% of the population does. Most cities have regular rolling blackouts. Yemen's electricity shortage, in addition to impacting quality of life, has a negative impact on economic development and foreign investment. Yemen's electrical requirements will grow substantially as Yemen's population of twenty million is expected to double in less than 25

The Yemeni government estimated gas reserves were over 16 trillion cubic feet (tcf) and this figure has been widely reported. Yemen's proven reserves of natural gas are only 10.3 tcf, produced by Hunt Oil during oil production in oil block 18, Marib. In 2005, the Yemeni government failed to renew Hunt's agreements on block 18, and Hunt subsequently charged Yemen with expropriation. Block 18 is now operated by a state run concern. Of the 10.3 tcf of certified proven reserves, 9.1 tcf has been sold and 1 tcf has been allocated for the local market.

However, the nation requires three times that amount to satisfy its needs for electricity through 2020. According to the Ministry of Electricity and Water, 1650 megawatts of new electricity generating capacity are needed to satisfy demand by 2020. This would require 3 tcf of natural gas. Other estimates which include energy needed for desalination of water have placed Yemen's gas needs through 2020 at 5 tcf. With the regime selling its 90% of its proven natural gas reserves, Yemen will have to buy energy internationally

for domestic consumption. Prime Minster Bajammal had assured Parliament that sufficient reserves remained after the export sales to satisfy local needs.

Local impact

YLNG's "Yemenization" program will create only about 600 permanent jobs for Yemenis over twenty years. Some temporary jobs will be available during the two years of pipeline construction. Media reports have stated that the LNG project will create 10,000-15,000 jobs for Yemenis while YLNG uses the term "several thousand" on its website. Mr. Fort in an interview with the Yemen Times said that "many" jobs would be created during the pipeline construction period and "several hundred" permanent positions were available for Yemeni citizens. YLNG has selected 650 trainees from 16,000 applicants and less than 200 are in training currently.

The Balhaf plant and pipeline will be large by international standards and may result in the destruction of some archeological sites. YLNG has begun constructing a new 320 KM pipeline that runs from the processing centers in Marib to the liquefaction plant at Balhaf harbor. A pipeline already exists but according to YLNG, using the existing pipeline would require "expanding the security zone." The route of the new pipeline runs through 171 sites of archeological importance, most of them dating back to the Bronze Age. YLNG's experts have deemed two sites "scientifically significant." YLNG may divert the pipeline around the two sites but if that is not practical, the two sites have been surveyed and photographed in the event they are damaged or destroyed by the pipeline construction.

Local fishermen who harvested large quantities of fish in Balhaf harbor will be displaced by the liquefaction plant. YLNG is providing some compensation to both residents and fishermen who will be impacted by construction, although there is some confusion, YLNG's Environmental and Social Impact Assessment (ESIA) notes, "All of the data obtained to date on livelihoods in the Project affected regions is difficult to reconcile." Balhaf was selected in part because a substantial corral reef eliminated the need for a breakwater, and YLNG is building a breakwater in another location for the displaced fishermen.

The long term effects on the marine ecosystem and Yemen's fishing industry are unclear. The ESIA classified the large corral reef as "regionally significant" "endangered." The ESIA noted Balhaf's corral reef is a nursery for commercial fish. YLNG has stated "a small amount" of corral will be destroyed during construction but has not provided estimates. The harbor and pipeline have been designed to run

through "less sensitive" corral areas. The ESIA noted the presence of sea turtles in Balhaf harbor but did not observe any turtle eggs. The plant will discharge heated water into sea but the ESIA maintains that it will not have a "significant" impact on water temperature in the highly sensitive Balhaf region. A proposed Coastal Zone Management Plan included part of Balhaf as protected marine zone. The ESIA noted that in discussions with YLNG, the Environmental Protection Agency has indicated that Balhaf will be designated a general use

YLNG plans to make a financial contribution toward implementation of the Coast Zone Management Plan. It says it plans to implement some much needed community development programs, but the extent to which YLNG will put some real muscle into working with the local communities remains to be seen.

