

## Close call on border

BY YEMEN TIMES STAFF

A prominent sheik of the Wayilah tribe, which lives along the border between Yemen and Saudi Arabia, told Yemen Times that up to 3,000 tribesmen are preparing to fight Saudi forces unless Saudi Arabia pulls out of Yemen.

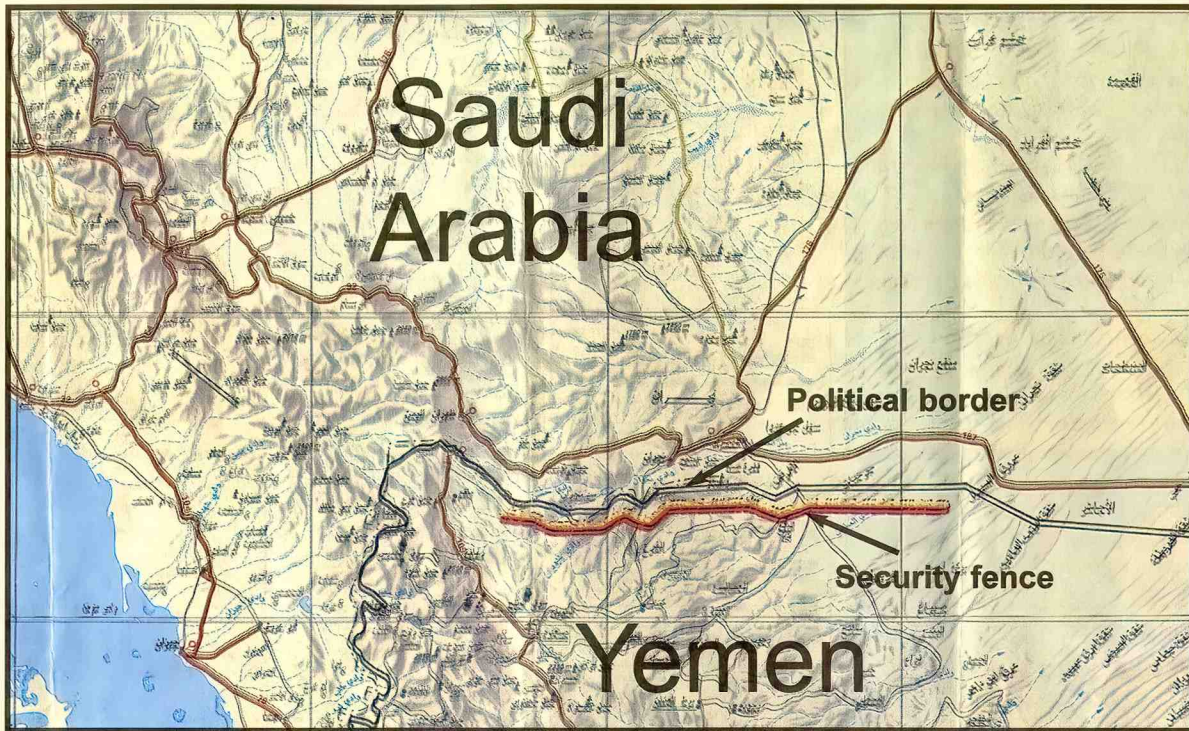
### Tribal threats

The sheik claims that Saudi Arabia has already built a security fence 4 to 7 km beyond the neutral zone inside Yemen, stretching from Jabal Hobash to Jabal Al Fara.

"Saudi Arabia has already built a security fence inside Yemen," said the sheik, "and we are ready to fight any time if Saudi Arabia doesn't remove what they have built in our country."

On February 7, leaders of the Wayilah tribe issued a statement protesting the Yemeni-Saudi border committee's memorandum which demands tribesmen to identify their properties outside the international borderline.

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According to tribal and local figures near the Yemeni-Saudi border in the north, the security fence is actually within Yemeni territory. If true, this would contradict the 2000 Jeddah border treaty.

## Ethiopian refugees demand end to their plight

BY YEMEN TIMES STAFF

Over 200 Ethiopian refugees in Yemen staged a sit-in at the United Nations Higher Commission for Refugees (UNHCR) headquarters last Tuesday in Sana'a to demand an end to their plight and protested against what they claim are "unjust responses from the UNHCR to their problems."



The protestors, who were mostly former members of the Ethiopian Naval, told Yemen Times that they demand an end to their plight since 1991. They said they need to be re-integrated into the Yemeni society or resettled in any other country.

According to the law, they can even go back home but they said they could not do that as they may face imprisonment.

In a press release submitted during the sit-in, the protestors claimed that they were promised to have something done to get them settled in Yemen and they claim that settlement means they would be entitled to citizenship according to the law.

They said it could only happen when the Yemeni authorities pass a law for

refugees. However, we can not wait until this law is issued," Yassin Mohammed, one of the protestors said.

The protestors said they are facing hard times and their living condition is going from bad to worse.

The refugees said they can no longer tolerate the situation. "We can no longer endure the contempt and ridicule we are facing," adding that one of their friends died because he could not pay for his medical treatment. "He needed only YR 50,000; he sought help but in vain," they said.

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## Symposium on dialogue among cultures and civilizations winds up Sana'a proclaimed as Arab Cultural Capital 2004



BY MOHAMMED AL-QADHI  
YEMEN TIMES STAFF

Sana'a was proclaimed as the Arab Cultural Capital last Tuesday with fireworks in the city's skies in the night of last Tuesday, which is the same day Sana'a was officially announced by Abdulqader ba Jammal during the a symposium organized by UNESCO in cooperation with the Yemeni Center for Studies and Research, on Dialogue among Cultures and Civilizations.

The symposium emphasized on the need for dialogue to achieve peace and stability in the world.

Prime Minister Abdulqader ba Jammal demanded in his speech during the inaugural session that the developed world support the poor countries so as to be able to go ahead with their

massive reforms and overcome their own problems.

He also indicated that the symposium was the first event to celebrate the proclamation of Sana'a as the Arab cultural capital.

