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Inside: ▶



5

Gas cylinders: Everyday risk



8

Aleppo, Capital of Islamic Culture 2006

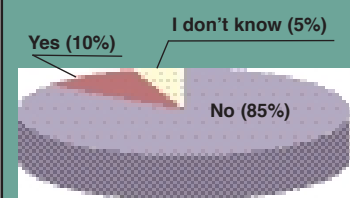


10

Medication smuggling ...Who is responsible?

Readers' Voice

Last edition's question:
Will the recently drafted Anti-Corruption Law help stop the corruption phenomenon in Yemen?



This edition's question:

Should the Yemeni government jail and charge the released Guantanamo Prison detainees?

- Yes
- No
- I don't know

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yementimes.com/#poll
and have your voice heard

Moving towards more rights for children



The Yemeni Labor Code gives working women, if more than 50 in a company, the right to child care. Above, working women in Al-Sabeen Hospital check on their babies during their break. The number of kindergartens reached 244 in 2005, 178 are private while the number of enrolled children reached 17,574, around 7886 of them are in private nurseries.

By: Khalil Al-Khaubari

SANA'A, Jan. 5 — The government is hoping to bring key children's right to the forefront with the first consultation meeting for discussing the draft of the first following up report 2006 concerning the level of implementing the International Children Rights Treaty.

The meeting recommends updating the children's database and statistics, establishing an observing system for the violations against children, increasing the human and financial support for the children concerned authorities.

The meeting was sponsored by the Higher Council for Motherhood & Childhood in cooperation with Save the Children Sweden.

"Before this extended and complicated meeting we used to make a small teamwork by the end of each year collects the information from the concerned authorities and make these information as the base of our national report," said Ali Saleh Abdullah, the Deputy Minister of Job and Social Affairs.

As the children's issues are almost confined to the table discussions for the periodic reports presented to the international committee, the implementing of these discussion's recommendations remains the big challenge for authorities concerned with child welfare.

"Children issues must have the priority in the development project for the goal of development is human being and childhood is the first and most important stage of human formation," said Saleh.

Yemen has presented three periodic reports to the International Committee

since it approved the International Children Rights Treaty in 1991. The recommendations of each report remained the same.

"In Dec. 2005, we discussed the third report and found that the recommendations are still the same for the previous reports so we decided to make a plane work where every concerned ministry participate in order to achieve the possible amount of these recommendation," said Abdul Rahman Ali, a national expert in children rights. "Today we came to see what the concerned authorities have done in term of implementing the plan's goals"

According to the report's draft the Yemeni government made a total revision for the national laws concerning children. These laws are related with children rights, juvenile's custody, military crimes and punishment, crime and punishment law, marital status law and prison organization law.

A committee of legal specialists along with national and international experts made changes to the law concerned with providing legal protection for children, hardening the punishments on the law breakers, enhancing the agreement between the national constituents and international treaties approved by the Yemeni government.

Concerning sexual exploitation of children the report says there is no available statistic on this regard because due to prominent social customs the number of sexual violations against children could not be recorded in hospitals and health care centers.

A study by the Higher Council for

Motherhood & Childhood received accusations as the most violating means toward children inside and outside the home with an average of 76 percent and sexual violations 17.9 percent and now the council is preparing a complete study on the sexual exploitation of children. Child trafficking is a widely problem in the last years in Yemen for a number social and economic reasons, according to the report.

Continued on page 2

Dr. Ahlam Saleh Bin Breik: "I decided to study medicine the day my younger sister died because of diarrhea in front of my eyes."

She is a medical doctor, a university professor, a community activist, a wife and a mother of four, three boys and a girl. She manages the most difficult balance any woman can encounter: a successful marriage, a good career and a fulfilling community role. This is why Yemen Times has selected Dr. Ahlam Bin Breik as Yemen Times Person of the Year 2006.



Dr. Ahlam Bin Breik
Yemen Times Person of the Year 2006

Interviewed by:
Nadia Al-Sakkaf

Every year, Yemen Times selects one person whose efforts in making Yemen a better place are commendable and deserve praise. YT person of the year 2006 is a lady from Hadramout. She is a role model in dedication and commitment to bettering the society. Dr. Ahlam Saleh Bin Breik is a physician and a nutrition specialist based in Al-Mukalla, where she was born in 1958. Although coming from a conservative society in Hadramout, Dr. Bin Breik did the unusual and travelled to Aden to earn her M.B.Ch.B from the University of Aden in 1983. She then continued her pursue of knowledge and got an M.Sc. degree in Applied Nutrition from the National Institute of Nutrition in Hyderabad, India in 1988. Then in 2005 she was awarded a fellowship from the Sudan Medical Specialization Board.

We chose Dr. Ahlam Bin Breik this year because of her endless giving to her society and her commitment to help people. Through her work and even through other activities she has helped enhance her community's awareness regarding reproductive health, nutrition and medical

issues.

When Ahlam was 12 she found a new dream about her future. It was a time when there were no female doctors in Hadramout and a time where health awareness was very low. Her younger sister had died in front of her because of diarrhea and her mother was admitted to the hospital because of reproductive health problems relating to her pregnancy.

Reflecting on her first day in college she said: "I remember the first day when I joined the college of medicine. During my meeting with the dean, Prof. Abdullah Hattab, he asked me why you want to study medicine? I told him I wanted to treat patients. He asked again: 'Only to treat patient?' I said yes. He insisted, 'What else?' I could not answer. So he told me, 'I hope that you think about preventing spread of diseases in the society.'" *Continued on page 2*

Security forces kill citizen, terrify family

By: Mohammed bin Sallam

SANA'A, Jan. 4 — Tens of security forces carried on armored vehicles attacked early Tuesday, Dec. 26, Faris Hamoud Al-Rudini's house, 32, and killed him after his family members refused to go with them without prosecution's orders, according to media sources.

The motivation for which security forces attacked Al-Rudini's house and killed Faris is still unknown.

Ameen Al-Rudini, the victim's uncle, told Al-Shoura.net on Wednesday, that security forces totaling 75 soldiers and 25 armored vehicles spread in Musaik's Al-Fawz zone early Tuesday morning. The forces entered the house by force and photographed it from inside and outside and shot Faris once in his head before leaving.

According to Ameen, Faris's corpse is still in Al-Thawra Hospital Morgue, and they will not bury him until the killers are identified and the cause for which they killed Faris and forced women and children to outside the house is known.

Ameen said that they have informed the Attorney General and the East Capital Prosecution who investigated them and listened to witnesses.

The assailants laid siege around Musaik Zone and prevented Hamir Police Station's affiliates or the zone's head from coming into the house, declaring they will kill anyone trying to enter.

For his part, Dr. Abdullah Al-Ulfi, the Attorney General, directed the Capital's North Prosecution to investigate the case after the victim's family had complained to him.

Security forces allegedly were looking for Mahmoud Al-Rudini, 27, the victim's uncle. Mohammed, Mahmoud's brother, told media his family was surprised when security forces broke into the house about 3 a.m., and they did not know the reason for the attack just that the security forces were looking for Mahmoud.

Mohammed declared he woke up while his father was quarrelling with soldiers, just a few minutes before Faris died, noting they were not resisting.

He also denied his knowledge that Mahmoud was on security's list and assured Mahmoud is a sports teacher at Modern Yemen Egypt School and used to move freely in all places adding, "It was possible for them to arrest him at any place and in a legal way instead of killing Faris, terrifying the family and violating the human rights."

Continued on page 2

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In brief

New military and security training launched

Jan. 6 — Mohammed Nassar along with the governor and other top military officials paid visits to several military camps in different regions of the country to launch the 2007 training year at those camps. Nassar highlighted good achievements by forces during last year of training. He pointed out Yemen's position of supporting peace and stability in the region, saying that the military and security forces are for protecting development and strengthening stability across the country. He called on forces to realize good results this year in building their capabilities.

Ibb

Belgium official visits Ibb district

Jan. 6 — The secretary general of Ibb local council, Amin Al-Warafi, held talks with the visiting Belgium Minister of State and Member of Parliament, Vansan Daidonah. In the meeting, Al-Warafi briefed the Belgium official on the experience of local council and the role of Yemeni woman in the political life. He said that the Belgium official's visit would contribute in enhancing bilateral cooperation between Yemen and Belgium. The visit will also help in the twinning between Al-Odain district and Karbak city in Belgium. The Belgium official said that his visit to Yemen aims to enrich his knowledge on the Yemeni ancient civilizations, expressing his admiration of the historical sites he has seen in Yemen.

Raymah

Relief aid sent to homeless in Raymah

Jan. 6 — A batch of relief aid arrived on Thursday in Raymah Governorate to help people who saw their homes collapse in heavy rains. The relief aid includes tents and blankets which will be distributed to 205 homeless families in different regions of the governorate. Secretary general of Raymah local council, Abu Al-Fadl Al-Saadi, said that the field teams started to evaluate damages. Prime Minister Abdul-Qadr Ba-Jammal asked from the Economic Corporation to offer all vital requirements to help people who lost their houses and discuss it in its next meeting with the Ministry of Finance matters of compensation for the people to rebuild their houses which have been damaged due to heavy rains, the source said. The prime minister also gave orders to the Ministry of Public Works and Roads to re-open roads that were damaged in the governorate because of the rains.

Sana'a

Yemeni-Qatari Committee discuss commercial and investment issues soon

Jan. 6 — The joint Yemeni-Qatari Ministerial Committee is to hold its third round of meetings in Sana'a. The round will be co-chaired by Yemen's Minister of Industry and Trade, Khaled Sheikh, and the Qatari Minister of Economy and Commerce, Mohammed bin Ahmed Al-Thani. The committee will discuss a number of relevant issues to reinforce economic, commercial and investment ties pertaining to the financial and economic fields, out of which petroleum, gas, minerals and electricity, in addition to discussing ways to strengthen relations between businessmen in both countries.

Yemeni-Italian security cooperation discussed

Jan. 6 — Deputy Premier and Interior Minister Rashad Al-Alimi discussed on Wednesday with the visiting Italian Deputy Foreign Minister, Yogho Avany, aspects of the security cooperation between Yemen and Italy. Al-Alimi appreciated Italian support for Yemeni security bodies, especially in fields of coastguard and fighting terror and crimes within the bilateral relations between the two countries. The visit of the Italian official to Yemen came to take part in the ceremony of passing 80 years of relations between Yemen and Italy.

Yemen and U.S. support Somalia's stability

ADEN, Jan. 7 — Jendayi Frazer, Assistant US Secretary of State for African Affairs, urged Yemeni authorities on Saturday to support the Somali people and utilize the best means for achieving that end.

President Saleh in his meeting with Frazer discussed the situation in Somalia and stressed the importance of helping Somali people.

Before her departure and in a press conference held by Foreign Minister Abu Baker Al-Qirbi, Frazer declared she discussed with the Yemeni side how to help Somali people and provide solutions to ensure Somalia's stability via peaceful dialogue between all Somali parties.

She further noted she is for holding

talks with Islamic Courts and other parties to make use of their expertise and announced her government decided to grant funding for the Somali government to support peace and stability in Somalia.

For his part, Al-Qirbi assured Yemen is keen about exerting efforts together with neighboring countries, U.S. and European Union to stabilize peace and security in Somalia according to Security Council's resolution.

The resolution dictates sending peacekeeping forces to Somalia and resolving the political situation to enable the Somali government to create security and stability across Somalia.

Japan supports Yemeni education

SANA'A, Jan 4 — In order to enhance the quality of basic education in Yemen, Japanese Funds-In-Trust (JFIT) provided an amount of USD 226,000 through the UNESCO to the Ministry of Education for the project of "In-Service Teacher Training of Basic Education Teachers in Yemen - Phase II". The project aims to build capacity of trainers of trainers (TOT); increase number of female trainees; improve status of training centers; and provide training materials. An additional amount of USD 38,000 was also provided by UNESCO regular program to this project, which will last for 15 months. Phase I of the project, which was also funded by the JFIT, was implemented during the period March 2003 - September 2005.

The Japanese Embassy has also provided financial assistance for Al-Esha'a school in Al-Mokha District in Taiz governorate to construct a new school building. The financial assistance, which amounts to \$US89,827, will be used for sheltering

half of the students at the school who currently study under the trees. Al-Esha'a school has suffered from the lack of classrooms, and that has left half of the students at the school no other option but to study outside of the building. Under such circumstances, parents have been discouraged to send their kids to school, and especially female students have felt uncomfortable in attending classes. With this funding from the Japanese Embassy, all the students at the school will be able to study in a schoolhouse from the next year.

The Japanese Embassy has funded 11 projects so far, including this project, (total amount of \$US804,882) during this Japanese fiscal year (April 2006 - March 2007) under the scheme called "Grant Assistance for Grassroots Human Security Projects." This scheme aims at supporting small-scale community-based projects that try to meet basic human needs, such as providing primary health care, rural water supply, and basic education.

Ex-Guantanamo detainees in detention

SANA'A, Jan.7 — Five of recently released Guantanamo prisoners are still in custody, said a human right activist.

"The Yemeni security has released only one of the six men who were repatriated from Guantanamo Bay by American authorities. They are held in the National Security without any charges being brought against them," said Khaled Al-Anisi, a lawyer and the executive director of the Yemeni National Organization for Defending Rights and Liberties, known as HOOD.

The six Yemeni detainees from Guantanamo were handed over to Yemen in December, they are now being held by Yemeni authorities to determine if they have any terror ties.

"They would be released if investigations showed that they were not involved in any terrorist acts," stated a security official that time.

Al-Anisi confirmed that the security prevents any human activist or lawyer to visit the detainees.

However, HOOD could ascertain the identities of the six men, who are Esam Hamid Al-Jaeifi, Ali Hussain Al-Tais,

Mohammed Ahmed Al-Asadi, Tawfiq Al-Murwai and Muhassen Al-Asskari.

"We have sent a letter to the General Prosecution and another one to the National Security Organization, in which we demanded the immediate release of the men or put them on trail," Al-Anisi said.

So far Yemen received eight nationals who were in Guantanamo prison and three others held in U.S. secret prisons, according to HOOD.

Even though they have been released Al-Anisi says the prisoners "are facing another Guantanamo" in their own country.