Conclusion

Yemen's natural gas project is central to Yemen's economic development, but only if strict corruption controls are implemented and transactions are made with transparency and in the best interest of the Yemeni people.

The Yemeni regime repetitively under reports the projected revenue of oil sales in the annual budgets, often by 30% or more. The actual revenue is not publicly known and there is no end of year reconciliation. The differential is allocated to a "special account" and effectively vanishes. Twenty years of oil production in Yemen have done little to raise the standard of living for the Yemeni people. The coming 20 years of gas production may do little

Like some developing resource-rich countries, the Yemeni regime maintains authority through bribery and military might, rather than through growthoriented economic policies. Typical of this "resource curse" syndrome, Yemen has high corruption and low investment in education. Economic diversification is stunted by governmental neglect, other industries are largely uncompetitive, and the regime is content with its dependency on the export of natural resources. One way economists suggest the syndrome can be avoided is to distribute the profits from the sales of natural resources directly every citizen, which - beyond being inherently just - would assist in developing private enterprise and diversifying the economy. With regard to Yemen's natural gas reserves, it remains to be seen if President Saleh's regime is operating in the best interests of the Yemeni people or based on the personal interests of regime key players. Early indications are not good.

Jane Novak (jane.novak@gmail.com) is an American journalist and political

REPUBLIC OF YEMEN PUBLIC WORKS PROJECT CONSULTING SERVICES REQUIRED FOR EXPRESSIONS OF INTEREST **REVISED / EXTENSION**

The government of Yemen has received financing from the World Bank toward the cost of the Public Works Project, and intends to apply part of the proceeds for consultant services. The services include:

- 1. Validate current base-line data so as to measure various outputs and outcome performance indicators
- 2. Conduct Socio-Economic Impact Assessments:
 - a. Physical objectives, in terms of infrastructure to be constructed and delivered to beneficiaries / concerned agencies; and
 - b. Socio-economic objectives, in terms of alleviating poverty through the generation of increased employment and improving community livelihoods through better pubic services (particularly, services of direct need to women and children).
 - **PWP improved procedures** and extent to which recommendations of the previous SIA were incorporated in aspects of improved data collection, social and environmental aspects.

The Public Works Project now invites eligible individuals to indicate their interest in providing the services. Interested individuals must provide information indicating that they are qualified to perform the services (brochures, description of similar assignments, experience in similar conditions, availability of appropriate skills among staff, etc.).

Consulting firms are also encouraged to participate through submitting profiles of their staff they think would meet the required criteria.

A consultant will be selected in accordance with the procedures set out in the World Bank's Guidelines: Selection and Employment of Consultants by World Bank Borrowers (current edition) Selection of **Individual Consultants.**

Interested consultants may obtain further information at the address below during office hours 8:00 am

Expressions of interest must be delivered to the address below by [September 10, 2006].

Attn: Saeed Abdo Ahmed **Project Director**

2nd turning on left of 20m Rd west 60m Rd, Telephone + 967-1-407354/407358, facsimile: 407353

e-mail: pwp-yem@y.net.ye P.O. Box: 18316 Sana'a – Yemen

Hadramout University says no to Syrian education system

Interview by: Sa'eed Al-Batati

How do you find the university after assuming the post of the rector?

At the outset, no one denies the effort of the university's former leadership, but the task set before us is to develop what is available and suggest solutions to any persistent problems.

People who ran the university before us had pursued the Syrian system of teaching that is maintaining the Arabic Language and making it one of the primary subjects even in scientific specializations. The Syrian system of schooling tends to translate the scientific materials from other languages into Arabic, as the Syrians don't have their own scientific syllabuses.

When we evaluated the educational process at the university, we found that students, particularly those enrolled in the Faculty of Engineering, were studying poor courses in Arabic. We paid closer attention to assessing the university syllabuses and examining their convenience with real-life situation, as soon as we took office in September 2003. We then issued decisions on generalizing the learning of English to help students obtain information from their real sources better than having an access to information via translated books.

How do you assess the university education throughout Yemen?