On his part, the Iranian ambassador said in his speech delivered on his behalf by Mr. Ahmad Bilali that "dialogue is not a luxury of cultural engagement."

He emphasized the need for dialogue to utilize hidden capacities of different cultures and civilizations.

Continued Page 3

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# Efforts to bridge gaps between Yemen and Egypt continue

YEMEN TIMES STAFF

Following the return of President Ali Abdullah Saleh to Yemen after what has been called 'a successful visit' to Egypt, Yemeni official sources said that efforts to bridge gaps between the two countries will continue towards achieving an optimum degree of understanding. President Saleh and his Egyptian counterpart Mohammad Hosni Mubarak concluded their talks in the presidency headquarters in Cairo Tuesday and pledged to continue efforts to bring the two countries together and create a common platform in preparation for the upcoming Arab summit to convene in Tunis next month. During the talks, the two presidents discussed issues of mutual benefit concerning cooperation in trade and security,

particularly in the fields of intelligence information exchange, fighting terrorism, limiting drug trafficking as well as combating criminal acts. They also discussed the situation in Palestinian occupied territories and Iraq as well as means to enhance Arab joint work. Meanwhile, President Ali Abdullah Saleh received in his residence suite in Cairo on Monday Secretary General of Arab league Amr Musa, who was in Yemen a month ago to participate in the regional conference held in Sanaa. The discussions focused on arrangements for holding the next Arab summit and means of bolstering joint Arab work in the light of presented initiatives from some Arab countries including Yemen. On the other hand, Egyptian Foreign Minister Ahmed Maher expressed confidence in that Yemeni-Egyptian relations are too stronger to be disrupted by any disagreements. Maher added that the two leaders discussed Arab issues and expressed their mutual desire to improve Arab joint work. On the other hand, Prime Minister Abdulqader ba Jammal praised, in an interview with the Egyptian Nile channel, the relations and cooperation in various areas between Yemen and Egypt. He referred in the interview to the need to enhance economic cooperation and trade exchange between the two countries, indicating that the forthcoming Arab summit will witness a common vision presented by President Saleh and Mubarak to strengthen relations on the political, economic and cultural levels among all Arab countries.

## Two killing crimes in Taiz

YEMEN TIMES  
TAIZ BUREAU

A citizen Anwar Saeed Abdeh al-Wazeer, 30, from the Mawasit Hajariya district in Taiz governorate was shot dead with a pistol bullet by his brother Nasser Saeed Abdeh al-Wazeer two weeks before.

There were attempts to save the victim but failed and the security men are still chasing the killer to arrest him and find out the real motives behind the killing incident. There some indications

that the killing took place because of a family dispute.

Another killing incident also happened at al-Hasri Mikhlaf village on December 30 where a farmer Sadeq Ali Khalid, 32, was shot dead by his brother Abdullah Ali Khalid as a result of a dispute over a tree and that dispute aggravated to the extent that the killer pointed his machine gun at his brother and shot him dead.

Security authorities are currently investigating into the incident.

## Readers' Voice

Yemen Times is reintroducing a popular feature "Readers' Voice" - formerly known as YT Opinion Poll. This is your opportunity to have a say on world and local affairs.

THIS EDITION'S QUESTION:

**Do you believe that the idea to build a fence (or wall) on the Saudi side of the border will indeed help minimize smuggling and infiltrations?**

- Yes, it definitely will
- It may but it is no guarantee
- No, it will definitely fail

Do you believe that the economic reforms including price hikes will help Yemen's economy?

- No, they will have a negative effect 43%
- Yes, they will have a long-term positive influence 43%
- I don't know 8%
- No, they will have no effect 6%

Go to our website and vote at: [yementimes.com/poll](http://yementimes.com/poll)

## Technology Magazine's new edition released

Yemen Times Staff

The Telecom. & Information Technology monthly Magazine has recently issued its 30th edition dated December 2003.

The new edition contained many informative articles and reports very much useful on Information Technology and computer technology, in addition to latest news on developments in computer technology and software and many various informative topics.



## Iranian embassy celebrates anniversary

YEMEN TIMES STAFF

The Iranian embassy in Sana'a held a reception at the Taj Sheba Hotel last Tuesday to celebrate the 25th Silver Jubilee Anniversary of the Iranian Islamic revolution.

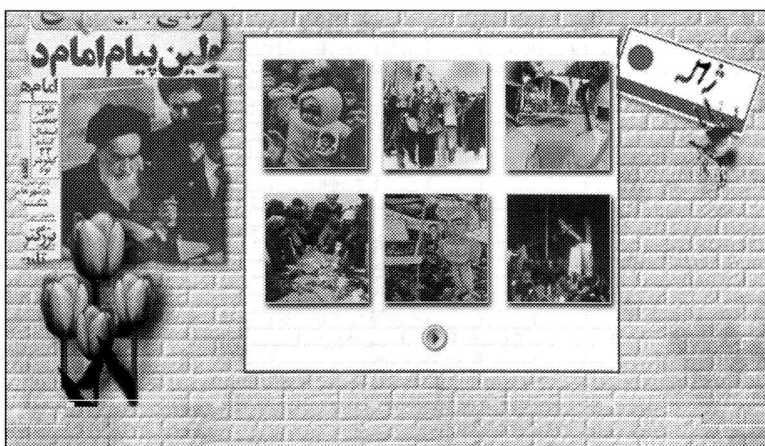
Several ambassadors and diplomats attended the reception, which also included hundreds of intellectuals and prominent personalities.

Meanwhile, Iranian leader Ayatollah Seyed Ali Khamenei granted amnesty or commuted sentences of a group of Iranian prisoners, convicted at the coun-

try's general, revolutionary or military courts.

The amnesty included commutation of life imprisonments to 15 years for some, as well as release of convicts under 18 years of age and men over 65. Women convicts over 50 were also granted freedom.

Analysts believe that 25 years after the revolution, Iran has developed faster than other Middle East countries. Iran's development pace in industry, education, technology, science, and even in politics exceeded that of all Arab coun-



tries, who are currently importing many products from Iran, including vehicles and electrical equipment.