"They are put in jail for long time without any charges," he noted

In 2005, Yemen received four Yemeni citizens from the Guantanamo prison and put them on trial. None were charged with terrorism-related activities. "We are not against investigation but we are against the illegal arrested," commented Al-Anisi.

The Pentagon said in December the Guantanamo prison's population was now about 395 inmates, out of more than 770 who have been held there since the camp opened in January

2002.

According to a list received by the Yemeni government from U.S. about 106 Yemenis remain at Guantanamo. However lawyers and human activists say there could be about 150 Yemeni detainees in Guantanamo.

"Now Yemeni detainees form the biggest number in Guantanamo prison," Al-Anisi confirmed. A study revealed that 95 percent of Yemeni detainees at Guantanamo, who were arrested in Afghanistan and Pakistan following the fall of the Taliban, have no Al-Qaeda links. The study said most Yemenis arrested were working as Quranic and Arabic language teachers in Afghanistan at a monthly salary of \$100 for married teachers and half that for singles.

Through information obtained from Yemeni families and testimonies of Yemeni Guantanamo detainees, most detainees were arrested in Pakistan due to the \$5,000 award offered by U.S. authorities to anyone reporting about those escaping into Pakistan from Afghanistan. This encouraged Pakistanis to inform U.S. authorities of any Arab national they discovered.

Boats face rocky time at sea

SANA'A, Jan. 4 — An Italian tourist yacht sank near Saba Island off the Hodeida coast after it hit the islands' rocks because of the high winds, said an official in the Coast Guard.

The 13 tourists of Italian nationality onboard the Katrina Yacht were transferred by a boat belong to the coast guard authority from Saba Island to Al-Zubir Island and then by helicopter to Hodeida.

The passengers were four men with their wives, and four single women and the yacht's captain wife who is Yemeni Italian nationality and two Philippine men and six Yemenis working as sailors on board.

The coast guard said they have a boat concerned with protecting tourists and it works constantly in Asslif port where tourists can be found most of time and

it's just to protect the tourists' passengers in Assalif port.

"We have also received a distress call from Katrina Yacht and obey the call immediately," said the official. "Katrina boat is completely destroyed and drowned when we came back for the second time to save Katrina Yacht too as we saved the tourist's passengers and the Katrina Yacht crew by some naval forces boats."

Last Saturday the Coast Guard called off the search for survivors following the capsizing of two boats carrying African migrants, leaving 26 people confirmed dead and 132 missing, said the UNHCR.

The two boats were carrying Somali and Ethiopian migrants when they capsized in the heavy seas off Yemen late Wednesday, they ended the search oper-

ation after hope washed out of finding any more survivors, said coast guard official in Shabwa.

Nine bodies were recovered last Dec. 29 bringing the number of confirmed dead to 26, and 17 bodies were found a week after smugglers' boats crossing the Gulf of Aden from Somalia capsized off the coast of Shabwa.

"All the missing people are now presumed dead," said an official with the coast guard. The two boats were among four boats carrying 515 passengers, most of them were Somalis.

All the smugglers were arrested and their boats were seized by the Yemeni coast guard, and it was the second event in shooting involvement between the Yemeni coast guard and the human traffickers this month, said the Yemeni coasts guard.

Continued from page 1

Moving towards more children's rights

On this regard the, Yemeni and Saudi authorities held a meeting in June 2006 aimed to set a coordinating and cooperation mechanism on regard with children trafficking.

Concerning the educational situation of Yemeni children and the teaching styles fol-

lowed in children schools the Yemen Country Manager of Save the Children , Waleed Al-Bashhe said, "Now we have a joint plan with the ministry of education in order to get rid of violence against children in schools and provide the alternative means. We also work on integrating the dis-

abled children in the schools which is a positive result of this report."

The private organizations are expected to present a similar report from their point of view for the year 2006.

"These reports are only means and not goals by themselves, we work on making

coordination between the two reports in order to raise up children's position," said Al-Basheer.

The main challenge in preparing this report was the difficulty to find correct and exact information. This problem created a lot of objection and questions on table discus-

sion about the number and statistics used in the report.

"There is no coordination in collecting children rights information between the concerned authorities and now we ask the participants to work together for a data base for children rights," said one national expert.

Security forces kill citizen, terrify family

A neighbor to Al-Rudini's family noted, "Upon hearing the voices, I opened the house's window and saw Al-Rudini's family outside the house in their pajamas. The security forces directed their arms towards me, asking me to close the window and not to come out."

"The soldiers encircled the house and neighboring houses and terrified the residents," added the neighbor.

Another relative said, "Security forces snatched Mahmoud's brother from Al-Thawra Hospital after he had rushed Faris to the hospital. Faris's father was arrested at home, and so far nothing in known about them and the victim is in the morgue."

Parliament Member Ali Al-Ansi, representing the constituency No. 4 - the place in which the event took place - denounced the crime. He told News Yemen that Mahmoud acts in the day light and he goes to his school and comes back everyday and it was possible to arrest him according to law

if he was wanted as claimed.

Al-Ansi, an affiliate of the opposition Islah Party, questioned whether suspecting legalizes killing, declaring his constituency's sons are displeased with Al-Rudini family's tragedy, where one of their sons was killed and other detained.

He assured he will support the family to sue security forces, also demand security transparency over such cases and domination of law over all security missions, particularly those relative to arrests, let alone killings which are criminalized by law and constitution, only under the judiciary judging.

Al-Nahar weekly newspaper said last Thursday, that Yemeni National Security Apparatus is launching hunting and raiding on supposed Al-Qaeda suspects and the operations resulted in arresting a number of suspects belonging to extreme organizations.

The paper added the National Security

managed to arrest eight people in raids that included many areas in the capital after receiving information that Al-Qaeda-linked affiliates exist there.

Among the arrested people are Jamil Ghurab and Abdullah Al-Dhubibi who are described as the most wanted Al-Qaeda affiliates in Yemen.

These arrests come after threats attributed to Al-Qaeda's wing in Yemen to implement attacks against government, tourist and foreign institutions and facilities in Yemen.

In related news, the General Prosecution referred mid-December five foreigners to State's Security Penal Court after they were arrested over smuggling weapons to Somali Islamic Courts.

An official source told the media that five from among the eight arrested mid-October were referred to the specialized court after the General Prosecution acquitted three, including two Australians and a German for

insufficient evidence.

Danish Layth Sorans, British Rasheed Abdulhaq Lascar, Yemeni Abdullah Awad Al-Misri and Mark Samliski and Somali Abdu Othman Suli will stand trial before the Penal Court over weapons smuggling to Somalia.

The same sources told media the prosecution referred the five suspects to the Specialized Primary Court.

A source at the prosecution announced Dec. 21, that they have finished investigating 22 terrorists accused of being linked to Al-Qaeda and planning to launch terrorist acts against local and foreign interests.

The 22-terrorist cell was hired by Fawaz Al-Rubai'i, and accused of targeting the French Tanker Limburge in Al-Mukalla Port. Security forces killed Al-Rubai'i in Sana'a's outskirts, one month following his escape from the Political Security's prison together with many other suspects.

According to the Ministry of Interior, the

suspects are involved in the foiled attacks that targeted oil facilities in Mareb and Hadramout in mid-September.

Media sources in Sana'a mentioned more than 17 people belonging to Abyan's Ja'ar, have been killed so far in suicide attacks in different Iraqi areas.

Al-Tagamou' newspaper said a number of citizens in Abyan distribute leaflets under the name of Jihad Base in Mesopotamia, and also that some members of Islamic Aden Abyan Army joined Al-Qaeda's Iraq wing and distributed such leaflets to recruit others.

The same source, attributing his news to official sources, revealed some extreme Islamic groups are planning to hit American and British interests, coinciding with the celebrations of the New Year and Eid Al-Adha.

Reacting to such information, security apparatuses took tight security measures to protect foreign embassies, hotels and companies.

YT Person of the year 2006

Give and take

Dr. Bin Briek has given a lot to her community whether to her students or her patients or her general neighbourhood. Dr. Bin Briek is associated professor at Hadramout University, College of medicine, working in the Community Department. Through her work in the college she has adapted the undergraduate medical education a new trend called problem-based, student-centered, community-oriented learning as the method of medical education.

The first part: problem-based learning is the basic human learning process that allowed primitive man to survive in his environment. Problem-based learning is a process whereby a student learns by utilizing problem as a stimulus to discover the information needed to understand the problem and hasten its solution the problem are the backbone of our curriculum.

The community-based education is a means of achieving educational relevance to health needs of community and utilize the community as an educational medium for training students, such training is most effective because it is carried out in close relation to the actual community in which they are to work after graduation. Hadramout University College of Medicine has adopted the community-based educa-

tion strategy since its foundation; the curriculum is characterized by real implementation of primary health care concept, which is considered as the key to health for all.

The community based activities are called field training program and it is extended throughout the entire 6 year curriculum. Field training is integrated and complementary to other educational activity in the student-centered strategy, the students can decide under teacher guidance, what to learn, the method of learning, and the sequence and pace of learning.

Since the learning is self-determined and acquired through own study, the student becomes an active participant in the learning process and this provides motivation.

As the student is responsible for his or her own educational objectives, students acquire the ability to evaluate their own strengths and weakness.

Reflecting on why she has endorsed this type of education Dr. Bin Briek said, "This type of medical education put us in close contact with the community and allows us to feel the needs of our community and identify its problems."

Currently, the university is establishing a new mother and child care hospital, this hospital will offer training for medical students and nurses, as well as good quality health services in the near future.

Dr. Bin Briek is also in charge of Hadramout society for fighting AIDS, which was established in 2004.

As to what she has gotten in return for all the work she does she commented:

"The society has given me respect and love and satisfaction which I see in eyes of many people and this makes me give more to my people."

Ambitions for the Future

About her ambitions and future aspirations Dr. Bin Briek had many wishes.

"I have many ambitions and dreams," she said, with her career ambition is to be able to provide good quality health services to mothers and children.

On a more general level, her wish was for Yemeni women to take their real position in society because they are independent and confident, taking matters into their own hands.

"I know that this will be achieved only through education and hard work in all fields, because rights are not easily granted, but are earned," she said.

She also wishes for every mother to teach her children, especially the males to respect women. And that all types of discrimination against women are eliminated, for that we should follow Islamic rules, which gave women many rights.

Ugo Intini to Yemen Times:

“European Union member states should come together politically in order to create a balance of powers in the world.”

Deputy Minister of Foreign Affairs Hon. Ugo Intini carried an official visit to Yemen last week. He is concerned with Italy's foreign affairs in the Middle East and North Africa region. And is Italy's rapport in this region and of its participation in various regional and sub-regional intergovernmental organizations (Arab League), as well as in matters regarding Euro-Mediterranean cooperation. He is responsible for issues concerning economic-trade cooperation and cooperation in cultural and scientific matters, armament materials.

Hon. Intini is chairman of the National Committee for the Promotion of Italian Culture Abroad. Intini is member of the Secretariat of the "Rose in Fist" Party and was president of the parliamentary group in the Lower House of the party. Prior to the formation of Rosa nel pugno (Rose in Fist) political party in 2005, he was elected during the previous legislature as a representative of the Olive Branch Party (Ulivo) in the 6th constituency of Genoa (Sestri Ponente-Cornigliano-Sampierdarena). He was President of the Italian Democratic Socialists Group of the Lower House, and member of the 3rd Standing Committee (Foreign Affairs) and the Documentation Oversight Committee.

Ugo Intini, with a degree in Law, a profession in journalism, an author of several books and a career in politics had very interesting things to say in his interview with Nadia Al-Sakkaf editor in chief of Yemen Times.

Yemen and Italy

Italy is the first country to build international diplomatic relations with Yemen over 80 years ago.

This visit comes to strengthen the ties and increase cooperation between the two countries further. We want to add to the political relation an economic content. Focusing on economic cooperation, the Italian government has encouraged its business sector to explore investment opportunities in Yemen. Now there is a greater opportunity through branches of the Italian industries in Dubai, which will be a transit point for the Italian investors to Yemen.

We are happy that Yemen is joining the GCC, and we encourage gulf countries to welcome Yemen into the council. Europe gives a good example of unity for the world to learn from. And I hope that we would be a contagious phenomenon.

Our economic cooperation with Yemen recently includes fishery, tourism, culture, the marble industry and security projects in the coastal areas. It is true that our assistance to Yemen is not much but we are improving it. We give Yemen less aid than other countries but we invest in very strategic situations with much stronger impact. The Italian economy is built on the cluster effect where we have thousands of small and medium size businesses in one industry. Their size gives them the flexibility and the aggregated performance give the effect of very large-scale businesses.

And we would like to encourage an economic cooperation between Italian businessmen and the Yemeni economic sector.

Growing cooperation and support

Now Italy is helping Yemen conserve the valuable scripts through a cooperation project with Dar Al-Makhtotat (Scripts House) as well as the restoration of an archeological excavation site in Marakish in Marib.

It is true that we give Yemen less aid than other countries but we invest in very strategic situations with much stronger impact.

Italy has also promoted language education at the University of Sana'a where Italian is being taught. In the educational field, Italy has increased its scholarships from 32 scholarships per year to 48 scholarships in various fields mainly medical and linguistics.

Concerning health cooperation, Italy has long organized for medical delegations through the assistance of the Yemeni representation in Italy and the Italian embassy in Yemen. Currently Italy is supporting Yemen with a management health system project as well as the establishment of a blood bank. Italy is working in the protection of environment in a huge project in Soqatra island where it donates more than 2.5 million euros



Intini at the foreign ministers conference on Nov. 24, 2006

through a UNDP project costing 5 million dollars.

Italy is also concerned with the refugee crises Yemen is going through especially that during the last period around 10,000 Somali have fled to Yemen because of the war in Somalia. Italy has long experience with refugees because of its geographical location and would offer assistance to Yemen in this regard. At this moment there are around 300,000 Somali refugees in Yemen, and many more are arriving.

There could be no working democracy without freedom of press.