I think the university education in the country started to improve after excluding political activities from university platforms.

Hadramout University is the first one to cancel the Faculty of Education. Can you say why?

Let me tell you that we did not cancel faculties of education; rather we developed them in a way that links the university with market demands. This view was not confined to education faculties, but it included all education-

al and scientific faculties as the curricula were evaluated, in addition to other educational means.

Before its development, Faculty of Education was a mixture of arts and science as well as other educational subjects such as teaching methodology, psychology and other subjects. Unfortunately, these subjects were taught at the cost of the primary subjects. When these subjects are mixed together, they make the student graduate after four years while he is not qualified enough to teach the primary subjects.

The first step we made was to divide the faculty of education into two faculties, faculty of arts and faculty of science. Later on, we built up the curriculum and students can get a B.A or B.Sc, thus enabling them to work in their own field with high competence. Those wishing to join the education sector have to attend courses for an additional year in order to study requirements for primary subjects such as methods and psychology. These qualified graduates will replace those coming from abroad. This project was adopted by other universities and this is what we pride.

When meeting with a number of Medicine and Engineering students, most of them expressed dissatisfaction with the practical side on the part of students enrolled at the faculty of petroleum engineering who did not work with oil though they belong to a governorate rich with in oil. How do you comment on this? What is said about the lack of practice in the university is not correct. Now. we have labs worth \$ 2.3 million. They are among the most advanced labs. We bought the same equipment available at European universities. Additionally, we adopted strong curricula in English and brought teachers with rare specializations. All these things cost a great deal.

It is true that we have trouble in how to make teachers adapt to using English as the media of instruction. Yet, we believe they can surmount these difficulties via contact with other teachers. Any one paying a visit to the Faculty of Engineering now is due to appreciate the way things go on.

Hadramout University is one of the rich universities and the luckiest among Yemeni universities in terms of receiving government support and having a board of trustees including prominent businesspersons. Is this information correct?

Hadramout University is not rich, but as the university was established, people believed that it is the richest one. The university's budget is small compared to Sana'a University where the paid-seat program contributes more than YR 1 billion to its budget per year. If I had this money, I would have made Hadramout University one of the best educational institutions. We cannot deny the role played by the council of trustees in supporting the university, but what does matter is how to establish relations with others.

What are the difficulties facing the academic work at the university?

There are difficulties facing each project. At Hadramout University, we have some goals we are working hard to reach. One of the goals is to improve skills of the teaching staff by giving them scholarships to attend programs abroad and let them contact outside professors.

We had been lacking a hospital for the university, but now we were gifted Prince Sultan University Hospital, one of the biggest hospitals throughout the country.

Why doesn't Hadramout University have media and economics faculties and do you have a plan to establish



such faculties?

We hope to have all the faculties, but we have priorities in line with our facilities and plan to establish these in light of the economic profit. Any department is established according to the educational planning in the country. As there is a media faculty at Sana'a University, which meets the demands of the country for media graduates, there is no need to establish another media faculty at Hadramout University.

What are the reasons for petroleum companies' refusal to recruit Hadramout University graduates and what solutions do you suggest to prevent reoccurrence of the problem in the future?

We inherited this problem from our successors. The university graduates, particularly those who graduated from the Faculty of Petroleum, were not good in English. Petroleum companies refused to recruit the university graduates under the pretext that they are not good at English and no one could blame them.

We have sought funding resources to retrain these graduates with English. Later on, English teaching institutes opened and invited native speakers to teach. Then, we contacted Americans, British and Canadians and established the Canadian Institute at the university to retrain graduates with English. Realizing the significance of English, we generalized it in all the faculties at the university.

Some Hadramout University students in Malaysia appealed to the Minister of Higher Education and Scientific Research to make them equal to students sent by other Yemeni universities in monthly allocations. They say they only get \$ 600 per month while other students receive \$ 2,000 to 3,000. Is it correct?