Meanwhile, the democratic achievements of Iran are also ahead of Arab countries.

Perhaps Iran is the only Muslim country in the Middle East that signaled a peaceful transfer of power, and is among the few that enjoy a wide range of rights for women in work and political life.

## One killed in wedding

YEMEN TIMES  
TAIZ BUREAU

One person was killed and two others were wounded in fireshots at a wedding ceremony held in al-Waziyah district, governorate of Taiz on February 7.

The wedding ceremony was held for Mr Mohammed Saeed Rajeh from the same area and during the intensive firing with rifles in celebration of the occasion a man called Abdeh Ahmed Thabit was killed with a stray bullet and two others; Ahmed Ali Jouqari, 35, and Ali Murshid Qaed Abdat, were injured.

Thus the wedding was changed into a sad occasion and joy was chnged into sorrow. The two injured men were hos-

pitalised in the Thawra hospital in Taiz while the area's police detained the father of the bridegroom.

This incident comes as a result of random use of firearms and as a regrettable consequence of the phenomenon of carrying arms in the country as well as the habit of firing shots on wedding occasions.

### Correction

In "Ambitions oil exploration," a story on page 2 in the last edition of the Yemen Times, an error occurred in mentioning that the estimated number of oil barrels to be attained from the well at Kharia is estimated at 650,000 per day. The correct estimate is 650. Our apologies for any confusion caused by the error.

## Symposium on economy and the media

The Information Training and Qualification Institute, in cooperation with 14 October Establishment for Press and Publication, is organizing at the Free Zone in Aden on Feb. 14, a symposium for press specializing in economic affairs. The symposium covers three premises: the reality of economic press and horizons of its development, the relationship of economic press with Yemeni economic activity, and how the press can play a role in this significant sector.

Director of the Institute's Unit for Studies and Research, Dr. Hussein Jaghman, has made it clear that the symposium clarifies the economic press role in shedding light on the economic and investment sector through press coverage of implemented development and strategic projects.

The symposium would also mirror the positive and negative aspects that hamper movement of the economic, trade and investment activity in Yemen.

## IN BRIEF

### Milan Tourist exhibition

Yemeni Tourist Promotion Council is to take part in activities of the Milan Tourist Exhibition scheduled there Feb. 14 to 17.

Taking part in the Council's activities are Yemeni Airlines and a number of tourist bureaus in Yemen.

This participation has a special importance, as it coincides with the inauguration of Sana'a as the Capital of Arab Culture 2004.

The executive director of the TPC Taha al-Mahbishi said there would be a promotion for Yemeni tourism, as well as meeting many Italian tourism exporters to Yemen. Activities also include Yemeni folk dancing, and exhibits of silver and other and other Yemeni crafts.

### Computers in high schools

The ministry of education has chosen a number of secondary schools for starting computer subjects as part of the basic curricula, beginning in the second term of this year. This program is to cover schools all over the Yemni governorates. After the implementation of computer teaching program at the selected schools it would be taught in schools across Yemen.

### Accidents claim 19 in Taiz

The number of traffic accidents that took place in the city of Taiz during the Eid al-Adha holidays From Jan. 28 to Feb. 6, reached 43, killing 19 persons and injuring 96 others.

Material losses resulting from those accidents amounted to YR 4.3 million.

A recent report by the Taiz governorate traffic administration attributed the causes of the accidents to negligence of both pedestrians and motorists, as well as the speedy driving and negligence in maintaining vehicles.

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## International Summer School in Forced Migration

### Scholarship opportunity

**Three-week bursary for Summer School in Forced Migration, UK**

Refugee Studies Center announces the availability of a few bursaries for a three-week intensive course at the Summer School on Forced Migration to take place in Oxford, UK during 5-23 July 2004.

**Who is eligible to apply**  
The three-week intensive course is designed primarily for managers in host government, intergovernmental and non-governmental organizations, engaged in planning, administering and implementing assistance to refugees and other displaced people..

**Requirements**

- Sufficient command of English
- Some knowledge in refugee-related issues
- Willingness to participate actively with others

**How to apply**

- \* You can apply online directly by entering your information at: <http://www.rsc.ox.ac.uk/ssonlineapplication.html>
- \* You can alternatively download the application form from: [http://www.rsc.ox.ac.uk/main\\_summer.html](http://www.rsc.ox.ac.uk/main_summer.html) and then fill in the appropriate fields

**Notes on application**

- There is no guarantee that any applicant will find a place as a sponsored student
- The deadline to apply is March 15, 2004
- Completed application, CV, and personal statement should be sent to:

**The International Summer School Administrator**  
Refugee Studies Centre  
Queen Elizabeth House, University of Oxford  
21 St Giles, Oxford, OX1 3LA, UK

**Contact information**  
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# Poetry fights illiteracy among Yemeni women

By HASSAN AL-ZAIDI  
YEMEN TIMES STAFF

The Social Fund for Development (SFD) has pledged to continue its efforts in cooperation with international organizations such as UNESCO to eradicate illiteracy among Yemeni women.

According to a recent survey result released by UNESCO, at least 75 per cent of Yemeni women are completely illiterate.

The efforts of the SFD will concentrate on using poetry to help especially rural women.

Reasons behind the success of such a method is attributed mainly to the fact that Yemeni women have an instinct of love for singing and telling poems, enabling them to quickly learn how to pronounce words and letters, and with little assistance, be able to read and write basic Arabic.

Exact figures of illiteracy rates are not known, but it is predicted that 80% of Yemeni females and 50% of Yemeni males are illiterate.

This rate is among the highest in the world.



Statistics unveil that around 77% of Yemeni women cannot read and write, yet efforts to use unconventional ways, including poetry have started yielding results in fighting illiteracy among women.

# Sheraton to launch blitz

The Sheraton Hotel in Sana'a, starting Feb. 15, will conduct a week-long sales blitz operating under the theme "Strength in Relations."

According to the hotel's management, the 18 department heads and sales executives, under the leadership of general manager Tony Goubran, will cover all the geographic regions of Sana'a with visits to various companies, embassies, banks and organizations.