Consequently Italy has a Fund for Humanitarian Urgent Intervention and through this fund will provide aid to Yemen. Moreso, Italy is working with Yemen on a security agreement and through provision of a radar system for the southern coast as a loan costing around 20 million euros. This is the second phase of this coastal security project which will also include training. Recently the Italian chief of coast guards had been to Yemen and his Yemeni counterpart will be visiting Italy soon to become acquainted with the Italian experience in this issue.

Also Italy has provided Yemeni coast guards with a small boat to assist in their surveillance.

On the institutional level, Italy is supporting Yemen with capacity building and training projects in decentralization and other management fields.

Democracy, freedoms and the quota system in Yemen

You need more than laws to gain freedom and achieve development. I don't believe much of the official legislations, I believe stability and freedoms are achieved through the public opinion. Freedom of press especially is very important. There could be no working democracy without freedom of press.

Yemen is gradually progressing towards democracy but I feel the best way to achieve it efficiently is through

educating people. No country can teach the other on how to be democratic, there is no fixed recipe, every country has its own particularities and must achieve its democracy through its own ways.

Regarding the rights of minorities, I personally don't like the quota system, but I would encourage it as a temporary measure to achieve balance. In Italy women's quota debate is heated and I would advise Yemen to implement the quota system for women because it would create gender balance faster. Because women are under represented and this injustice does not help Yemen. Therefore I favor this measure at these current circumstances.

The Palestinian-Israeli conflict is the mother of all crises in the Middle East, if we do not achieve peace in Palestine then the Middle East will never find peace.

The Middle East

The Palestinian-Israeli conflict is the mother of all crises in the Middle East, if we do not achieve peace in Palestine then the Middle East will never find peace.

I believe we should involve all stake holders in the region, including Syria and Iran. As for Iran's nuclear dossier, we do not accept nuclear capacity for Iran because it can be a trigger for other countries in the Middle East and this would lead to a very dangerous situation. Iran has the right to using nuclear energy for civil purposes, in fact we offered and still are willing to help Iran produce such energy for civil purposes. There is already a negotiation going on with Iran on this issue. The problem is when this energy is used for military purposes and this is something we will not accept. Too many mistakes have been done in the past and we must convenience Iran that it has an important regional role, and



that it will not be attacked or have its regime ousted. And keeping this in mind, Iran must not work to availing nuclear weapons.

Talking about Iraq, killing Saddam was a big mistake. To start with, we in Italy and in Europe in general are against the death penalty, and to hang Saddam Hussein this way and on this day makes things worse. I believe the only possibility to stabilize Iraq is to create peace between Sunni and Shie'a Muslims, killing Saddam only complicates the problem. Iraq doesn't need any more blood.

The problem with peace keeping is that Europe has been absent in the peace keeping of the Middle East for many years. Now it is a little difficult for it to show up and take a leading role suddenly.

This is why the European Union member states should come together politically in order to create a balance of powers in the world. Italy has participated in the peace keeping in Lebanon greatly. Italy pushed Europe to intervene in Lebanon. But it must be clear that Lebanon is a departure point not an arrival point.

killing Saddam was a big mistake. Iraq doesn't need any more blood.

Italy and the EU

Italy and all the other European countries have benefited from the European Union a lot. The most obvious example is the euro and the open markets. The euro has helped create a common fiscal policy and helped enhance the economic situation of Italy and many other European countries. It reduced inflation, and is a currency with more credibility, it obliges governments to good governance and because of the common currency we reduced our deficit from 5 percent to 3 percent. As to what Italy gave Europe, Italy is one of the five founding fathers of the European Union, we were one of the main players behind the creation of the union, and we encourage the expansion and including more countries.

The EU is an economic giant but a political dwarf

Our perception of the European Union could be explained in four spheres. The first one, the most narrow one, is what we call the euro area, these are only five countries who started the union from the very beginning. The second sphere consists the early members and those are fifteen countries only. Then comes the actual Europe as today. And finally what we call the outer Europe and this could reach our friends and partners in North Africa, the Middle East including the gulf and Yemen. The outermost circle is represented by the Barcelona process. Our vision for Europe is expanding everyday.

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Intini meets Chirac end of 2006. "Europe is an economic giant but a political dwarf," says Intini.

the challenges that face Europe. The EU is an economic giant but a political dwarf. We must grow politically and have a common foreign policy. Italy understands this more than everybody else because of our historic memory. Now we are exactly in the same situation, Europe is still the richest part of the world, but either we unite politically or we will finish quickly and we will be marginalized. Another problem is through our security pensions system, we provide a very good health old age security system but with increasing percentage of the population ageing this has become a problem. We must maintain the welfare system but in the same time we must solve the problem of cost. We must reduce the pensions in terms of percentage not of money but we face the public opinion.

I hope for 2007 to be a year to work towards peace in the Middle East especially in Palestine, and for Italy and me to play a role in making this happen.

Happy New Year 2007

I hope for 2007 to be a year to work towards peace in the Middle East especially in Palestine, and for Italy and me to play a role in making this happen. In Italy we just finished cleaning the budget we had been handed over from the previous government. We had a budget of the

state of 30 billion euros. I hope we can improve the economic conditions from this point onwards. And personally I wish for my son to achieve his career aspirations in this year.

I would advise Yemen to implement the quota system for women because it would create gender balance faster.

Last comment

Yemen is a country with great history and great traditions. I have been to many countries in this region but Yemen perhaps is one of the very few countries that I can say is a nation with historic past. The Yemeni government is doing a good job in maintaining stability in the country and is working towards better democracy. During my visit I met with the Yemeni foreign minister and I found that we share the same vision and I hope something good will follow on this visit.

I would like to encourage an event in Italy to present Yemen to the Italian community, not only through the students and medical delegation but also through intellectuals. We will work with the Yemeni embassy in Rome and the Italian embassy in Yemen as well as the Yemeni-Italian Friendship Association to make this happen. I see a good future for Yemen through its people because human power is much more important than oil or anything else. And Yemen is a country with great history and in my opinion the future is very much dependent on the past.

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حسين علي القاسمي - وجميع الاهل والاصدقاء

Gas cylinders: Everyday risk

By: Saddam Al-Ashmori
For Yemen Times

Citizens complain about outdated gas cylinders that are unfit for domestic use. Those who sell them are greedy and unconcerned about the consequences associated with outdated gas cylinders lacking safety specifications. Such sellers don't consider that these cylinders claim the lives of numerous innocent people and destroy homes. Although the cylinders they sell leak gas, citizens are obliged to buy them despite the fact that they cause tragic devastation.

Thus, gas cylinders are a ticking time bomb. Citizens are shocked when they explode while at the same time, concerned government parties fail to address the problem.

Mohammed Saif Ahmad from Taiz governorate's Mawyah district recounted, "Gas leaked from the cylinder overnight and in the morning, so when my wife went into the kitchen to fix coffee, the cylinder exploded, destroying the ceiling of our home. Since the windows were shuttered, it turned into a massive house fire."

He continued, "Every room in the house filled with gas. Two girls from our 15-member family died, while others were injured on various parts of their bodies. Not one of us escaped the incident. My hands and legs were burned, as well as my scalp"

Ahmad added that the incident occurred due to ignorance and carelessness on the part of concerned governmental parties.

"While all Yemenis were happy and celebrating the eid, my family and I were in the hospital during that time," lamented the head of a Hajjah household, who requested not to be identified.

He narrated, "We got up on the morning of the eid to find our house in flames. When we bought the gas cylinder, we were doubtful about its valve, but we didn't mind using it because many cylinders are in the same condition. However, in the morning, the cylinder exploded while my wife was cooking."

"All of my family members were injured and one of my daughters died," the man regretted, "We don't know whom we should sue or who's responsible for the incident."

His pregnant wife delivered when she was taken to the hospital to be treated for burns. "There were nine of us when we were taken to the hospital, where one of my daughters died from her burns. But we returned home as nine after my wife delivered our baby!" he quipped.

Another gas cylinder victim Mohammed Ali Ma'odah explained, "I was disfigured, along with my wife and daughter, and we're still disfigured because we don't have enough money for treatment. Therefore, we're seeking philanthropists to help us pay such costs."

Describing his ordeal, Ma'odah related, "My wife and I left the house to go shopping in the morning. Gas was leaking but we didn't know it. We couldn't smell the gas when we returned home, which is why we weren't cautious. After we returned, my wife started to turn on the stove, but the cylinder exploded, disfiguring our legs and faces. Our neighbors took us to the hospital, but we still suffer deformities because we couldn't afford the operations."

Gas agent Mohammed Al-Hajzi remarked, "I don't think gas sellers have anything to do with the issue because the gas cylinders come to us filled from the company. We don't

know what'll happen after the cylinder is opened; however, we do notice that some cylinders are outdated."

"The gas company should repair any damaged cylinders and confiscate outdated ones that can't be repaired," he proposed.

Dr. Nasr Al-Qadasi, head of Al-Jumhuri Hospital's Burn Department, pointed out that faulty gas cylinders are responsible for 90 percent of burn cases. "The Burn Department averages 3,000 burn cases annually and 23 people died from gas cylinder explosions in the second half of 2006," he noted, "Carelessness and ignorance on the part of families, coupled with absence of monitoring outdated containers are behind these tragic incidents."

Al-Qadasi suggested that gas companies should have a primary role in conducting periodic gas cylinder maintenance since citizens have no alarm systems in their homes. "Such companies ignore gas cylinders. Moreover, vendors who sell them on the streets via pushcarts don't handle them properly, as cylinder valves are exposed to damage, thus causing gas to leak," he explained.

"Those parties concerned with the issue, such as the Yemeni Society for Consumer Protection and the General Authority for Specifications, Standards and Quality Control, don't play an effective role in tackling it, so they're responsible for incidents of this type," Al-Qadasi concluded.

Sana'a resident, Abdulhamid Al-Sarori, another citizen affected by gas cylinder explosions, recalled that gas leaked in his house overnight, but he didn't know it. "We were misfortunate because the kitchen was closed tightly. When my wife turned on the stove to cook in the morning, the leaked gas exploded, damaging our doors and windows and burning my wife, who

remained in the hospital for three weeks," he described.

However, he admitted, "We behave carelessly by sending our children to bring full gas cylinders, which they roll down the street on the way home. Also, the majority of citizens and gas sellers don't check the cylinders before filling them or exchanging them for full ones."

According to Al-Sarori, many people also complain about lack of the distinctive substance mercaptan, which produces an odor, thus alerting residents about a gas leak.

Mahmoud Al-Sharjabi described gas cylinders in Yemeni markets as ticking time bombs in every home. "I've bought gas cylinders lacking safety specifications, but ordinary citizens can't do anything about it. Parties like the Yemeni Society for Consumer Protection and the General Authority for Specifications, Standards and Quality Control are responsible for the problem and its consequences," he asserted.

Hisham Mohammed commented, "My wife made a mistake. She knew the gas was leaking, but she turned on the stove and was burned. Not maintaining outdated gas cylinders for domestic use shows that both citizens and concerned parties are careless because there's no monitoring."

Sana'a University teacher Hussein Al-Junaid noted that many people have been killed or injured in gas cylinder explosions, suggesting, "Gas companies must check the cylinders



A mother nursing her injured boy at a hospital in Sana'a. Many children are a victim of their parents carelessness in mishandling gas cylinders.

before filling them to see whether they meet safety requirements."

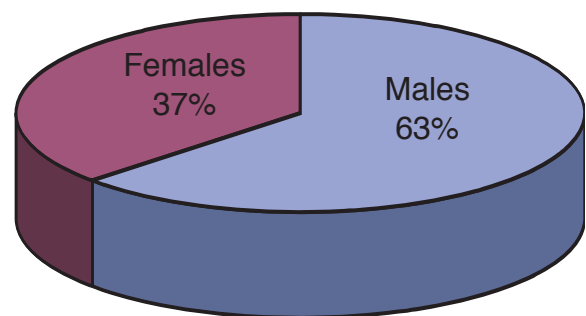
However, Ahmad Al-Basha, Deputy Director of the General Authority for Specifications, Standards and Quality Control, pointed out, "The authority has listed a number of safety specifications to save citizens' lives and protect them from gas cylinder explosions. However, the problem persists because both citizens and gas agents still use outdated cylinders, which helps to exacerbate the problem and is riskier to our lives."

He added, "We've been requesting gas cylinder manufacturers to remove

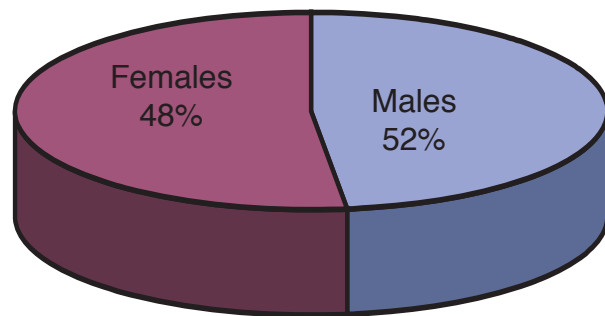
all outdated gas cylinders from the market and impose heavy sanctions on those selling them to citizens. Such companies have specialized engineers, who should check gas cylinders and decide whether they're fit for domestic use."

Al-Basha stressed that mishandling gas cylinders and lack of awareness about how to deal with these cylinders makes them ticking time bombs. "[However,] we've now recruited field agents to monitor violations and report them to concerned parties, who then will take necessary measures in this regard," he concluded.