The students you are talking about were sent for scholarships via Sheikh Abdullah Ahmad Baqshan and not via the government and there is a difference in terms of allocations between the first group and the second. The government increased salaries recently by 20 percent and it helped raise allocations for its scholars, but this did not happen on the part of scholars sent by Sheikh Baqshan.

What is the women's share of education at Hadramout University and do traditions and habits affect female student's enrolment?

There is no difference between males and females at the university. What was said about traditions and customs is not right and is outdated. Female students enrolled in Hadramout University constitute 40 percent of the overall number of students and I appreciate female students occupying the topmost ranks in their classes.

What are your plans to make Hadramout University a distinctive educational institution?

Teaching in compliance with modern means is the base for improving the performance of the university, coupled with supplying students with modern labs and encouraging teachers to attend educational conferences. We work hard to make education qualitative to help students compete in the labour market in and outside our country. We don't want Hadramout University graduates to be taxi drivers.

What is your advice to students via the Yemen Times?

I want students to devote most of their time to learning and to pay closer attention to their specializations. A student enrolled in the Faculty of Engineering has to devote all his or her effort and so do physicians and other specialists. If you seek success, you have to concentrate on your specialization.

University History

Hadramout University for Science and Technology is a governmental institution, its official inauguration was Feb 8, 1996. Tts faculty of petroleum engineering was opened before other faculties. Now there are 7300 male and female students enrolled in 13 faculties at the university. Ali Hood Baabbad was the rector of the university until 2003 when Ahmad Omar Bamashmous, the current rector, took up the position.

Interview with Elif Shafak

"In Turkey, a novel is a public statement"

Elif Shafak's latest novel, "The Bastard of Istanbul", has been tremendously well received in Turkey. However, Shafak is now facing a trial for "denigrating Turkishness" – because of comments made by one of her characters in the novel.

Interview by: Lewis Gropp

After having already tried to, unsuccessfully, sue Orhan Pamuk for "denigrating of Turkishness", Turkey's prominent and infamous right-wing lawyer, Kemal Kerinsciz has now filed a lawsuit against you. In how far are liberal intellectuals in Turkey networked to resist right-wing, nationalist pressure, how do they support one another?

Elif Shafak: Unfortunately the liberal intellectuals are not as good at combining forces as the ultranationalists. I liken the Turkish society to a tapestry of clashing and coexisting forces. The liberal intellectuals do indeed constitute a weighty force in this context, but oftentimes they fail to work together.

Unlike the state and the bureaucracy, both the media and the civil society is multilayered and composed of multiple actors. Thus, these ultranationalists do not represent the majority of Turkish society. Their number is small and yet their voices are so loud. There is an ongoing clash of opinions. On the one hand are the ones who want Turkey to join the EU, democratize further and become an open society. These are the ones who support the reforms and question the status quo.

On the other hand are the ones who want to keep Turkey as an insular, xenophobic, nationalistic, enclosed society. And precisely because things are changing in the opposite direction, the panic and backlash produced by the latter group is becoming more visible and audible.

You have stated that the Turkish language has become a battleground. Is the country in the middle of a "kulturkampf", a cultural struggle, and if so, what role is the Islamist government playing?

Shafak: Culture was the cement of the "nation-building process" in Turkey. After 1920s, the homogenization, Turkification and centralization of culture were at the top of the Kemalist elite's political agenda. In order to be

able to establish a new state the reformist elite first and foremost created a new language and culture. In time Ottoman words were discarded, Sufi words were taken out.

As for the other side of the coin, both the government and the conservative forces in the society aim at venerating the Ottoman past, at the expense of critical thinking. There is a duality: the modernists Kemalists are future-oriented and pay no attention to the past and historical continuities. The conservatives, on the other hand, in the endeavor to value all that was devalued by the reformists, have made the past unquestionable. Both are reductionists, in my opinion.

Your novels are drawing on a wealth of literary resources, and you have purposefully employed Ottoman language in them. Would you say that Ottoman language culture was more pluralist and richer than today's Turkish? Has the Kemalist language revolution "flattened" the linguistic varieties the Ottoman Empire provided?