"The purpose of the blitz is to thank all Sheraton Sana'a Hotel clients for their business in 2003, as well as to familiarize them with the hotel's endeavours during 2004," Goubran said.

"The opportunity will also be used to receive feedbacks from customers and to present the hotel activities, updating them on the latest lobby renovation and the new executive rooms," he added.



# Historic sites unveiled in Socotra Island

By YEMEN TIMES STAFF

A national excavation and exploration team of The Museums and Monuments General Authority has announced the unveiling of 80 new historic sites in Socotra, some dating back thousands of years.

This comes as part of a wide-scale exploration program for the island, which is believed to have been home to ancient civilizations that lived there in the Bronze Age.

Among the most interesting are the ancient homes, complexes, mosques, castles, and graveyards, along with carved rocks and drawings on caves and walls.



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Note: You could come in person between the hours 4 - 7 P.M

Continued from page 1

# Close call on border

**Diplomatic maneuvering**

Even though tribes are preparing for a conflict, a Yemeni government official told Yemen Times on Tuesday that Saudi authorities did accept to remove the separation fence along its border with Yemen after extensive Egyptian and US efforts paid off in convincing Saudi authorities to do so.

"Both the US and Egypt exerted efforts with Yemen and Saudi Arabia resulting in an agreement to remove all constrictions made by the Saudis," said the Yemeni official.

**Exchange of visits**

The Yemeni government recently complained that Saudi Arabia was building a barrier inside the 20 km neutral zone between the two countries that was established by the 2000 border agreement. Last Monday, Talal Angawi, head of Saudi Arabia's border guard, told pan-Arab newspaper Asharq Al Awsat that the government is building a security "screen" on Saudi soil

to help curb the flow of militants and weapons. On the same day, the Yemeni government sent a delegation headed by the Deputy Interior Minister to Jeddah to discuss any differences between the building of the security fence and the 2000 border agreement.

A security delegation from Saudi Arabia was also sent to Yemen headed by General Mohamed Abdullah Al-Qawsi, Deputy Minister of Interior for Security, to discuss the border security fence problem.

The Saudi government has stepped up security along the southern border with Yemen - a traditional route for drug and arms smuggling - after suicide bombings in Riyadh in May and November last year. Saudi officials believe most of the weapons used in militant operations in Saudi Arabia are smuggled in from Yemen. Yemeni government officials estimate that there are 60 million weapons in Yemen with a population of 20 million.

In December, Saudi officials said

that they had arrested 4,047 people and apprehended large quantities of weapons and drugs along the border with Yemen.

In June, both countries signed an agreement to upgrade border surveillance. However, tension has been growing between Yemen and Saudi Arabia since the beginning of January after the Saudis began the construction of the security fence. Yemeni products have also been prevented from entering Saudi Arabia in the last few weeks. Recently, Prince Nayef Bin Abdelaziz Al Saud, Interior Minister of Saudi Arabia, declared that Yemen did not have the right to join the GCC because of its geographical location. He later changed his statement by pointing out that Yemen must meet certain prerequisites to join GCC.

Sheik Mohammed Bin Shagaa, once the head of the Wayilah tribe, died in April 2002 in a car accident, considered by many as a mysterious accident. He was fully against the 2000 border agreement.

# Ethiopian refugees demand end to their plight

The UNHCR however rejects the claims suggesting that the international organization is not fulfilling its duties properly and said that the protestors want to be resettled in countries such as the USA, Canada, Australia and other developed countries; a desire, the UNHCR says, that cannot be met easily as such resettlements are bounded by regulations and decisions taken by those countries, and especially as most of those refugees were affiliated to socialist political or military movement that are not welcomed in many countries.

However, the UNHCR officials promised to deliver a complete legal response to the claims of the protestors in which it will confirm that it is operating within the law and that it is carrying out its duties and fulfilling its responsibilities in the best way possible.

Yemen is facing a lot of economic and security problems due to the often massive flow of refugees from the African Horn countries.

# Sana'a proclaimed as Arab Cultural Capital 2004

On his part, Mr. Ahmad Sayyad, Assistant Director-General of the Sector of External Relations and Cooperation of UNESCO, called Arab countries to start dialogue with their own people first before starting the same with nations, considering change as an internal desperate need so that the citizens in the region would hold on to their rights.

He demanded that the dialogue in Arab countries start with a special focus on the issues of human rights, women's rights, democracy, freedoms and rights minorities in a way to test their capacity in starting dialogue with others. "We should not focus the dialogue on the past or history but on how to develop and improve the situation of the people in the future, dismissing violence, oppression, war and tyranny," he said.

The Japanese ambassador, Yuichi ISHII, said in his speech that the event comes in response to the UN resolution putting 2001 as the "UN Year for Dialogues among Civilizations". He emphasized that such dialogue is

essential for achieving peace and stability of the world as dialogue would overcome differences among nations, religions and cultures.

He declared that Japan is planning to hold a conference of "Trans-Regional Dialogue between Japan and the Arab world on Cultural Diversity and Modernization" in collaboration with the UNESCO and Arab countries including Yemen.

The event would take place in Paris in May this year and will be attended even by some prominent figures from Europe.

The participants in the Sana'a event from different Arab and foreign countries debated several important issues such as globalization, dialogue among cultures and civilizations, the contribution of education into these themes, the impact of Arabic culture and its accomplishments on other cultures, the role of dialogue on curbing terrorism in all its forms and establishing lasting and universal peace, and dialogue between the East and West-yesterday, today and tomorrow.

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*Needs help from civil servants, says Mohammed Ahmed Saeed*

# Peace foundation answers call of poor

**A**rrouna and Shara'ab Assalam are two main districts in Yemen that have been in need of essential services for a long time. The civil service has neglected these two districts.

Conditions are unsatisfactory, with the most serious difficulty being poverty.

In addition to this, there are other social problems such as, lack of essential services, unemployment, shortage of health services and educational facilities.