Burn injuries for children from 0 to 12 years old



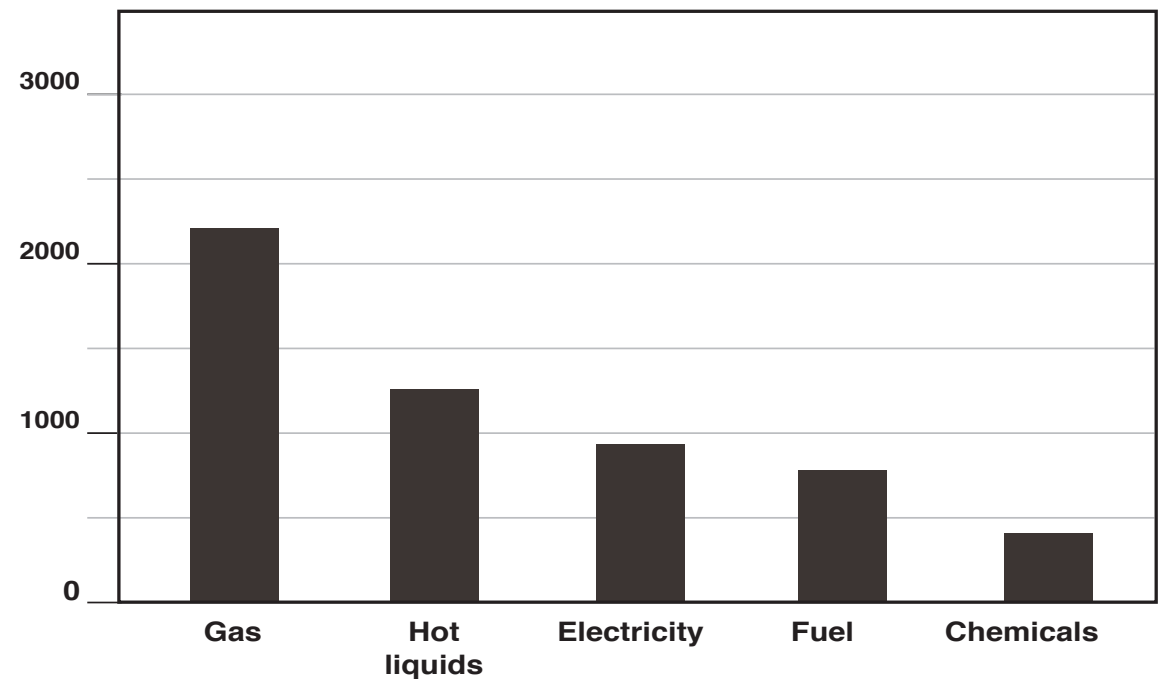
Burn injuries for children above 12 years old



The percentage of burn injuries is much higher for male children than females under 12 years of age

Source: Jumhuri Hospital's Burn Department

Causes of burns



Source: Jumhuri Hospital's Burn Department

Telecommunication centers are a new career of Yemeni women

They work in the daylight in some cities, such as Aden and Al-Hodiadah and their work continues until the beginning of the night. Women's work in the telecommunication shops regards a new phenomenon in the reserved Yemeni society. It was almost with a political background, as it has been raised along with the economic difficulties that have influenced the Yemen's economy after the return of about one million immigrants and their families from Gulf States after the second Gulf War.

By: Shaker A. Alhithri
For Yemen Times

The beginning of women's work in the telecommunication business is not interesting to public who still refuse women's work, to some extent, and how they will encounter women in shops or drive a taxi?

There are other reasons imposed on the nature of this work that include the impact of worldwide women's movements in the women integration into the development plans in the developing countries, particularly the

Arab countries. The unity of the two parts of Yemen (North and south) in turn influences positively the social values. It has been known for the political and social regime in the South part of Yemen encourages women to work in various sectors. However, the women's work in the field of telecommunications is new and subjected to the Yemen traditions. Arwa (19 years), who works in a shop of one of her relatives in the capital Sanaa, said that she works from 8 am until 3 pm and she denied being harassed by costumers, while Soad 22 years old said that some customers, especially

adolescents, are trying to swap out the nature of the work.

The work of women in telecommunication centers acquires the enthusiasm of the owners of these shops, as their interest in this service helps to attract a larger number of customers. Other shops benefit from the employment of women to manipulate the prices of telephone units, although the Yemen traditions do not allow men to argue or bargain with women.

Specialists believe that the joining of women to fields of work directly with the public, such as call centers, would help developing the community vision towards the women's work. It seems that such a field could embody a large number of unqualified female. Although that Arwa did not receive any education, she has not encountered any problems in her work, and this indicates that she uses computer without any difficulties. The magnitude of the phenomenon of women's work in the field of telecommunication differs according to the nature of the Yemeni city.

The number of working women in



"Phone booth owners prefer hiring females to work for them and I do it because I need to increase my family income," said a female working in a phone booth.

YT PHOTO BY SADDAM AL-ASHMOURI

the field of telecommunication in Sana'a still limited but they are more prevalent in Aden, which is the first of its kind on the emergence of public relations, and also it is the first city that encourages the women to work.

Yousri Mohammed (Training Specialist) sees no shortcoming in the work of women in the commercial shops, but he did not agree with their working at the Internet cafes. He regards their work in

telecommunication centers, even in the military institutions, better than the Internet cafes, because of the possibility of pornographic materials in such places.

Words of Wisdom



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

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

OUR
OPINIONOne thing Europe
should learn from Italy

During these recent holidays I met with the Italian Deputy Minister of Foreign Affairs, Ugo Intini, who was visiting Yemen. We had a chat about issues relating to the Middle East, Europe and the world. What interested me during the discussion is the extent he valued European unity and felt it should be taken to higher levels, reflecting the political opinion of the Italian government. "We believe that there should be a strong political power in Europe to balance the world," he said, reflecting on the political domination of the U.S. and the rising powers in Asia. He believed the European Union member states, having succeeded in achieving economic unity and now working on defense cooperation, should start aiming towards a united political stance. Frankly speaking, I have not heard this point of view much while in Europe or while talking to many other European diplomats or even European citizens. The feeling I keep getting whenever the idea of a united Europe politically is approached, is that Europe or the Europeans are not even ready to contemplate the thought, let alone implement it.

I believe the rest of the world sees Europe as a single entity, but Europeans themselves do not. Europeans have a lot of inhibitions and fears regarding their expansion, especially the deepening versus widening debate concerning the growth of the EU. This concern saddens me personally and I believe it saddens many people in my part of the world. To us, Europe has more political credibility in the Middle East than other political powers. We view the European Union as a successful example for unity and power, but the Europeans must understand that no matter how economically strong there are, it is politics that move the world.

During the interview with Intini, he told me Italy has learnt its lesson from the past regarding political unity. In the 15th century, during troubled times, Italy was one of the strongest powers in Europe and could be seen as the heart of the renaissance, but it was divided into different federations and powerful families. The struggle for political power diminished its status quickly, and this is the lesson Italy has learnt and does not want to repeat with the European Union.

The problem is that not everyone in Italy feels this way, in fact around 20 percent of the Italians want to create North and South Federations instead of one Italy. Many Europeans believe the European Union should exist while preserving the individual identities of all its member states, which is a very difficult challenge against the existence of a political unity.

Perhaps our disappointment with ourselves as Arabs, who have a greater potential to be united, makes us hope the solution will come from elsewhere, mainly Europe. Yet eventually what will come from the EU is up to the Europeans themselves and no one else.

Nadia Al-Sakkaf
Editor-in-Chief

Where will the
Arab battle head? (Part 1)

By: Dr. Salah Al-Mukhtar

Regretfully some Arabs when they tackle political events they think with their hearts instead of brains and therefore they get lost in alleys of ignorance. The clearest example is how some Arab, rather than Iraqi, elites or personalities understand the events going on in the Arab Homeland. Thus they become an easy catch for the plans of the hostile propaganda.

The sudden shift, after the Israeli aggression on Lebanon last July from the priority of supporting the Iraqi resistance to lowering its rank to merely a sectarian war and focusing the support for its twins the Lebanese and the Palestinian resistance movements. There are several phenomena of this mistaken understanding, most prominently the forgetfulness of the Iraqi resistance to an extent of neglecting to mention it when demonstrations and ceremonies are staged in support of the resistance in Lebanon and Palestine. When there is talk about the Iraqi resistance it is described as a civil sectarian war. Some in the media have gone to repeat what would serve the occupation and those who participate with it, in mentioning that Lebanon and Sudan might slip into the condition and case in Iraq. They mean that they will face a state of sectarian fragmentation, as they view the case in Iraq.

A year ago some were warning against Lebanonization of Iraq with regard to its development, that is the political sectarianism. But at present some are likening Lebanon to the virtually mistaken case in Iraq. Has Iraq so suddenly changed to be an example of dismemberment and has Lebanon changed and surpassed its traditional political sectarianism? In the light of all that we have found many believe that many divisive Arab battles will take place in the Lebanon arena rather than in Iraq.

The Iraqi resistance has basically emerged to expel the occupation and its bases escalated and become stronger in dependence on this liberationist nature. It has also gained support from Arab public opinion and revived the hopes for victory on enemies of the Arab nation after it managed to change the American forces of occupation from the position of offense to defense and placed the occupation in the face of true defeat even before a year passed since its beginning. The Iraqi resistance has surprised the entire world because it is the only resistance in the world which was founded without a foreign support, launched immediately following the occupation of Baghdad as comprehensive war of liberation fought by Iraqi battalions comprising hundreds and thousands of Iraqis, unlike other liberation wars which begin with a few people and then expand gradually and it is the only resistance that has not sustained defeats, although military setbacks are natural part of the state of war.

By virtue of these characteristics the Iraqi resistance succeeded in the re-formation of the Arab psychology by giving it hope that image continued outside Iraq until the early months of 2006 when the dome of Imam Al-Hadi in Samrah was blasted as a result of American-Iranian cooperation. Then a deluding media campaign began sowing a mistaken idea that a sectarian war had erupted and took the place of liberation war. And as a result of depriving the Iraqi resistance of media outlets the idea of the sectarian war spread.

In a sectarian war there will be two blocks of sectarian masses fighting each other and fighting must lead to an acute sectarian singling. There is not such a thing in Iraq. There is no fighting between two sects in Iraq fought by two blocks. There are masked gangs with disguised identities carrying out kidnapping operations, both Shiite and Sunni and that is associated with ran-

soms and death. There has never happened up until now that Shiite or Sunni masses launched attacks against each other, but all that happens is a work by political or criminal gangs directed by America. The most dangerous of it is what the Interior Ministry, the National Guard and the army carries out. They are all organizations established by the occupation and are composed of Iranian or mercenary groups who do not represent any sect or religion. They represent themselves as mercenaries or criminal gangsters or agents motivated and directed by international or regional intelligence organizations.

The sectarian segregation and blowing up bridges between the Sunnis and the Shiites has not happened for several reasons. All the Iraqis know that the crimes of killing according to identity were not perpetrated by Sunni or Shiite elements, but rather carried out by occupation, Iranians and Kurdish. Therefore the Iraqi people remained united and their kinship remained uniting the Shiite and the Sunni. Operations forcing people to leave their residential areas were carried out by Iranian elements and most dangerously by regiments of Badr and Al-Sadr. The most important factor of proving that there is no civil war in Iraq is the formation of the Iraqi resistance. It does not represent a certain sect, as America and Iran allege. The Iraqi resistance includes Shiites, Sunnis, Arabs, Kurds, Christians and Muslims. This fact explains the phenomenon of the resistance's non-retreat or weakness despite all that it has been facing of unsightly massacres at the hands of occupation and its Iranian allies. It is on the contrary it is expanding and progressing and removing all obstacles and beating all conspiracies to an extent it pushed America to one killing corner; the corner of defeat. The resistance in Iraq would not have achieved all those victories if what is going now in Iraq is a sectarian conflict.

SILVER LINING

The aftermath of
Saddam's execution

The Iraqi government surprised the Muslims by executing former Iraqi President Saddam Hussein on the first day of Eid. The timing, as well as the way of carrying out the execution, has instigated the anger of the people. I myself acknowledge and I previously wrote articles that the man is a dictator and deserves this end. But the decision to execute him during the first day of the Eid is really disgusting and has demonstrated that the current government of Iraq is still obsessed with revenge sentiments not only against Saddam and his regime, but all Sunni people. And unfortunately, such groups cannot build a nation of freedom and democracy as we have been aspiring towards. We wished that the ousting of Saddam would bring hope and a better tomorrow for Iraq as we expected that who would replace him would be much better and with a liberal thinking, looking ahead to the future. However, the outcome is really frustrating and painful.

In fact, the execution of Saddam at this particular time and in the humiliating way we saw on TV, the Iraqi government and the Bush administration have generated more support and fans for Saddam even in his death. Not only this, the execution has widened the gap between the Sunni and Shiite groups not only in Iraq, but also across the region. I have listened to a number of people and through discussion with them, come to realize that the critical tone against the Shiites has mounted.

The ordinary people who supported Hezbollah and its secretary general Hassan Nasrallah during the latest Israeli pounding against Lebanon are now frustrated with the Shiites and the way they deal with the Sunni groups in Iraq. The potential fiasco of the relationship between the two religious sects is definitely at stake.

They even look at Iran, who they used to consider as a growing nuclear power as a pride for all Muslims, as a first enemy of the Arabs believing that Saddam was right in battling Tehran in 1980s. The Bush administration perhaps wanted to push to this end, but certainly, this gap between the Sunnis and Shiites is likely to expand.

Another major victim of the execution of Saddam is the truth. Saddam is truly a dictator whose death sentence has been expected by everybody. However, so many people including legalists believe his trial was not complete and was not fair; he could have been a good witness on many events that took place during his tenure as head of Iraq state including the war with Iran, invasion of Kuwait, attacks on the Kurds and many more crimes. We believe that justice should have been made to all actors of such events and all should have been held accountable.

Any way, Happy New Year to all the people across the globe and I hope 2007 will be free from wars, killings and full of peace and prosperity to all.

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



By: Mohammed
Al-Qadhi

Administrative reform begins from society

Dr. Abdulaziz al-Tarb

In the light of world variables international experts are unanimous that administration reform is an important factor that must not be overlooked at any rate due to its prominent role on which the rest of reforms are built. It has become an inevitable necessity insistent pushing itself forward because of its comprehensive characteristic and local peculiarity in countries and societies.

As a matter of fact that most of developing countries, including Yemen, are still suffering by following traditional ways of work and this affects how administration functions and weakens administrative capabilities of the state establishments. There is an ambiguity in the systems, contradictions in legislations and absence of coordination and transparency and legal accountability as

well as objectivity in taken decisions.

What is eye-catching is that there is no similarity between senior postman experiences. There is still nepotism, weakness in monitoring, an absence of rules for evaluation and non-application of principles of reward and punishment as well as all forms of transparency and accountability and that provided opportunity for the growth of collective administrative corruption.