Shafak: Ottoman language and culture was much more multilingual, multicultural and multireligious. It was, after all, a multiethnic empire, widely extended and deeply varied. I am one of the very few authors who openly criticizes the Turkification of our language. I use a lot of old words and Sufi concepts in addition to new ones. That is why my linguistic style has upset many among the Kemalist elite.

I think in time we became more intolerant and bigoted regarding "cosmopolitanism". In the late Ottoman era there were for instance woman writers writing in both Turkish and English and French. That was considered normal.

Today, I am being extensively criticized for writing fiction in English. Many see this as a "betrayal", as if I am betraying my language and therefore my

nation.

Atatürk had introduced a rigid nationalism in order to safeguard

Turkey's political stability with an iron fist policy. At the same time, he was also a bold reformer who admired Europe for its cultural achievements and wanted Turkey to profit from them. So does Turkey have any post-Kemalist intellectuals that promote a moderate nationalism while, at the same time, rejecting the chauvinist-nationalist excesses we're currently witnessing? In other words: in order to be an intellectual in Turkey today, do you have to be liberal and left-wing?

Shafak: Not necessarily. There are intellectuals left and right, sometimes collaborating, sometimes clashing head-on. By and large to be an "intellectual" is an important public role in Turkey. In this sense we are closer to the French tradition rather than the British tradition. An intellectual has a public role here. There are, however, glass barriers when it comes to gender and age. It is not a coincidence that the intelligentsia is mostly composed of men above middle age. To be a woman and to be young is a disadvantage.

In a country like Turkey, a novel is first and foremost a public statement and a novelist is always more than a novelist. In the interviews I give in Turkey I talk more about politics than aesthetics or art. In Turkey novelists are public figures. As a result, we have a writer-oriented literary world rather than writing-oriented. Literary criticism has remained feeble but the criticism of writers has soared. We are either loved or hated.

Ironically, it is under the Islamist government of Erdogan that Turkey that far-reaching social, political, and economic reforms were introduced. The country has taken major steps towards Europe within the past few years. How do you think can deeprooted fears of identity that were induced by these changes be alleviated?

Shafak: I personally do not label the AKP government "Islamist". I think we need another concept to define them – either "Muslim democrats", like



Elif Shafak: "The feedback I received from people of different walks, extending from leftists, minorities, Kurds, housewives, mystics, Alevis to headscarved female students has been very, very positive"

Christian democrats, or perhaps "Muslim conservative party". But "Islamist" can be quite confusing.

It is true that major steps have been taken by this government in terms of accelerating Turkey's EU bid. They supported the EU process more wholeheartedly than the conventional political and military elite who wanted to keep the status quo intact. At the same time the world is becoming increasingly polarized.

People on both sides draw cultural frontiers. In such a framework it is extremely important for Turkey and the EU to prove that yes, indeed Islam and Western democracy can coexist. It is important to blur the boundaries that many people dangerously take for granted.

"The Bastard of Istanbul" is the second novel you have written in English; your first novels were all written in your native tongue. Do you think the attacks on your book would have been less severe had you written it in Turkish?

Shafak: It is a whole package. When you choose to write in English, "the language of imperialism", some people

get all the more annoyed and reactionary. This kind of knee-jerk inflexibility can come from both leftists and right-wing.

That said, I also would like to add that, although the novel was difficult to digest for some people, in general, the reception in the society and media has been very positive. The novel has become a bestseller and sold more than 50,000 copies and was discussed, circulated and read freely. I gave numerous readings, talks, book signings all over Turkey, extending from Y'zmir to Divarbaky'r. The feedback I received from people of different walks, extending from leftists, minorities, Kurds, housewives, mystics, Alevis to headscarved female students has been very, very positive.

Interestingly, the hate messages that I received mostly came from Turks living abroad. The Turks living abroad as immigrants can be much more nationalist and conservative and rigid-minded than the Turks in Turkey.

Your new novel deals with the Armenian tragedy. Do you know of any other Turkish novel who has explicitly dealt with the issue?

Shafak: There are traces here and there but for decades and decades, Turkish literature has been startlingly silent in this issue.