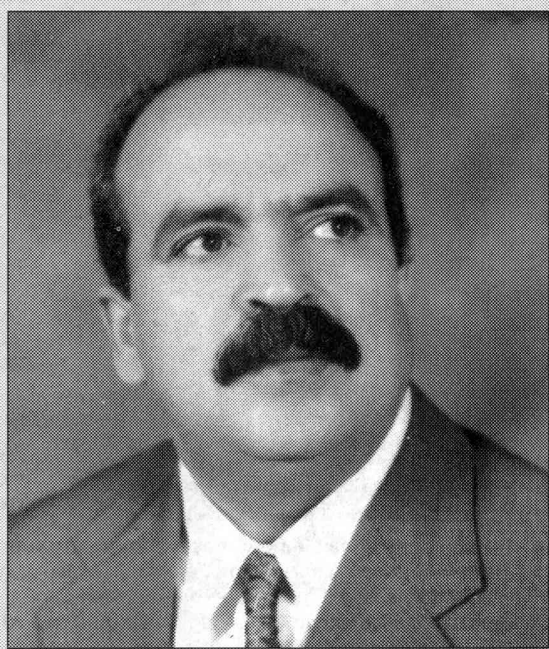
In response, with the aim of promoting the future of those two districts, a charitable society was established and devoted its efforts for the benefit of locals.

Efforts are currently in full swing by the Charitable Social Peace Foundation members.

The foundation was founded by Mohammed Ahmed Saeed who belongs to al-Haql Aifou village, Assalam District.

He possesses a strong determination which enables him to achieve desired goals for the welfare of his citizens.

To learn more, the following interview was held by Yemen Times Bureau Chief Emad al-Saqaf. Following are edited excerpts.



Mohammed Ahmed Saeed

**Q: Could you please give us a brief account of the Charitable Social Peace Foundation?**

**A:** The Charitable Social Peace Foundation is an independent developmental and social foundation established in July 2003. It was established with the aim of making the local people there determining their priorities and basic needs. This has enabled us to map out plans, implanting them and searching for other resources to increase the individual of low income.

**Q: How did you get the idea to establish the foundation?**

**A:** The idea of establishing the foundation came to mind through experiencing day-to-day bitter reality for the districts of Arouna and

Shara'ab Assalam, such as, shortages of essential services. Our concern began to increase in other aspects including poverty, unemployment, illiteracy, and other long-term tribal vengeance.

All those issues attracted our attention and a need was felt for helping the situation. A vital and positive role in this regard has been played to work hand in hand with the locals in order to promote their living standards, and to find other resource-bearing revenues for poverty-stricken families where illiteracy has negatively affected their day-to-day lives.

All these reasons have called us to think deeply how to improve the living standards of the people for a better future away from poverty, illiter-

acy and diseases. The way then has been prepared for establishing the Charitable Social Peace Foundation.

**Q: In your point of view, why are these two districts not developing like other adjacent ones?**

**A:** It can be attributed to the international organizations and civil society organizations in our country. Those organizations are oblivious to the negative conditions. No interest has been paid or shown to them like other areas in Yemen.

In addition to this, a blind eye has been turned by human rights activists, civil society organizations as well as the media, for several reasons such as the spread of tribal vendettas, killings and other problems. It is also rumored among peo-

ple that locals are no longer in need of the help of other people and above all, they are entirely depending on growing Qat.

All these things are wrong. Locals are simple and in need of the basic essential services for sustaining their living standards. The role of the charitable society organizations in this regard is indispensable for improving the simplest life constituents for a better future.

**Q: What services that have been rendered by the foundation to Shara'ab district?**

**A:** The charitable mission has been undertaken earlier. Before the establishment of the foundation, it was entrusted to trustworthy people where we have made contacts with poverty-stricken families. Within a short period of time which do not exceed 6-month age, the foundation could achieve the following:

- Establishing the Al-Khair Mosque in Al-Haql village.
  - Establishing the Holy Qura'an Teaching School and its Sciences
  - Building roads for 3 villages
  - Completing its administrative and teamwork aspects
  - The foundation could also train a special team including, researches.
- As a result, a fieldwork survey was conducted for determining duties performed by the foundation with the aim of establishing database for knowing all there is to know about the two districts' conditions such as, poverty-stricken families, orphans, widows, physically handicapped people, prisoners and the lost ones.
- Cash financial assistance was distributed during the Holy Month of Ramadan in order to reach 5500 fam-

ilies.

The foundation has also adopted the Fast Break Project at the level of individuals and families through distributing complete meals for each family during the Holy of Ramadan.

Strenuous efforts have been currently underway by the charitable peace members to distribute the Eid clothes for the parentless children.

**Q: What are the strategies that have been adopted by the Peace Foundation?**

**A:** Perhaps the Charitable Social Peace Foundation has adopted a unique strategy if compared to other charitable foundations.

This manifests itself through the following:

1- The foundation does its best in order to enable its local community members to actively participate in improving their conditions as well as looking for other alternative but sustainable resource-bearing revenues.

2- Countryside surveys are also conducted in the participation of villagers for determining the basic needs for the local community.

3- Multifarious activities are adopted by the Peace Foundation such as training the poor family beneficiaries. This includes, training and making them acquire handicraft industries for promoting their living standards, such as, sewing, handicrafts, embroidery, weaving, establishing micro-shops, eradicating illiteracy, disseminating hygienic culture, household economy, caring for the topmost sons who belong to the beneficiaries, granting cash and in kind rewards in specific occasions such as religious festivities and during the Holy Month of Ramadan as

well as the beginning of the new school academic year.

**Q: Do you think that the Peace Foundation will be able achieve its goals through its self-centered support?**

**A:** As a matter of fact, the Peace Foundation's goals are numerous and its ambitions are limitless.

Tasks that have been entrusted with the foundation are too big and in need of huge material as well as financial support. This also entails the help of other international organizations, civil society foundations, businessmen and philanthropists to support the foundation in its duties.

We hope that the media could play an important role for informing the public of the districts' needs.