As a specialist in administration organization I have conducted many studies and visions since the beginnings of the 90s, demanding the abolishment of institutions that are corrupt and working to establish alternative institutions to benefit society by eliminating the administrative corruption cases within



By: Prof.
Abdulaziz Al-Tarb

those new alternative administration formations.

I also requested that other countries carry out significant reforms and to found a watchdog committee capable of activating participation in choosing leaderships, following up the process of administrative reform, and watching administrative and organizational structures in addition to promoting continuous training. I also proposed the necessity of empowering the authority to create the second leading generation in institutions and enterprises as well as distribution of powers and responsibilities that motivate the organizational body to prepare qualified

administrative leaders to guarantee monitoring against leading managers who may practice corruption. It is because those are trustworthy and close to the head of the state or the authority.

At more than one conference there was a request for reconsideration of the nation and a salaries scale in a manner to observe the inflation rate, reconsideration of workers system and their promotion and to adopt basis depending on proficiency and professional criteria in the process of employment and promotions along with a just system of salaries and wages securing justice in the distribution of income. The goal is to encourage skills and direct training establishments to prepare training opportunities in support of administrative planning and decision-making. They are also meant for building an authentic and accurate database.

Finally I think that making a success

of the process of the targeted administrative reform is difficult without launching initiatives for reforming the public sector, works sector and the balanced development. In order to guarantee that reform will be effective it must start from the base of the pyramid, inside the civil society organizations and there must be concentration on surpassing the difficulties, on the other hand. That can be achieved through studying the latest principles of administration and benefiting from experiments of advanced countries in this regard as well as drawing up programs for qualification of the state's leaderships in organizational, administrative aspects continuously until attainment of the aspired for future.

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



By Samer

Letters to the Editor

British woman gets harassed
by Yemeni authorities

For several months my mother, Mrs. Al-Hamdani, a British citizen has been threatened and harassed by individuals who are in power within the general attorney office in Aden. Al-Hamdani's family who are currently living in the U.K. explained to British government Foreign Ministry that Al-Hamdani has been battered with assaults from the local authorities of Sheikh Othman area in Aden. Those assaults have been ordered by the director of the general attorney office in order to take over Al-Hamdani possessions and property within the area.

We, Al-Hamdani's family, are pleading for help from the British government, Members of Parliament and the Foreign Ministry to take any actions in order to protect our mother

in Yemen from the serious threats that she is experiencing at this moment.

Harassments and threats are being used against Al-Hamdani on daily basis; her family stated that those people who are in the local authorities are physically harassing Al-Hamdani properties, and possessions. The Al-Hamdani family go on to explain that the extent of this harassment has reached damaging Al-Hamdani's possessions and opening gunfire on the family's lands which put a lot of people at a real risk.

We already asked for help from the Yemeni government and requested them to solve the issue and protect their mother from the serious danger she is put in because of those individuals that are operating in the Sheikh Othman area. However, Al-Hamdani and her property and are still in danger of assaults from those individuals

that are acting with the knowledge of the local police.

In a special appeal to the President Ali Abdullah Saleh, Al-Hamdani's family asked the president to interfere and solve the situation that their mother is facing because her health condition cannot take the pressure much longer. They have asked the president to stop those individuals who are taking advantage of their official positions within the local authorities to harm people and their possessions for the sake of their own personal gains and benefits.

Al-Hamdani's family explain that those individuals don't follow the laws that have been issued in order to protect their mother and people like her, and they have crossed all the lines that have been set by the court in order to stop them from harassing Al-Hamdani. It is important for both the

Yemeni and British government to be involved in the protection of my mother, and her personal possession and property, because they are concerned if the problem doesn't get solved now, the consequences will be fatal and many innocent people's lives will be put in serious danger.

Worse is that the government newspaper, 14th October on its issue dated 26th December, published that the president granted the land to unlawful people. It is astonishing and appalling how an official newspaper can make such a grave mistake without even checking. This happened just one day after the president himself said he would look into the issue as per reports from his office. How much deeper a mess can this country go into?

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Ways of denial

The Holocaust must be contextualised, and its lessons learned

The Nazi Holocaust aimed to rid Europe of its "Jewish taint". By this was meant banking capital as opposed to industrial capital and the moral degeneracy, lack of patriotism, scorn for national values, heritage and other such ills caused by the "worm" that ate away at all that was noble and pure in the Germanic people. That worm was the racial strain that never belonged, that was intrinsically alien and that nevertheless insisted on remaining in order to wreak its pollution; it was European Jewry and its various manifestations including capitalism, communism and liberalism, and its mere presence, according to this diabolical system of thought, that were a scourge to racial purity.

Late capitalism, as forcefully imposed by the centralised bureaucratic state, converged with a fanatical and rabidly xenophobic and very ideological late nationalism of the "vesrpaeteten Nationen" with a history of religious anti-Semitism dating back to the Middle Ages and the crusader expeditions that attacked Jewish villages in central Europe en route to Palestine, a religious exclusionism that targeted both Muslims and Jews in Andalusian Spain and that shaped part of European identity in terms of both an external determinant -- the Muslims -- and an internal determinant -- the Jews.

But the Nazis' obsession with the annihilation of the Jews was also fired by an ideology that incorporated totalitarian social engineering, founded upon social Darwinism and assorted recent biological discoveries that were applied to human beings, together with a populist romantic socialism that was hostile to communism, democratic socialism and liberalism, all regarded as alien to the "Volksgeist", "the spirit of the people".

This form of pseudo-scientifically justified and coldly carried out mass extermination would not have been possible without a strong ability to compartmentalise between the bureaucratic functionary and the duty to obey orders, on the one hand, and the individual and his private moral sphere on the other, a phenomenon that is one of the characteristics of the modern state apparatus. Nor would it have been possible without all the business of documentation, recording and archiving, which is also a characteristic of the modern state.

The irony of all this pseudo-scientific human taxonomy and the obsessive documentation of the

names, addresses, confiscated possessions and physical details of the people who were rounded up and freighted to the concentration camps and from there to the gas chambers is that this paperwork has become the most important primary historical source for the Holocaust and the most important instrument with which to refute the claims of those who deny it occurred or belittle its magnitude.

It is not so much the sheer numbers of victims that distinguishes the Holocaust. As unique as it was in the 20th century, millions of native inhabitants were exterminated en masse in the Americas over the course of previous centuries. Nor is it just a question of scale: many more millions died in the course of World War II, alone, than in the Nazi gas chambers and these included Russians, Germans, Poles, French, Italians and many other nationalities. The true horror of the Holocaust resides not only in the deliberate singling out of entire peoples -- Jews and Gypsies -- for extermination and in the scale of this crime, but also in the totality of the target and the "rational" way in which it was carried out.

Jews were snatched from their homes amid the general silence of their neighbours, a silence interspersed by hatermongering by anti-Semitic groups and by the active complicity of informers. Most of the Jews who died in the concentration camps were not Zionists; in fact, many may not have even heard of Zionism. Moreover, the role of the Zionist movement in saving Jews, or in conspiring with the Nazis, was very marginal, regardless of the number of studies that have been produced on both cases and regardless of the fact that most of their findings have been corroborated. Zionism did, indeed, have two faces; it was the perspectives and aims of the researchers that were and remain at odds.

The Zionist movement began, and had set its sights on Palestine, long before the Holocaust. Zionists only used the Holocaust to justify their national project in hindsight, even if that justification is what drove some Arabs to deny the existence of the Holocaust. Yet, while there are people who have felt that by minimising or even refuting the Holocaust they undermine Jewish claims to a state in Palestine, the majority of educated and informed Arab opinion has never denied the Holocaust or the existence of anti-Semitism in Europe. Rather,

they have argued -- correctly -- that since this horror took place in Europe the Palestinians should not have to pay the price.

Although it vaguely existed as a blend between the residue of a religious culture and extremist nationalist ideas imported from Europe even in early stages, anti-Semitism in the sense of hostility towards the Jews only began to spread significantly in the Arab world in the form of cultural and intellectual output after 1967. Clearly, the rise of this phenomenon coincided with the rise of a metaphysical attitude that sought to explain the overwhelming Arab defeat of that year in terms of the confrontation with an absolute evil bent on a global conspiracy of the nature of the "Protocols of the Elders of Zion", which has been proven to be an invention of the Russian secret service at the end of the 19th century but which nevertheless found many gullible ears in the Arab world in the wake of the 1967 defeat. Holocaust denial similarly emerged during this period and in the same spirit of a fantastic conspiracy theory that ascribed to an international Jewish cabal the power to invent and dupe the entire world into believing a stupendous set of lies.

I would like to suggest that there are two types of Holocaust denial. One, espoused by elements of the European traditional right and neo-ultra right, is to deny it happened. This form has not acquired sufficient roots to become a determinant of the behaviour of nations and societies. The other form of denial is to ignore that the Holocaust occurred within a particular historic context and, hence, to deal with it as some fiendish aberration that somehow occurred outside the bounds of time and place.

One major consequence of this approach is that it inhibits the study of the Holocaust as a historical phenomenon and as a sobering primer on the dangers of racism, extremist nationalist chauvinism and totalitarian social engineering in modern mass societies.

But Holocaust denial can assume another face, which is to reduce it to an instrument for realising political ends. The Zionist movement has excelled in this, its rituals and rhetoric in commemoration of Holocaust victims far outstripping its concern for the victims and its activities to combat the phenomenon when it occurred. In fact, the subject was not even on the agenda of the Jewish organised community, the "Yeshov", in mandate

Palestine during the war years and many Zionists at the time found it embarrassing to hear of Jews being dragged off to be slaughtered without putting up a resistance; it conflicted with the nationalist fighting spirit and the image of the new man they were trying to inculcate. It was not until the Eichmann trial that the embarrassed silence was broken and emotions suddenly gushed out.

In the course of Zionism's attempts to portray the history of the entire Jewish people as one uninterrupted stream of oppression and persecution that culminated inevitably in the Holocaust, Holocaust history has been transformed into an exclusively Israeli property.

Victims of the Nazi gas chambers have been nationalised and converted, in spite of themselves, either into an episode in the Zionist struggle to create a state or into an instrument for blackmailing others into supporting Zionist aims or for justifying the crimes the Zionist state perpetrates against others. It is as though the magnitude of the crime entitles Israel to play the victim par excellence or the victims' sole proxy, placing it beyond accusations of wrongdoing because it is the victim by definition.

The Zionist casting of all Jews as victims of Nazi atrocities has given rise to two curious phenomena. The first is that any Israeli can speak and act as the victim even if he has more in common ideologically and psychologically with the offender or the "Capo" -- the Jews who cooperated with the Nazis in the concentration camps.

In other words, the mere fact of being born to a Jewish mother somehow gives licence to represent all victims, including in front of those who actually are more victims than he is and those who are more hostile to Nazism, racism and its offshoots. The second phenomenon is the monopoly claimed by the Israeli ruling establishment to speak on behalf of Jews and Jewish history in general, which largely translates into soliciting, and pressuring for, political and financial support for Israel.

In the first instance, the challenge of truly understanding and learning lessons from the Nazi phenomenon is reduced to something akin to a therapy session in which those in the role of victim help those in the role of perpetrator purge their guilt by satisfying the psychological and material demands of the former. There is something morally repugnant in this passing of the sins, or innocence, of the fathers to the sons, as opposed to engaging in an objective process of historical investigation with the aim of

combating racism in all forms and in all societies.

After all, the main victims of European racism today are not Jews, and in Palestine Zionism is not the victim but the perpetrator. Unfortunately, the Israeli-German therapy sessions ignore such stark realities and, in so doing, offer both the Israelis and the Germans carte blanche to vent their racism on others, as though the Holocaust were a purely German-Israeli concern and the greater phenomenon of racism something else entirely. It is as if through their mutual catharsis with regard to the former they exonerate themselves from responsibility for the latter.

Meanwhile, Zionism's unwarranted, illogical and historically unsubstantiated monopoly on the role of Holocaust victims' spokesperson sits well with Europe. Most of Zionism's aims and demands do not require Europe to engage in a serious process of introspection in order to uproot the deeper causes that gave rise to the Holocaust. Contrary to what one may logically expect, this suits Zionism's purposes because it keeps the monolithic discreteness of the Holocaust intact and diminishes, in comparison, the significance of Europe's other crimes.

The upshot is to toss the entire Jewish question outside Europe and dump it in the Middle East. It may come as a relief to European officials to be able to exonerate themselves for the Holocaust by placating Israel with anti-Palestinian, anti-Arab and even anti-Muslim sympathies. If anything, however, this form of behaviour confirms the continuation of the underlying syndrome, a syndrome that is nevertheless glossed over with a fresh bill of moral health, authorised and stamped by Israel after every visit of atonement a European leader makes to the "Yad Vashim" Museum in Jerusalem.

It is for this reason that all victims of racism across the world should campaign to break the Zionist hold over the role of spokesman for victims of the Holocaust. Conversely, the Arabs and Palestinians who deny the Holocaust offer European and Zionist racism no greater gift than this denial of the occurrence of the Holocaust. What possible Arab or Islamic interest can it serve to even offer to exonerate Europe of one of the blackest pages in its history? To do so is not only to absolve Europe of a crime that was, in fact, committed, but also to earn its contempt and to wake up one day to find Europe and Israel joining forces against Arab or Muslim Holocaust deniers with such venom that one

might imagine that the Holocaust had occurred in Egypt or Iran and that Holocaust denial is a far graver crime than the perpetration of the Holocaust itself.

Holocaust denial is just plain stupid, also as a political argument. But Israel will be no less expedient in turning the provocation against its regional adversaries who had nothing to do with the Holocaust.

On the other hand, the Holocaust is a phenomenon that merits proper scholastic study, the purpose of which is to sort fact from fiction, and myth from reality. No incident in history lies beyond the realm of historical research. This said, Tehran can hardly be said to have a tradition of Holocaust studies; the subject does not rate very high in Iranian academic priorities.

And a conference in Tehran that was proceeded by a political speech denying the Holocaust cannot be said to be an academic conference; it was a political demonstration, one that harms the Arabs and Muslims and serves only the ultra-right and neo-Nazi forces in Europe and the Zionist movement.