How much research have you been doing in preparation for the novel?

Shafak: I wrote this novel while teaching and living in the USA. In addition to doing my own research, I also collected oral histories, watched documentaries and interviews, talked to numerous Armenians in the Diaspora, visited many Armenian homes, and had the chance to observe both the Turks and the Armenians in the USA.

I am a Turkish writer and wherever I go I will take those cultural traces with me. And yet at the same time, my writing is nomadic and I want to surpass national and nationalistic boundaries. The boundaries of a nation-state do not constitute the boundaries of my imagination.

Where do you think are the limits to freedom of expression? Would you want to see novels banned that promote, for instance, racial hatred, terrorism, the superiority of men over women or other silly and uncivilized ideas?

Shafak: I do not want to see novels being banned for even outrageous reasons, such as racism. "The written word" should be free to circulate. Human individuals are not sheep that can be guided as designed by an invisible hand. Readers should have the right to but whichever book they want, to read it and then to make their own mind about it. Oppression only yields to further subjugation.

The novel has originally been written in English, and is to be published by Viking Press in spring 2007. Why is it taking so long to get the English version onto the market?

Shafak: The two literary markets operate so differently. The literary world in Turkey is smaller but more dynamic and flexible. The one in the USA, though larger and robust, can be confined in other ways. Yet, on a separate note, the novel being so critical and controversial for the Turks, I too wanted to have the novel published in Turkey and Turkish first because it was important to me to see the reaction of the Turkish readership first.







The Youth Forum section is an uncensored space for youth-related issues written by Yemen Times readers.

Tom and Jerry

By: Afrah Nasser afrah.nasser@yahoo.com

have this strong feeling of unconanger towards the West which leads me to find unusual ways of expressing myself," I bet those were the words of the people who attempted recently to bomb British airplanes. I find their attempt to be a desperate, but normal, way to make the world see the longlasting damage done to Arab's

As the old saying goes "violence leads to violence" and therefore we can see where this world is going!

morale.

Are we in the forest where the most powerful eat thos weaker? Are we really animals? These days nothing is okay. We seem to reverse obvious facts and always find a way to confuse intentions of all types of religion and sectarianism.

The bombers claim is this is the birth of a new middle east! As long as there is no logic r sense of justice, and just a continuing dominance of selfishness, I bet no one will be in peace.

Despair, anger, rage, and resentment can turn into unpleasant actions. Nevertheless, some have a strong believe that we should see how good it gets. Tom and Jerry is who we are!! You decide who plays Tom and who plays Jerry.

How do I live without qat?!

By: Mohammed Albadani Katyouwe1@yahoo.com

told my friend that I ever never chew qat, but I still think I am living. Actually, I do not know the kind of life he was talks

I ask qat chewers: What is the benefit of chewing Qat? They all reply with the same answer which is: Chewing qat is "another life." Maybe there is an imaginary life they claim, but every one of us prefers living in fantasy where we are free from problems such as fighting, war and bloodshed. But this kind of life destroys the real one which Allah created. As he said in His Holy Quran, talking to his angles, "I will create a

successor on the earth (Allah, the greatest, spoke the truth)."

My Indian professor analyzed the average working hours for Yemeni's and found it is just two to three hours per day. He said the only reason for this is chewing qat. And Afaf Sho'eib, the Egyptian actress, posed the question, "If 99 percent of the Yemenis chew gat ,then who will build the country?'

Most catastrophic is when the "devil tree" became more important than families. Many times I hear workers in the morning start their praying for Allah to help them gain some money that day. Do you know what for? The answer will be wrong when one says for buying food for their families or medicine for the sick.

money for buying qat. Moreover, when the Yemenis meet each other the first question is always, "Did you buy qat and where are you going to

Most heartbreaking in Yemen is that when you ask someone about his family or about circumstances, his answer must be, "If there is money to buy qat, everything will be okay." He means that everything other than qat is not important.

Finally, we hope it would not be correct when the American ambassador in Yemen stated one day that Yemen will not improve. (O Allah, we pray to you, do not make the world gloat over our grief.)