**Q: Any last comment?**

**A:** At the end, I'd like to thank God of what has been established so far for the benefit of these two districts. I reiterate that the two districts are still in need of other essential services to be rendered in health, drinking water, poverty, unemployment, and illiteracy, particularly among women, which has spread among families.

Those problems are not restricted to Arrouna and Shara'ab Assalam, but these two areas need attention.

Thus, I call the civil society organizations and international organizations as well as governmental bodies to cooperate with the Charitable Social Peace Foundation.

We need them to work, so the foundation can be their reference for any data or facts that have been gathered by the foundation through its field work surveys and visits.

# Yemen's Shiites celebrate Al-Ghadeer

By HASSAN AL-ZAIDI  
YEMEN TIMES STAFF

**H**undreds of Shiites in Yemen celebrated the anniversary of Al-Ghadeer Eid last Monday, which comes out every 18 Dhi Al-Hijja in the Hijri calendar.

This is the day Prophet Mohamed gave his farewell address, and Shiites believe he transferred authority to Ali bin Abi Talib.

**Seminars throughout Yemen**

Also on Monday, a special seminar was held by the Badr education center headed by Zeyd Al-Muhawari. The seminar entitled "Tolerance and moderate Islam" concentrated on Islam is a

moderate religion based on tolerance and peace. Al-Muhawari emphasized the moderate stance of the Zaidi Shiite sect.

On the other hand, the Jaafari Shiite sect, which is the most radical of all Shiite sects in Yemen, also celebrated this occasion by praising its Shiite leaders of Iran. The sect held a seminar in the Surwah district of Mareb province.

The sect started celebrating this anniversary 15 years ago.

Ahmed Abdullah Al-Zaidi, one of the main scholars of the Jaafari (Ithne Ashariya) sect, gave a lecture which asserted the Shiite sect's importance and value in Yemen, and means to enhance the sect and promoting its values further.

The Dawoodi Bohra sect also cele-

brated this occasion by holding an event at the Faidh Al-Hatimi Center in Sana'a, and also held an activity in the Hoteib in Haraz district.

Several seminars and lectures were held in various mosques in Saada and other areas where Zaidis and Shiites of different sects reside.

**Shiite and Sunni rivalry**

The Wahhabi-Salafi movement in Yemen has always been powerful and widely accepted, with more influence in grassroot levels, unlike Shiite counterparts.

It has much more financial resources located in neighboring countries.

There has always been a hidden competition between the Saudi-supported Wahhabi movement and the Iran-supported Shiite movements as both see the each other as the main rival in terms of religious ideology and influence.

Emir Al-Waleed bin Talal of Saudi Arabia told a French newspaper

recently that there is a tendency to spread Shiite ideology in the region from Iran. "Do you remember the Iranian revolution in 1979 and the political turmoil that followed?" He also called upon the USA to maintain a balanced and equal representation of Sunnis and Shiites in future Iraq so as to not result in ethnic or religious tensions in the region.

**Background on Zaidi sect**

It is worth noting that after the breakup of the caliphate, Yemen came under the control of the rising Rasside dynasty, imams of the Zaidi sect, who built the theocratic political structure of Yemen that lasted until 1962.

The 26 September Revolution in that year led to the gradual decline of the number of Shiite sect members, who constitute only a small fraction of the population in today's Yemen, mainly located in Sanaa, and some northern parts of the country.

Their existence continued in small



Dr. Zeid Al-Muhawari, a Zaidi scholar, lecturing in occasion of Eid Al-Ghadeer in Sana'a

numbers, but maintained an influential position in religious aspects in the capital and other northern areas.

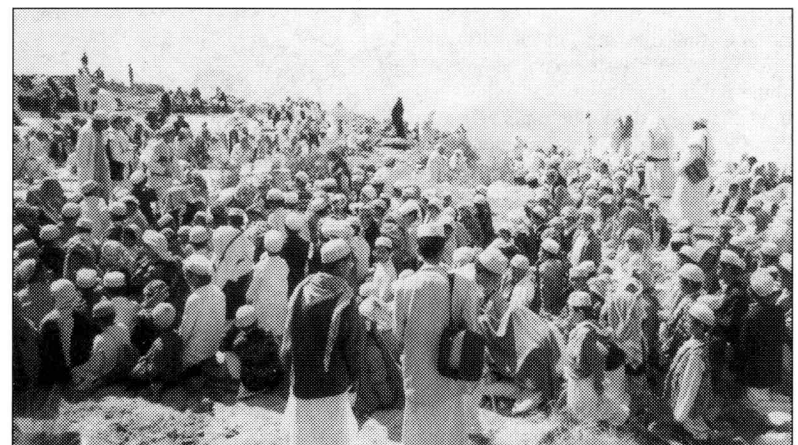
Iran has continued to provide Yemen with thousands of books about the Shiite sect, some of which were held at the Hodeidah port for many years, but

were eventually allowed to get into the country.

Hundreds of Yemenis travel to Iran to learn more about the Shiite sect and other religious sciences, and the trend to learn more about the original Shiite sect continues until today.



Imam Ali mosque as thousands of people gathered in the holy city of Najaf, some 160 km south from Baghdad, February 10, 2004, to mark the annual "Ghadeer Day". REUTERS



Ismaelite (Bohra) sect in Haraz



Jaafari Shiites in Serwah, Mareb. Children shown here wearing Imamite Scarf

## Saudi Arabia defends Yemen border "screen" plans

RIYADH, Feb 9 (Reuters) - Saudi Arabia said on Monday it was building a security "screen" on its southern border with Yemen aimed at curbing the flow of militants and weapons, but rejected any comparison with Israel's West Bank barrier.

Talal Anqawi, head of Saudi Arabia's border guard, told the pan-Arab newspaper Ashraq al-Awsat that workers were laying a pipeline to prevent vehicles crossing the porous frontier, which cuts through mountainous tribal territory.

Saudi Arabia is battling a wave of violence, blamed on militants linked to Saudi-born Osama bin Laden. Tonnes of weapons, ammunition and explosives have been seized, many of which are believed to have been slipped across the border from Yemen.