During World War II, when some Arabs and other Third World peoples were rooting for Germany because it was fighting the colonial powers France and Britain, the Arab and Third World left, which had allied with the Soviet Union, argued that it was wrong for the victims of racism to side with the racist Nazi regime. Their position was correct. Today, there is not even a pragmatic immoral justification whatsoever for siding with European racism.

Holocaust denial does not undermine the moral justifications for the existence of the state of Israel, as some imagine. What it does, however, is hand the European right and Israel a convenient enemy upon which to unload their problems. This enemy comprises Palestinians and Arabs, specifically fundamentalist Muslims, those Bush is fond of calling "Islamic fascists".

The initial Arab reaction to the Holocaust was simple and straightforward and much more rational. The Holocaust occurred, but it was a tragedy for which the Europeans, not the Arabs, should assume responsibility. This is the opinion that prevailed throughout the 1940s and 1950s, the sense of normalcy that survived in all of us continues to hold it.

Azmi Bishara : is an Israeli Arab politician and an elected member of the Knesset.

Source: weekly.ahram.org.eg

By: Noah Barkin

The German government has been working overtime to play down expectations for its looming EU presidency and it is not difficult to understand why.

In addition to a host of thorny international issues Germany will be confronted with when it takes the EU chair from Finland on Jan. 1, Berlin faces the monumental task of shaking Europe out of the torpor that set in last year when French and Dutch voters rejected a new EU constitution.

Chancellor Angela Merkel has vowed to revive that treaty - a huge challenge in a bloc where scepticism about the European project is on the rise half a century after it was launched in response to the devastation of World War II.

Complicating the task for Berlin

during its six-month presidency will be the sheer size of the EU, which will expand to 27 member states when Romania and Bulgaria join next month.

Forging consensus on the constitution, as well as other sensitive issues on the German agenda including EU energy strategy and relations with Russia, will be all the more difficult with this unwieldy group.

"We know the expectations are very high," German Foreign Minister Frank-Walter Steinmeier said in Brussels this week.

Designed to streamline decision-making in the enlarged EU, a constitution is seen by many in Europe as crucial to ensuring the smooth functioning of the EU.

But Germany must balance the interests of the 18 nations that ratified the existing treaty against those of the French, the Dutch and also sceptics

like Britain, the Czech Republic and Poland.

It has an extremely tight window. At a June summit in Brussels, just one month after France elects a new president, Germany aims to lay out a timetable and rough outline of what a new constitution could look like.

The hope in Berlin is that the EU can end the ratification process - all members must approve the charter for it to take effect - before European parliamentary elections in 2009.

Germany has vowed to keep the substance of the existing treaty, but a more likely outcome may be the "mini-treaty" advocated by French presidential contender Nicolas Sarkozy.

"A mini-treaty would look like a defeat for the Germans, but as long as you don't call it that it could work," said Katinka Barysch of the Centre for European Reform in London.

The constitution is one of a series

of sensitive issues Germany will be tackling in the first half of 2007.

It has ambitions to kick-start the long-dormant Middle East peace process as part of the "quartet" of mediators - a grouping of the EU, Russia, UN and US.

But Germany's controversial efforts to engage Syria in this effort have failed, and continued unrest in Lebanon and violence between Israel and Palestinians have cast a cloud over plans for the troubled region.

Forging a comprehensive new EU co-operation agreement with Russia, another of Germany's key tasks as president, appears to be slipping down the priority list.

The launch of talks has been blocked by Poland, which wants Russia to end its ban on Polish meat imports.

And after talking openly for much of 2006 about an ambitious new "Ostpolitik" which would bind Russia

closely to the EU, Germany's eagerness to negotiate with Moscow has faded as concerns mount about the murders of a Russian journalist and former KGB agent.

"It simply isn't a priority anymore," said Alexander Rahr of the German Council on Foreign Relations in Berlin. "The government is quietly distancing itself from a new Ostpolitik." Instead, Germany may focus more intensely on energy policy and climate change. The European Commission is expected to present proposals for an EU energy action plan in January and Germany will lead discussions on the issue with a view to agreeing a final plan at a March summit in Brussels.

Complicating this debate will be Europe's heavy reliance on Russian energy and splits within Merkel's ruling coalition on the use of nuclear power.

Germany's diplomatic minefield

will not end there. In early 2007, it may face the tough task of forging consensus on the sensitive issue of Kosovo's independence from Serbia - an aspiration supported by most EU members but opposed by Russia.

Other issues likely to force their way on to the German agenda include Iran's nuclear ambitions and Turkey's faltering bid to join the EU. As German officials have noted in recent weeks, unexpected crises could also arise.

Finland and Austria, which held the six-month EU chairs in 2006, spent a good part of their presidencies dealing with the Lebanon war and a natural gas row between Russia and Ukraine.

"We know what we can plan for, but we also know we could end up spending most of our time dealing with the unexpected," Steinmeier said this week. - Reuters

source: Gulf Times Newspaper.

In praise of times past Aleppo, Capital of Islamic Culture 2006

The Islamic Conference decided to select capitals of culture from the Islamic world to be representatives of the positive face of Islamic civilisation. Mona Naggar has been taking a look around in Aleppo, one of this year's Capitals

A metal ball monument has been the talk of the town in Aleppo for months. In the city's central Saadallah al-Jabiri Square, across from the monument to those who fell in the struggle for independence against France, what is reputed to be the Middle East's largest metal ball has become the setting for a variety of cultural events. Many of the city's inhabitants however are not



Issa Touma: "I am not against the culture capital idea as such, but I refuse to work with unprofessional people"

particularly impressed.

The illumination of the square has also incurred their wrath given the problems that the city's electricity supply is prone to.

But it is the improvement work on Saadallah al-Jabiri Square that is to thank for Aleppo's selection as one of this year's Capitals of Culture. The Organisation of the Islamic Conference has decided that each year three cities from the Islamic world are to be chosen as Capitals of Islamic Culture. They are to be

presented to the world as showcases of Islamic civilisation.

Last year it was Mecca, birthplace of Islam, which was chosen as inaugural city. This time round the honour is being shared by Aleppo, Isfahan and Timbuktu.

A hub of Islamic high culture

Mohammad Kujjah, director of the archaeological society and of the general secretariat in charge of the festivities in Aleppo is proud of his city's performance in beating off competition from Damascus, Istanbul and Cairo to fulfil the criteria set by the Conference of Islamic States. In his office, close to Aleppo's historic citadel, he is in his element expounding on the history of Halab, as the city was known in the second century BC. This north Syrian city, which is one of the oldest continuously inhabited in the world, became a UNESCO World Heritage Site in 1986.

The imposing citadel, the mosques, churches, schools, khans, hammams, covered souks and hospitals reflect all epochs of Islamic history. High-water mark in the city's history came during the rule of the Hamdanid prince Saif ad-Daula in the 10th century, with his court becoming a magnet for prominent men of letters and scholars such as the poet al-Mutanabi and the mathematician al-Khawarizmi.

A hopeless task

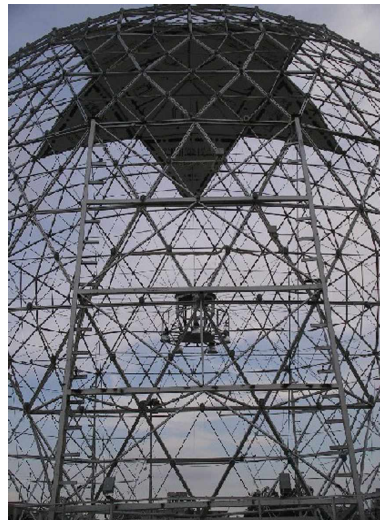
For centuries the city was an important trading centre. Today it is still home to a multi-ethnic, multi-faith population. Aleppo is also associated with prominent figures from the period of the Arab Renaissance or nahda, such as the writer Abdarrahman al-Kawakibi or the literary family Marrash.

It's a rich heritage, and one which the programme of events is intended to reflect. Something of a hopeless task though, as Mohammad Kujjah explains: "Really, one would need years to properly prepare for such an event. But it wasn't until the middle of last year that we were informed that Aleppo had been chosen as one of the culture capitals. And, unfortunately, I have to say, we received a budget of only two million dollars from the Syrian government."

Neither the Organisation of the Islamic Conference nor the Arab League was prepared to give financial support to the city. The programme, which is comprised of a mix of lectures, readings, exhibitions and some concerts, can be downloaded each month from the website that has been specially set up for the occasion.

The threat of marginalisation

The main focus of the events is clearly on the glories of Aleppo's history. The challenges and problems that have been a feature of the citizens' lives for decades in a city with a population now close to four million, hardly feature at all. One challenge is the provision of a city plan that would help cope with the



Aleppo's Metal Ball is reputed to be the Middle East's largest metal ball - but like much of the city's 2006 cultural programme it has been severely criticised



Aleppo's historic citadel

swelling population, improve the quality of life and preserve the authentic identity of the city as well as help resist the threat of marginalisation posed by the power of capital Damascus.

Among the citizens, enthusiasm for the festivities has been somewhat restrained. Some are openly sceptical and happy to spread the latest rumours on the corrupt officials who, they maintain, are only out to line their own pockets. Many others are simply not interested. Musician and singer Zafer Jesri, however, is critical of such thinking:

"We are not used to culture. People sit in front of their television sets and don't get out. I don't believe that the organisers have done anything wrong; it's just that people in Aleppo are fond of finding negative things to say. For us glass is always half empty."

Independent cultural activities as security risk

The intellectual Abdarazzaq Id, who admits he has not been to any of the events, is more critical, and sympathises with the views of his fellow citizens. People, he believes, don't trust anything that is organised

by the government. Such things tend to bear the imprint of the Baath Party and the intelligence services and are treated with indifference.

Independently organised cultural activities were not welcomed by the powers that be and looked upon as a security risk. Id believes that Aleppo's cultural life is in terminal decline.

Gallery owner and photographer Issa Touma is boycotting the official activities. He has refused to allow the international photographic exhibition, which has been running at his gallery since last October, to be included as part of the Capital of Islamic Culture programme. "I am not against the culture capital idea as such, but I refuse to work with unprofessional people."

Touma's readiness for confrontation, an attitude that has led to his gallery facing closure, speaks openly about how the city is run:

"We've been complaining to the culture minister for years about the culture-starved condition of Aleppo. We are in a very bad state. Many galleries have had to close in recent years. The main problem is the power of the Amn as-Siyasi, one of Syria's many intelligence organisations; they

control everything that goes on in the city. In Damascus, permission for such cultural events comes directly from the Ministry of Culture."

But in Aleppo every exhibition needs the approval of the intelligence service.

A lost opportunity

One thing that those involved in the cultural sector in Aleppo, whatever their political persuasion, are agreed upon, is that the title of Capital of Islamic Culture represented the biggest chance in decades for the city to present itself internationally.

Not only the critics have been expressing disappointment. Even someone friendly to the regime, like writer Walid Ikhlas, director of the culture committee with responsibility for the festivities, talks of a lost opportunity.

The various local organisers have given their best to the project, but in a climate of strict political control culture, too, must live within confines. An unfortunate truth, even in a city boasting thousands of years of glorious history.

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Body LANGUAGE

By: Nisreen Shadad

Bus route gestures: Bab Al-Yemen roundabout

Driving a Yemeni bus and calling riders to get on is slightly problematic because buses have numerous routes, but often use the same departure point.

In order for riders to communicate with bus drivers, Yemenis created gestures and signs that easily refer to where buses are going. In the past, illiterate men dominated as bus drivers, so both drivers and riders needed a way to communicate with each other. Once citizens became more educated, the bus's direction was written on its front, as well as coloring certain routes red, yellow or green.

In this issue we will talk about the gestures of Bab Al-Yemen Street. There are numerous gestures bus drivers and passengers use. Such gestures mostly depend on the direction the bus will take.

Bab Al-Yemen is the departure



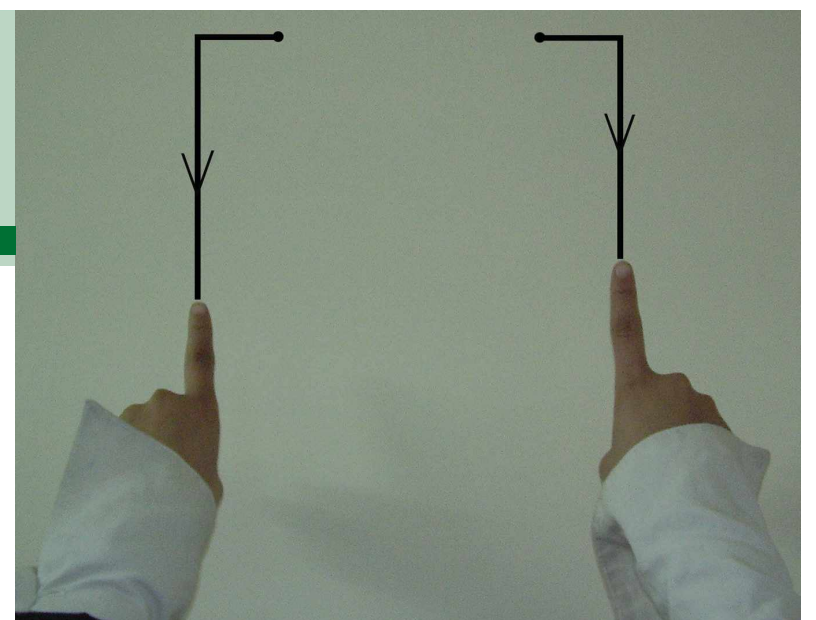
There are many hand gestures used by Bab Al-Yemen bus drivers and passengers; such gestures rely on the direction the driver is going to take. Bus drivers of Bab Al-Yemen- Hail and Shumaila district motion their forefinger forward. For drivers of Bab Al-Yemen- Al-Safya and Asr, they point out to the right side while drivers of Bab Al-Yemen- Hail-Mathbah point out to the left side.

point for nine different buses heading different ways. The first is Bab Al-Yemen-Hail. It begins from Bab Al-Yemen and ends in Hail, "When going to Hail Street or coming back to Bab Al-Yemen, we have to pass through Al-Zubairi Street. In Al-Zubairi, whether we are going to Hail Street or Bab Al-Yemen we motion our

forefinger forward," said Anwar Hizam, a bus driver. Bab Al-Yemen-Shumaila district as well uses the same gestures, "Go straight we motion our forefinger forward," said bus driver Ali Mohammed Al-Hazwara. Bab Al-Yemen-Al-Safya people are sticking out the thumb and pointing to the right side, "When we are at

Taiz round, we point to the right side. It is like merry-go-round so that we always point out to the right direction," Ahmed Al-Harazi, a bus driver.