Tell me once love

By: Al naggar Tariq al_naggar_2005@yahoo.com

> Tell me one time Unless I do crime A word expresses love Give a hint or write in

glove By mouth, say it For me never to forget

Thus giving me even a clue Your eyes narrate

So loudly do I love you

lots I will pay whatever costs

Gifting heart is possible But only waiting for acceptable

Tell me once love I will fly like a dove

I am nothing without you

By: Naesa Mohamed

I am nothing without you. I became as a flower without water.

Let me be between your arms, Let me put my head on your shoulder I can feel your sensation, When I am between your hands; I feel as if I was born again, come and embrace me, Don't let me alone

I'm drown in your deep sea, I can't float without you; don't let me alone. I need you very much.

Thank you doctors and teachers

By: Amira Abdullah Al-Haddad

did not find a chance better than this to tell you about some of wonderful aspects which we all respect in you. I want to thank you for all your precious time which you spend with us in the lectures or in your rest time.

You never say "No" to any seeker of your knowledge.

Thanks because you do not sit on your chair during the lectures. You are always moving from one place to another, making sleep run away from our eyes and minds.

Thanks because your thoughts are always orderly and clear. You

never spoil the lessons by telling us things you are not sure about. You take care that all information we get from you is clear, simple,

Thanks because in your lectures we study, laugh and even cry. You always find a hundred ways to make the lesson simple, interesting and helpful. You tell us jokes, stories, idioms, proverbs and lessons from life. I really thank you because you treat us as your sons and daughters. You make it easier for us to communicate with you and correct our mistakes.

Finally, I would like to thank every one who has helped with one single word: "Thanks."

Lebanon: A potential Hollywood production

By: Kamal Alhirdi kamalalhirdi@yahoo.com

f interested you are in outdoing the classic Shakespearian movie stories and winning the Oscar nomination for the best . Hollywood movie production or being the Newsmaker of the Year then now is the time to get down to work! Come up with a movie idea – the title I suggest is "The Dishonorable Warriors" – it will certainly be viewed by all creatures besides humankind!

At movie theaters across the world. you would find viewers yelling, "Long live" for the honorable warrior who struggles courageously, fights honorably, and wins eventually. Likewise, people of different races, different religions are now yelling, "Long Live" for

18 Authoritative rule

19 Southern constellation

25 Part of the small intestine

30 India's first prime minister

39 Heroic in scale, moviewise

46 Gave a negative review to

48 They stay ahead of heels 50 Sound investments?

24 Word in a John Lennon tune title

26 David Robinson was one in col-

29 One for whom play means work

23 Hospital staffer, e.g.

28 Japanese flavorings

31 Liqueur flavoring

32 Chops into cubes

33 Editor's markings

35 Unopened bloom

40 Non-computer chip?

37 Samovar, e.g.

45 Actress Moore

51 Flange

every child, woman, and man in mind have no mind at all as they are Lebanon who stands firm and fights in defense of their land, freedom, and dig-

In the deliberate absence of movie directors and producers, Israeli's insane troops murder in cold blood the innocent souls of children, God's symbols of compassion and tenderness. Could you imagine how hard life would be to parents losing the smiling faces of their kids? They also murder spouses - the full meaning of life. In addition, senior citizens are being executed under the Israeli's heavy bom-

Israeli's troops do not fight honorably; they strike civilians, demolish public utilities, tear personal properties down and level everything to the ground. Those troops and their masterwalking and forcing others onto the path of complete destruction. On the other hand, Israel seems to

lack logical thought because they don't realize the consequences of their barbarian attacks against Lebanon. They might have studied the option of involving their people in this openended war, they must have miscalculated the hope for peace because it is quite logical and justified for Lebanese people along with all freedom seekers to fight and fight until their last breath – especially when they have nothing left to live for.