The two countries, who only recently ended a long-running border dispute, have stepped up security cooperation since suicide bombings in Riyadh killed more than 50 people last year.

But Yemeni newspapers have reported that the Yemeni government has complained about the route of the barrier, saying it was being built in a 20-km (13 mile) zone designated as an open area under a 2000 border agreement.

Anqawi said the barrier was being built on Saudi soil.

"What is being constructed inside our borders with Yemen is a sort of screen...which aims to prevent infiltration and smuggling," he told Ashraq al-Awsat. "It does not resemble a wall in any way."

Saudi Arabia has condemned Israel's construction of a barrier, part fence and part wall, inside the West Bank. Israel says it is a security barrier to keep out Palestinian suicide bombers. Palestinians say it is a pre-emptive landgrab.

The newspaper showed a picture of what it said would be a model for the Saudi-Yemeni barrier — a section of raised, concrete-filled pipeline which it said had already been built on Saudi Arabia's northern border with Kuwait.

Diplomats say Saudi Arabia is urgently stepping up border controls after the surge of militancy last year, fuelled by weapons smuggled across thousands of kilometres (miles) of desert of mountain borders.

It is close to awarding a contract worth up to seven billion euros (\$8.7 billion) to French defence electronics company Thales to supply a border surveillance system, sources in Paris said last month.

## Iraq bomber blows self up near tribal chief house

RAMADI, Feb 10 (Reuters) - A suicide bomber blew himself up outside the house of a U.S.-backed tribal leader west of Baghdad on Tuesday, wounding four bodyguards, in the latest attack on Iraqis working with U.S.-led occupation forces.

Witnesses said the bomber detonated his explosives outside the house of Amer Suleiman, chief of the al-Duleimi tribe in the area and head of the local U.S.-appointed authority in the restive town of Ramadi, 110 km (68 miles) west of the capital.

The unidentified bomber died on the spot and four Duleimi bodyguards

were wounded, some of them critically, the witnesses said.

The attack followed a pattern of targeting Iraqis seen as collaborators with the U.S. occupation. A twin suicide bombing in northern Iraq killed more than 100 people on February 1.

The bombings targeted Iraq's two main Kurdish parties which enjoy good ties to Washington.

Ramadi and neighbouring areas, at the heart of the so-called Sunni triangle where resentment of the United States is strongest, have seen scores of attacks on U.S. forces and allied Iraqis.

## Britain plans Blair meeting with Gaddafi

LONDON, Feb 10 (Reuters) - Britain said on Tuesday it is planning a meeting between Prime Minister Tony Blair and Libyan leader Muammar Gaddafi.

"We've discussed that, we are hoping very much that a visit can be arranged as soon as convenient but no date has yet been fixed," Foreign Secretary Jack Straw told a news conference after landmark talks with his Libyan counterpart.

Such a visit would mark Gaddafi's further reintegration into the international community. Italian Prime Minister Silvio Berlusconi flew to Tripoli to meet him on Tuesday — the first visit by a Western leader since Libya pledged in December to halt plans to develop weapons of mass destruction.

It was not clear whether the meeting with Blair would be on British or Libyan soil.

After talks with both Blair and Straw, Libyan Foreign Minister Mohamed Abderrhmane Chalgham said his country was cooperating fully in opening up its weapons programmes to international inspectors.

Regarding programmes of weapons of mass destruction, we are the ones

who took the initiative in this matter," he said in translated remarks.

Libya has long been listed by the United States as a sponsor of terrorism, and suffered United Nations sanctions until last year for the 1988 bombing of an airliner over Lockerbie, Scotland, which killed 270 people.

But London and Washington have been moving rapidly to bring Tripoli back in from the cold in past months. Last year, Libya paid \$2.7 billion in compensation to Lockerbie victims, before agreeing to dismantle its weapons programmes.

Britain has moved faster than the United States to restore ties. Washington has yet to lift economic sanctions, including a ban on travel by U.S. citizens to Libya. Those sanctions are keeping lucrative oil deals on ice.

But after three-way talks in London last week, U.S. officials said Washington might soon lift restrictions on travel to Libya if it continued to make progress on the pledge to halt weapons programmes.

Easing those sanctions could allow American oil companies to resume activities in Libya, which they had to abandon when expanded U.S. sanctions forced them to pull out in 1986.

## Iranian plane crashes in UAE

SHARJAH, United Arab Emirates, Feb 10 (Reuters) - An Iranian plane with at least 40 passengers on board crashed on Tuesday during take-off from Sharjah airport in the United Arab Emirates.

Witnesses said only flaming bits and pieces remained of the Kish Airlines plane. Ambulances were rushing to and from the scene. There was no immediate word on the number of casualties in the incident.

"Only a bit of the tail remained. It doesn't look like many people survived. Rescue teams are still looking for people," one witness said.

"The plane crashed near the tarmac. Police have sealed off the area to allow rescue operations," she added.

The official UAE news agency WAM said the plane was carrying 40 passengers. A UAE official had earlier said the plane was carrying 60 passengers. A Kish Airlines official in Iran confirmed that one of the company's planes had been involved in an accident but said the company was still seeking further information.

Earlier, security sources had said the plane was a Russian cargo jet with 35 passengers on board. The type of plane was not clear.

Iran's airlines have difficulty maintaining their ageing fleet of Boeing aircraft, many of them bought before the 1979 Islamic Revolution, due to U.S. sanctions. Instead, they have turned to Russian made-aircraft often leased from former Soviet countries.



A video grab image shows emergency workers surrounding the wreckage of a plane crash near Sharjah in the Gulf state of the United Arab Emirates on February 10, 2004. At least 34 people were killed as an Iranian Kish Airline plane with 40 passengers and five crew on board crashed near Sharjah on Tuesday. The UAE's official news agency WAM quoted sources at the scene as saying they could see 33 charred bodies. Another person died at a Sharjah hospital. REUTERS

## Car bomb kills around 50 south of Baghdad

ISKANDARIYA, Iraq, Feb 10 (Reuters) - About 50 people were killed and dozens wounded when a car bomb ripped through a police station south of Baghdad on Tuesday, witness-

es and doctors said.