Abdullah Ali Al-Hawsali, a representative and Hifhullah Al-Rabidi, a bus driver of Al-Hasaba- Bab Al-Yemen said they use no gestures when going to



This hand gesture is mostly used by the passengers to indicate Bab Al-Yemen (Yemen gate). They draw on the air using both hands two lines at each side. They begin with a horizontal line and then going down to draw a vertical line.

Al-Hasaba or Bab Al-Yemen. People who use buses of Bab Al-Yemen-Tahreer also use no gestures; they call the riders saying "Tahreer" or "Bab Al-Yemen." The gestures of Bab Al-Yemen-Hail-Mathbah drivers and passengers is to motion the forefinger to the left side, "It is because we go straight and turn left," said Ahmed Al-Yarimi, a bus driver.

"People motion using their both hands as if they drawing a door in the air to indicate the picture of Bab Al-Yemen. However, this gesture is mostly used by the passengers," Al-Yarimi commented. Ali Al-Badawi, a bus driver added, "Buses of Bab Al-Yemen-Hadda drivers use this gesture when coming back to Bab Al-Yemen."

Bus drivers of Bab Al-Yemen-

Asr point to the right side when going to Asr, however, when coming back people use two hand gestures, "We motion our forefinger forward when going from Asr to Kentucky round, however, from Kentucky to Bab Al-Yemen we motion our forefinger forward," Molatif Al-Ateela, a bus driver. For Bab Al-Yemen-Shamlan bus drivers move their forefinger in a circular manner until they reach the New University. When coming back; from Kentucky round to Bab Al-Yemen, people motion to the left side," Mohammed Qazwan.

The color of the routes depend on the departure point, "If the route is yellow means the departure point is Al-Hasaba, if it is red, the departure point is Tahreer and if it is green the departure point is Bab Al-Yemen," Al-Hawsali added.



The color is always related to the departure point, a red color (the right) indicates that the departure point is Al-Tahreer, a yellow color (the middle) indicates that the departure point is Al-Hasaba and a green color (the left) indicates that the departure point is Taiz round, Bab Al-Yemen and Shumaila.

Yemen plays Eritrea

Agencies — Preparing for the 18th Arabian Gulf Championship, scheduled to take place Jan. 17 – 31 in Abu Dhabi, the capital of U.A.E., Yemen's national football team played its Eritrean counterpart in a friendly game at Al-Meraiasi Stadium in Sana'a Sunday. Yemen is participating for the third time in a row in the Gulf competition.

According to Hussein Al-Sharif, the Second Deputy Chairman of Yemen Football Federation, this practice match was held as part of a series of efforts the federation exerts to prepare the national team for the Gulf championship.

The national football team is led by the Egyptian coach Mohsen Saleh, who recently selected a new formation of players from different Yemeni clubs with the aim of helping the team demonstrate better performance in the Gulf competition.

"The Yemen Football Federation has been working hard to organize another practice game between Yemen and Sudan on Jan. 10, but the Sudanese Football Federation excused itself to accept the invitation due to the difficult conditions its team is going through," said Al-Sharif.

He added that the Yemen Football Federation asked its Syrian counterpart for a friendly game between Yemen and Syria, but the Syrian federation conditioned the match must be staged in Syria, which Yemen accepted.

Al-Sharif confirmed that federation is keen to provide the convenient



Yemeni football national team.

atmosphere for the team to prepare well before the 18th Arabian Gulf Championship starts.

He pointed out that Yemen's national football team can play practice matches with other Egyptian teams like Al-Esmaili and Ithad of Alexandria, but it gave priority to friendly meetings with national teams.

Al-Sharif hopes that Yemen teammates benefit from the available facilities and be well prepared in order to demonstrate better performance in the most important Gulf sporting event.

As part of its preparation for the Gulf event, the national team held a 10-day external camp in Cairo during which it played Arab Contractors and Anbi teams. It lost 1-0 to the former and made a 1-1 draw with the latter.

The most important thing is that the team played enthusiastically and

showed good performances in both games.

Under the Egyptian coach Mohsen Saleh, the national team seems improved, thus making fans pin hopes to be in their best in the Arabian Gulf competition. The coach selected a new formation involving younger players whose ages don't exceed 23 years.

Saleh was of the wish to continue camping in Cairo since he believes that playing strong clubs from Egypt is better for Yemen than playing with weak teams such as Eritrea and Sudan.

The Eritrean team's delegation arrived in Sana'a Saturday morning led by Chairman of the Eritrean Football Federation Eto'o Asfi, who said that his team wants to gain experience and benefit from meeting Yemen.

Al-Nono leads his Syrian team to victory

Agencies — As part of the Professionals Tourney's 13th round, the international star of Yemen's football team Ali Al-Nono led his Syrian Tashrine Team to win 2-0 over Al-Fetwah team on Saturday.

Al-Nono is one of the Syrian Premier League top scorers, particularly after he put his side ahead with a strong header, while playing Al-Fetwah, just three minutes after the meeting began.

Al-Nono added his second goal in the second half of the encounter following personal effort to easily place the ball home in Al-Fetwah's net. With this victory, Al-Nono's team advanced to fifth place with 16 points while the loser remained in the position eight with 13 points.

The Syrian team brought on Al-Nono last month to play as forward. The Yemeni striker played for Egypt's Bur Sa'eed, the Sudanese Mars team and the Besaitain team of Bahrain. Over the past time period, he played for his original team Ahli Sana'a before being signed by the Syrian team. Al-Nono is expected to camp with the national team in preparation for the 18th Arabian Gulf Championship, which is due to start on Jan. 17 in U.A.E.



Ali Al-Nono

Egypt's Ahli team will play in Yemen

Agencies — The Egyptian Ahli team accepted to hold an international friendly game with Yemen's national football team in the middle of 2007 in the capital Sana'a.

The Yemeni Ambassador to Egypt Abdulwali Al-Shamiri said that he received official consent from the Egyptian team to play Yemen in Sana'a in six months. The match is due to coincide with the 100th Anniversary of Egypt's Ahli team.

The consent indicated that the Egyptian team is due to involve all its international stars including Mohamed Abu Turaikah, striker Emad Mute'eb, the Angolan professional player Flafiyo and the great star Mohamed Barakat.



Egyptian team.

20 years now, Samson of Arabs back in Sana'a

Agencies — Samson of Arabs, a Syrian sportsman in the name of Zaid Nasim Sa'ab, has returned to Sana'a once again this month to perform his amazing shows following 20 years of absence from Yemen. He made the last show in Yemen at Al-Dharafi Stadium in Sana'a in 1986.

Samson of Arabs, who has been famous since the 70s of the last century, shows his unfamiliar performance demonstrating fitness and the strong physique the man enjoys and which is not enjoyed by anyone else.

Sa'ab played similar performances in many Arab and African countries since he began his career in 1974.

Samson of Arabs visited Sana'a for the first time in 1986 in response to an invitation from Wahdat Sana'a Club. At Al-Dherafi Stadium, he showed unfamiliar performance in the presence of thousands of spectators numbering up to 20 thousand.

In a statement to Yemen News Agency Sheba, Sa'ab expressed his happiness over visiting Yemen for the second time and viewing the developmental, political, social and sporting changes the country went through over the past years.

He pointed out that he returned to Yemen since he was pleased by the hospitality of Yemenis who are more helpful and hospitable than Africans and people of other Arab countries.



Samson of Arabs during one of his performances.

The strong sportsman is planning to show his amazing performance in the Yemeni cities of Sana'a, Aden, Ibb, Hodeidah and Mukalla in coordination with the Ministry of Youth and Sports.

Samson of Arabs' shows have varied during his last visit to Yemen including a car driving over his arm, foot and chest. He stands between two cars and prevents them from colliding with each other. He drags cars via a rope to his teeth or hair, and a rock weighing 200 kg can be hammered until it is broken down on his chest and head. Samson stands on a wood board filled with pins

and two men standing on his shoulders and prevents a motorbike from running through a rope to his teeth.

Samson of Arabs has been residing in the Mauritanian capital Nouakchott for 17 years during which he showed his amazing performance in different African countries.

The Syrian guy exercised boxing in the early days of his life when he moved for work in the Lebanese capital Beirut in 1973 thanks to his fitness and sound physique. In the same year, he won the Lebanese Clubs' Championship before he quit boxing.

Chelsea's billions boost silverware, hamper youngsters

By: Ossian Shine

SINGAPORE, Jan 7 (Reuters) — Roman Abramovich's billions have brought glory and silverware to English champions Chelsea, but they have done little to enhance the prospects of teenage hopefuls at the London club.

Filipino midfielder James Youngusband was released from Chelsea last year after 10 years at Stamford Bridge and says it is harder than ever to make the grade at the Russian oligarch's club.

"Before Roman Abramovich's time, out of about 100 youths, seven or eight would make it," said Youngusband, who is in Singapore to represent the Philippines in a friendly international against the hosts.

"Now, with increased competition from

other European youth players — and more finances — only three or four succeed."

The 20-year-old has moved to semi-professional side AFC Wimbledon and is rapidly coming to terms with the realities of life outside the top flight, while younger brother Philip remains at Chelsea.

"Leaving Chelsea was the lowest point of my football career, a big setback," he told Singapore's Sunday Times.

"It's more physical in the lower leagues, not pretty football.

"You face bigger-sized players, the ball's in the air more," said the midfielder who played for Chelsea from the Under-10s to the U-19s levels, and made 30 appearances for the reserves in the two seasons before being let go.

While James will take part in this

month's Asean soccer championships, staged in Singapore and Thailand, his brother has ruled himself out.

"Unfortunately, I won't be going. I have spoken with Chelsea and they feel it is best I stay here at such an important time during the football season," he told Filipino media.

"This is the period where decisions will be made about my future."

The Asean soccer tournament - formerly the Tiger Cup - is a biennial tournament featuring national sides from South-East Asia and takes place this year from Jan. 12-Feb. 4.

The Filipinos have been grouped with three-time winners Thailand, Myanmar and Malaysia, while the Singapore group features Vietnam, Indonesia and Laos, the top team in the qualifying stage.

((وبش الصابرين الذين اذا اصابهم مصيبة قالوا انا لله وانا اليه راجعون))

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والده السيد العلامة /

محمد حسن محمد الحيفي

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كافة طاقم ومنتسبي مؤسسة يمن تايمز للصحافة

والطباعة والنشر

Medication smuggling ... Who is responsible?

By: Rowaida Al-Saqqaf
For Yemen Times

A new study on medicines in the Yemeni markets revealed that 37 to 50 percent of medicines are smuggled. The study, conducted by the manager of sales in Al-Rafa Foundation for Medicines Dr. Ali Al-Dowa, said that a large amount of drugs that unofficially enter the Yemeni markets are spoiled and ineffective. Of course this study is not the first one warning of fake medications that threaten the economy as well as people's lives. The authorities such as Ministry of Health, Supreme Drugs Authority, Customhouse and even medicinal agents still exchange the accusations of who take the responsibility behind the spread of drug smuggling.

"Pharmaceutical agents in Yemen do not have the capability to guarantee a constant supply of medications to the Yemeni markets and that encourages smugglers. At the same time, the concerned authorities do not create radical solutions such as compelling the agents to provide these medications all year," said medicine agent Dr. Nasser Ahmed Nasser, explaining the reasons behind the spread of smuggled medication in Yemen. Nasser blamed

the patient's need to some medications not available in the Yemeni market and where are no substitution of these medication," said Al-Baw'ani.

Smuggled medication mostly does not contain the effective constituents to fight disease, even if the medication is not faked, the smuggling and storing process expose these medications to spoil, according to Al-baw'ani.

In this regard Dr. Riadh Abdulmawla said that the danger of smuggled medicine lies in the fact that these medicines come from an unknown source and nobody knows if it is genuine.

"Much of such medication have been adulterated and could be fatal," noted Abdulmawla. "Unfortunately the normal Yemeni citizen cannot recognize between the smuggled medication and the original one. Sometimes even the pharmacist cannot distinguish between them, as some faked medications look similar the original one in its shape and the agent seal."

Medicinal companies are involved

According to some health experts, smuggled medicines mainly enter the country from the Horn of Africa, particularly Djibouti, from where they are brought by sea to the Yemeni coast. Yemen spends over \$115 million

a lot of the medication is illegal.

But Dr. Mohammed Abdulmughni stressed that agent companies are not involved in smuggling drugs to the country and "there are in Yemen 35 medicinal agents, each one has its reputation so all of them are supposed to compete to gain citizens' trust."