Anyway, history repeats itself and teaches us that a despotic power is condemned to collapse; and courageous people will- at any cost- eventually win

Universal Crossword

ACROSS

- 1 Word on a cornerstone, perhaps 5 Gift from China
- 10 Kind of loser
- 14 Car sound
- 15 Therapeutic plants
- 16 Like a world-famous office
- 17 Stops shouting
- 20 Gave to another for care
- 21 Rear for rear, perhaps 22 Lawyers' grp.
- 23 Hearty brew
- 24 Kipling novel
- 27 Balkan republic (Var.)
- 31 Classified fodder
- **34** Out for the accused **36** Type of tea
- 37 Combat outfit 38 Increases the chance for a sale
- 41 Newsman Roger 42 Indigent

- 43 First symptoms, e.g.
- 44 '70s White House kid 45 Throw a monkey wrench into,
- e.g. 47 Sibilant sound

52

- **Edited by Timothy E. Parker**
- 48 Dry, in Napa 49 Sound of satisfaction
- 51 Salts used medicinally
- 54 Largest city of Laos
- 60 Rejects a bid
- 62 It bonds models
- 63 Pointed arch
- 64 Place for dinars
- 65 Certain salamanders
- 66 Lessened
- 67 Absorbs gravy with bread, e.g.

- 1 With the wherewithal
- 2 Atomic number 10 3 Eye used in spooky recipes
- 4 Phantom's passion 5 Where the Danube meets the Inn
- 6 Words with "Thanks" 7 All alternative
- 8 Transfer document
- 9 Sure-footed animal
- 10 Honorary Shawnee

"COME ON DOWN" by Cole Cooke

- 11 Roman love poet
- 12 Census form query
- 13 Red or Cardinal, for short
- 53 Hare's tail 54 Old Chevy **55** Words with the doctor
 - 56 Residential overhang

59 Seashore sights 61 When do we want it?

52 Ill-gotten gains

57 Voluminous do 58 Tide of minimum range

31 32 33

58

PREVIOUS PUZZLE ANSWER







Yemen's first and most widely-read English-language newspaper

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Despite age, Al-Ashmour district forts remain inhabited

By: Saddam Al-Ashmori

another 105 years in order to stay in this fort," said Hajj Hussein Al-Naghib, who still lives in Al-Kuber Fort. "My children built new and modern houses outside the fort, but I refuse to live with them because I like living in my house inside the fort," he

Al-Kuber Fort is located in Al-Ashmour district, west of Amran governorate. Al-



Ashmour district is 125 km. In Al-ashmour the old forts may look ruined, but the unconquerable homes still have some families inside.



famous for its unique and unconquerable forts as well as their exceptional architecture. Although most were built six centuries ago, they have been and remain standing and inhabited.

Besides Al-Kuber Fort, other forts like Halamlam, Shara'ei and Al-Darb were built sometime between the 14th and 15th centuries. These forts were built in a similar design because they were

built on hard-to-reach areas, with three inaccessible sides, while the fourth was accessible as the only gate through which inhabitants could enter and leave the fort. A wall was built around the three inaccessible sides, while the fourth contained a door that was closed at night.

Within every fort was a building slightly taller than the others, built in a rounded manner, and used for grain storage. Additionally, every fort wall and building had small holes for observing the movements of the enemy or those outside the fort and above the fort's main door was a small hole enabling the guard to see who was knocking.

Mosques were built outside the forts and pools dug beside them to provide water. Further, upper pools stored water for various uses. Whenever there was a water shortage in the lower pools, outlets were opened in the upper ones to fill the lower ones.

While wandering about the fort,

also noticeable is a tunnel through which water passed into the fort, thus enabling its inhabitants to have water for prayer and other uses if the fort came under siege.

The fort was divided into zones and every zone belonging to a certain family was fortified and equipped with a strong door. The zone incorporating the fort's center belonged to the family to which the fort's sheikh belonged. This zone had the largest diwan (a place able to hold all inhabitants during meetings, weddings, consultancies and receiving guests) and the sheikh had the keys to it.

The fort's ground floors were allocated for sheep, cows and other domestic animals and some were used for such animals' food or as horse stables, particularly at the fort's gate.





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