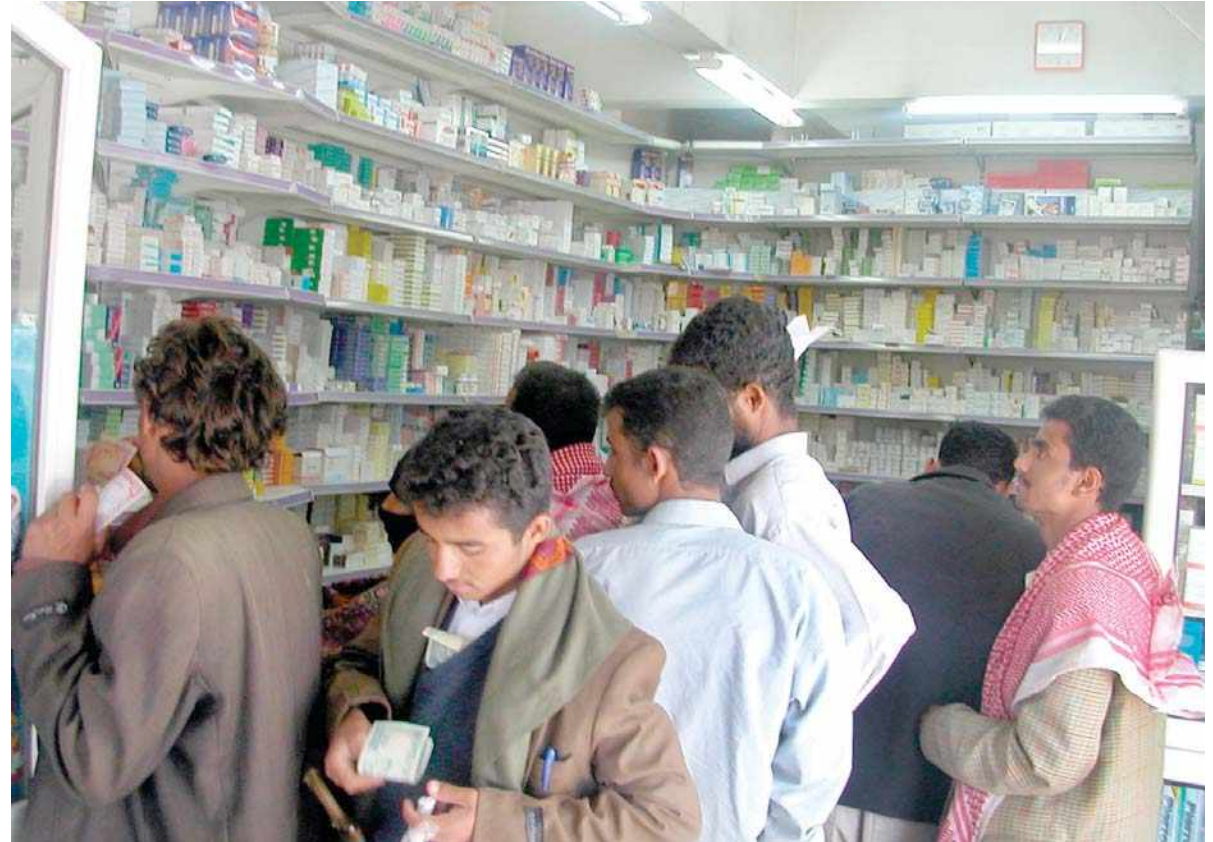
Death bottle or drug bottle

According to health workers most of the smuggled drugs have not been tested in laboratories and, if they are genuine, have often passed their expiry dates. Additionally, they seldom meet international standards for proper storage.

"Those medicines are being stored in miserable and unhealthy climates and environments, so they lose effectiveness at least or become very poisonous," Al-Dowa's study mentioned.

But even armed with these facts, Adel Mahub, who suffers diabetes, confessed that he resorts to using smuggled insulin because "many times we can't find the insulin in the pharmacies so we turn to any source to provide us with this medication even by smuggling."

Another patient said that he does not care about the source of the medication and thanked those who bring him cheaper medicine because "it is a



Most Yemeni patients tend to use the cheapest medicine and it leads them to contraband medicines.

different between the drug trader and the yogurt trader so in principle there is no common between trader, humanitarian, and medication. Ministry of Health is the first responsible in this problem."

Customs and medicine authority

Many accusations were directed to the Customhouse which is considered the official authority observing the terrestrial, marine and aerial passages. An official in Customhouse refused to publish his name confirmed that they are playing its role in the light of its given authority and according to the laws and regulations which fight all kinds of smuggling including medicine smuggling.

"Last March, five tons of smuggled medications were destroyed in Al-

Azrqaen wasteland. These medications were seized in some stores in the municipality," said the authority. "Moreover we seized a vehicle carrying a large amount of smuggled medications including 37 medicinal types. Including medications for children, and cosmetics." He noted that most of these medications were expired.

"To fight such phenomenon we need to all support and efforts of officials and private sectors to get positive results. We need a certain time plan by which we can restrict all the medications stores and pharmacies whose owners sell the smuggled, expired drugs. This plan also should include all the Yemeni governorates," he said.

An official in Supreme Drugs

Authority, who also refused to give his name, said that the authority does not directly monitor the medications that enter the country.

"The role of the authority, at the borders, comes only when Customhouse or securities ask its advice about these medications," he said, adding that the authority tried to treat this phenomenon by finding confident medicine producers whether they are local, Arabic or European.

"The contraband medications in the Yemeni market form 60 to 70 percent, but the situation is better now with the issue of Price Medication Resolution. Our goal now is to distinguish between the faked and the imported medications by approving certain signs, agents names, register number, and price," he concluded.



Dr. Nasser Ahmed Nasser



Dr. Mohammed Abdulmughni



Dr. Sami Al-Baw'ani



Dr. Riadh Abdulmawla

the securities, particularly those in the boundaries, confirming that there are many influential men involved in the smuggling process. Dr. Sami Al-Baw'ani agreed with Nasser, adding that these medications are easily entering the country through the customhouse "which only imposes fines, no other punishment, in case they seized these medications. Not to mention the bribes will be paid to disregard."

"Some powerful men cooperated with unconcerned medication traders who exploit the difficult economic circumstances that most patients live in and sell these medications at low prices to gain fast profits. They also exploit

yearly on medicines. Most of this is spent on imported medicines from 50 countries through 400 importers, as the local pharmaceutical plants only produce just over 15 percent of Yemen's requirements.

Most poor Yemeni patients, however, tend to use the cheapest medicine and it lead them to the contraband medicines. It affects the medicinal business in Yemen directly, and some known medicinal companies and agents now buy huge amounts of the contraband medication and put their company seal on the product before remarketing these medications.

Nasser says that a visit to any pharmacy can show the consumer that

humanitarian service offered by smugglers."

Nasser thinks along the same lines saying, "I agree with this sentence. I can't blame the smugglers because they offer humanitarian service maybe I want to thank some of them who save some patients' lives I blamed those who smuggle medications to gain profits."

Whereas Abdulmughni corrected this sentence in his point of view saying, "Drug smugglers are giving a devil service in drug bottle."

However Al-Baw'ani has different view saying, "Medication traders in Yemen have no knowledge of pharmaceuticals so there are no

New vaccines against cervical cancer

The introduction of new vaccines against the virus that causes cervical cancer, could have a major impact on the health of women in the developing world, said World Health Organization last month.

According to WHO more than 250 000 women died from cervical cancer in 2005 - the vast majority in developing countries.

Cervical cancer is the second most common type of cancer among women, with deaths projected to rise by almost 25 per cent over the next 10 years, according to WHO. In 2005 there were more than 500 000 new cases of cervical cancer, of which over 90 per cent were in developing countries. Left untreated, invasive cervical cancer is almost always fatal.

Well-organized screening and early treatment programs have been very effective in preventing the most common kind of cervical cancer but they are costly and difficult to implement in low-resource settings. In 2006, a vaccine - that protects against infection and disease associated with the Human Papillomavirus (HPV) - the virus that causes cervical cancer - was licensed, and another vaccine may be licensed soon.

The recently licensed vaccine is effective in preventing infections with the HPV types (16 and 18) that cause approximately 70 percent of all cervi-

cal cancers, as well as in preventing infections with those types (6 and 11) that cause approximately 90 percent of genital warts. This and another HPV vaccine are under regulatory review in countries around the world and may offer a new opportunity to eliminate cervical cancer, the number-two cancer killer of women.

"New vaccines against HPV in the developing world could save hundreds of thousands of lives if delivered effectively," said Dr Howard Zucker, WHO Assistant Director-General for Health Technology and Pharmaceuticals. "The roll-out of effective HPV vaccines is important for several reasons: They help in combating a deadly cancer and are a potent technology to add to existing cancer control programmes based on prevention, screening and treatment."

The vaccines -- which are initially targeted at girls and may be expanded to boys in the future before or around the time of first sexual activity -- offer the unique opportunity to address segments of the populations that are traditionally difficult to reach: young adolescents. Thus, a multifaceted strategy should exploit the opportunity to promote sexual and reproductive health by strengthening health programmes for adolescents.

"We don't know the final cost of the vaccine in developing countries," said Arletty Pinel, Chief, Reproductive

Health Branch of UNFPA. "But, we can be certain it is going to be a major challenge to introduce quickly where it is needed most - in the poorest countries. Eighty per cent of women who die of cervical cancer are generally poor and live in underserved areas. They will be the ones to benefit most from affordable prices and access to this vaccine."

Mobilizing resources for strengthening health systems and purchasing HPV vaccines, both nationally and internationally, must be a priority and there must be innovative ways to finance HPV introduction. At an international level, partnerships will be needed to try to reduce the usual time-lag between formal registration and availability in developed countries, and establishing a negotiated price and adequate production capacity to supply developing countries.

In addition to being a new tool for the prevention of a very common form of cancer, the introduction of effective HPV vaccines has other potential benefits for health systems in general. The roll out of such vaccines could help build synergies among immunization, cancer control and sexual and reproductive health. It also has the potential to provide valuable experience for the introduction of any future vaccine against HIV.

Source: World Health Organization

CALL FOR EXPRESSION OF INTEREST - SECURITY GUARDS SERVICE

The Delegation of the European Commission in the Hashemite Kingdom of Jordan intends to conclude with a company specialised in the security of persons and premises a service contract for the surveillance of its offices, Residence and accommodations in Amman, Jordan and in Sana'a, Yemen (2 lots).

The contract will be awarded after tender following a restricted procedure. Only the companies pre-selected among those having replied to this call of expression of interest will be invited to submit a bid.

Bids should be submitted for one or more lots.

If you are interested in this service contract, the conditions for the pre-selection may be received in person either

- from Sunday to Thursday, up to 8 February 2007 from 9am to 3pm from the Head of Administration of the Delegation of the European Commission in Jordan, Al-Ameerah Basma Street - North Abdoun

OR

- from Saturday to Wednesday, up to 8 February 2007 from 9am to 3pm from the Administrative Assistant of the Delegation of the European Commission in Yemen, Diplomatic zone (Parallel to Haddah St.) at the junction of st. 1 and st. 16, 2nd to Haddah st. Villa # 12 (opposite Hawai recreation Youth Club).

You can also request the conditions for the pre-selection by electronic mail to the following address : bruno.devos@ec.europa.eu, up to 8 February 2007.

The deadline for the submission of the documents required for the pre-selection is fixed to 11 February 2007.

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Korean Community in Yemen

By: Joseph Park
For Yemen Times

The Korean Community in Yemen is not as big as in other Arab countries, with United Arab Emirates having about 600 Koreans, it only consists of about 70 to 80 people. But the size of the Korean community in Yemen is on an increase. In fact, there is a chance of a Korean Embassy opening in Sana'a. The Korean community was huge before the Gulf War; it consisted of about 1,000 people. As the Gulf War happened, the Korean People in Yemen started to leave, then as the Yemeni War happened the Korean community in Yemen dropped to only a few families. During the Korean IMF crisis, the Korean government had not found a reason to keep an embassy here, so the Korean government shut down the embassy. Most Koreans in Yemen are currently residing in Sana'a, Taiz and Sadah with a family in Saiyun/Hadamout area. As you probably know, there are many Korean electronic and IT-related companies in Yemen, there are many representatives from those companies as well. There are also constructors from the Hyundai Construction Company, who is building an electricity transmitter near the Marib area. After the Yemeni president's visit to South Korea, there have been an increasing number of businessmen interacting in both countries Korea and Yemen.

Most of the Koreans residing in Yemen have professional jobs. Many doctors and nurses are here representing Korean charity organizations and some of them work in their charity clinics, like Global Care Charitable Clinic or in public hospitals. Those who work in the charity clinics, offer low-class people a chance to get a medical service at a cheap price. The doctors and nurses who work in public hospitals offer Yemeni doctors a high-quality medical education.

There are many teachers amongst the Korean community, some work in a Korean institute called the Korean



Picnic in Manakha.

Educational Center, KEC, where they offer studies in Korean, English and computers. There are also piano teachers who teach both Yemeni and international students. The Yemeni Table Tennis coach is also a Korean, who coaches Yemeni players and is slowly improving the team with better results in many table tennis championships.

The Korean people in Yemen are open-minded to Yemeni people and the Yemeni culture; the Koreans keep close relationships with Yemeni employees, students, players and neighbors. The Korean kids also have a tight relationship with their friends in their neighborhood or their school.

As Koreans, they get together every weekend to share our hobbies like playing sports and they enjoy each others company by talking about their life-stories, and discussing international, Yemeni and Korean news. The Koreana Restaurant is the main social gathering place for the Koreans and this is where they go to eat Korean food. During their national holidays like Chusuk (Korean Thanksgiving Day), Sulnal (New Year's Day), they come to the Korean restaurant to enjoy delicious Korean cuisine.

As the Korean population is increasing in Yemen, now there is a

organization in Yemen that represents the Korean people here, to the Yemeni society and to the Korean government. I interviewed the Chairman of the Korean Community Organization-Yemen (a tentative name), Kim Gwang Ja, and asked her what her ambition is for this organization, and she said she wants to make sure that every business that the Korean people here do will be smooth and without problems. She also said that she wants to set up a Korean School here so that the Korean kids won't lose their pride for their country. She also added that she wants to do things, in general, that will develop the Korean community in Yemen. She finally said that there is a probable chance of the South Korean Embassy reopening again by the end of 2007 in Sana'a.

The Former Yemen Ministry of Foreign Affairs-Asian department, Garhum Rasheed, has said that the Korean-Yemeni relationship is very bright in future and have many things in common, like their historical backgrounds. He said the Korean community in Yemen needs to be active in a way that they become the propaganda for the Korean government to the Yemenis. He also advised that the Koreans here need to do more to contribute to the Yemeni society, like the Korean fast-growing economy. He also said that the Koreans can learn from Yemenis in how North and South Yemen united.

Honorary consul of the Republic of Korea, Nabil Hayel Saeed, said that he feels the Korean society is being a great help and an example in setting the basic infrastructure and in business sector in Yemen. Nabil also advised the Korean society to become more committed to their employees at their work.

I think that the Korean-Yemeni relations is very hopeful and Koreans are doing their best for the good of Yemeni society and for improving the Korea's image to Yemenis, they are the true diplomats and they are the reason why Yemen and Korean can improve to become partner countries for each other.



Workers of Korean and Yemenis at the clinic.

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