"There are around 50 martyrs, 30 of whom have been identified, and dozens wounded," Dr Tahsim Ahmad told Reuters at Iskandariya hospital,

near the site of the attack.

The hospital's director, Razak Jannabi, said: "Thirty dead have been brought here, I believe that number is rising. I believe it's at 49."

A Reuters reporter counted at least 20 bodies outside a hospital in the small town of Iskandariya, 40 km (25 miles) south of Baghdad. Piles of bloody clothing lay beside the corpses.

Inside the hospital, staff frantically tried to mop up pools of blood with soap and water.

"It was a car (bomb) that was parked outside the station," policeman Sadeq Khodeir told Reuters. "It brought down part of the building and the court house."

The provincial governor, Imad Lifty, said: "All of the people killed are locals, they are innocents and Muslims. No Muslim could have done this. It appears the amount of explosives used was huge because it killed so many and devastated the buildings."

U.S. troops cordoned off the roads leading to the blast site.

Insurgents fighting the U.S. occupation have often targeted Iraqi police, seeing them as cooperating with the occupiers.

Car bombs outside several police stations in Baghdad and others in towns like Baquba, Khan Bani Saad and Khaldiya have killed dozens of people in the past few months.

Iraqi police officials say 300 policemen have been killed as a result of the insurgency. The police force was set up by the U.S.-led authorities in Iraq, who provided training, equipment and have often led joint patrols.



A video grab image shows the scene of a car bomb in Iskandariya south of Baghdad, February 10, 2004. A massive car bomb ripped through a police station south of Baghdad on Tuesday killing about 50 people, in the latest deadly attack on Iraqis seen as collaborators with U.S. occupation forces. REUTERS

## Militants in Gaza protest against bombing trial

GAZA, Feb 10 (Reuters) - Hundreds of militants and their supporters staged a protest march against the Palestinian Authority in Gaza on Tuesday for putting on trial four men charged in the deadly bombing of a U.S. diplomatic convoy.

Masked gunmen fired in the air as demonstrators chanted "Bowling to American demands is treason," a reference to U.S. pressure to bring to justice those responsible for a roadside bombing in October that killed three U.S. security men in Gaza.

U.S. Ambassador to Israel Daniel Kurtzer criticised the hastily convened military trial that got under way on Saturday for four suspects, saying it should not be held behind closed doors and the charges should be tougher.

The Popular Resistance Committees, an armed group that has carried out attacks against Israeli troops in the Gaza Strip since a Palestinian uprising began more than three years ago, has identified the four suspects as members.

But it has denied involvement in the October 15 bombing.

"We urge President (Yasser) Arafat to free our men," a spokesman for the Popular Resistance Committees said at the Gaza rally, which was organised by the group and drew some 500 people to the streets.



Armed Palestinian militants attend an anti-Palestinian Authority protest in Gaza Strip Feb. 10. Hundreds of Palestinian militants and their supporters staged a protest march against the Palestinian Authority in Gaza on Tuesday for putting on trial four men charged in the deadly bombing of a U.S. diplomatic convoy last Oct. 15. REUTERS

The trial at the military court in Gaza City was called without prior notice, days after U.S. officials complained the Palestinian Authority had not cooperated fully in the investigation of the bombing.

A military prosecutor said the four were involved in planting bombs

against Israeli troops in the area where the convoy attack took place and this "might have led to the killing of the Americans as a result of the bombs that were planted".

At the beginning of Saturday's court session, two of the suspects shouted that they had nothing to do with the

bombing.

Kurtzer said Washington should have been told in advance of the Gaza trial. "We don't believe that this is the way to proceed," he told a convention of American rabbis in Jerusalem on Monday. "We want to see an open trial".



Britain's Prime Minister Tony Blair (L) greets Libyan Foreign Minister Mohamed Abderrhmane Chalgham at 10 Downing Street, London, February 10, 2004. Britain's Foreign Secretary Jack Straw told a news conference on Tuesday that plans for Blair to meet with Libyan leader Muammar Gaddafi are being actively pursued. REUTERS

# Dances, motorcades as Philippine campaign begins

MANILA, Feb 10 (Reuters) - With the volume at full blast and issues toned down to a minimum, Philippine politicians burst onto the campaign trail on Tuesday for general elections in May.

President Gloria Macapagal Arroyo is seeking re-election and about 17,000 other posts at all levels of government are also up for grabs — places in the Senate, the House of Representatives, and jobs such as mayors.

At rallies with gyrating dancers or on the road in caravans of cars, the mood was village fiesta amplified by the funding and choreography it will take to win on voting day — May 10.

Arroyo, who is suffering from what one commentator called a "charisma deficit" and running second to film star Fernando Poe Jr in opinion polls, called on candidates to "take the high road to prudence, decency and civility".

But personalities, not platforms, win elections in the nation of 7,100 islands, and a tradition of vote-buying, intimidation and dirty tricks is unlikely to change.

At the Cuneta Astrodome, a Manila stadium used for everything from cock-fighting matches to prayer vigils, Poe headlined an extravaganza of celebrities, the "Sex Bomb Dancers" and popular comedians — all covered by eight TV cameras.

"Poverty is the greatest scandal in our country," the action hero told more than 10,000 supporters to thunderous applause before he linked arms with his team as confetti rained down.

"We need change, change in our dream, and that dream is to have a brighter future."

Arroyo started in Laguna, a resort and farming area south of Manila, but has drafted in her own legion of stars

for a rally later in the day as posters of the president promising "Food, housing, jobs and education" appeared along major streets.

Arroyo wore a vest emblazoned with the slogan "Already proven and solid too" as she trumpeted her economic achievements to a lukewarm reception from about 500 townspeople.

## PERSONALITIES AND PRAYERS

While the presidential candidates will concentrate their firepower on the main island of Luzon — home to most of the wealthiest, best educated and most connected Filipinos — voters across the archipelago were treated to a touch of campaigning.

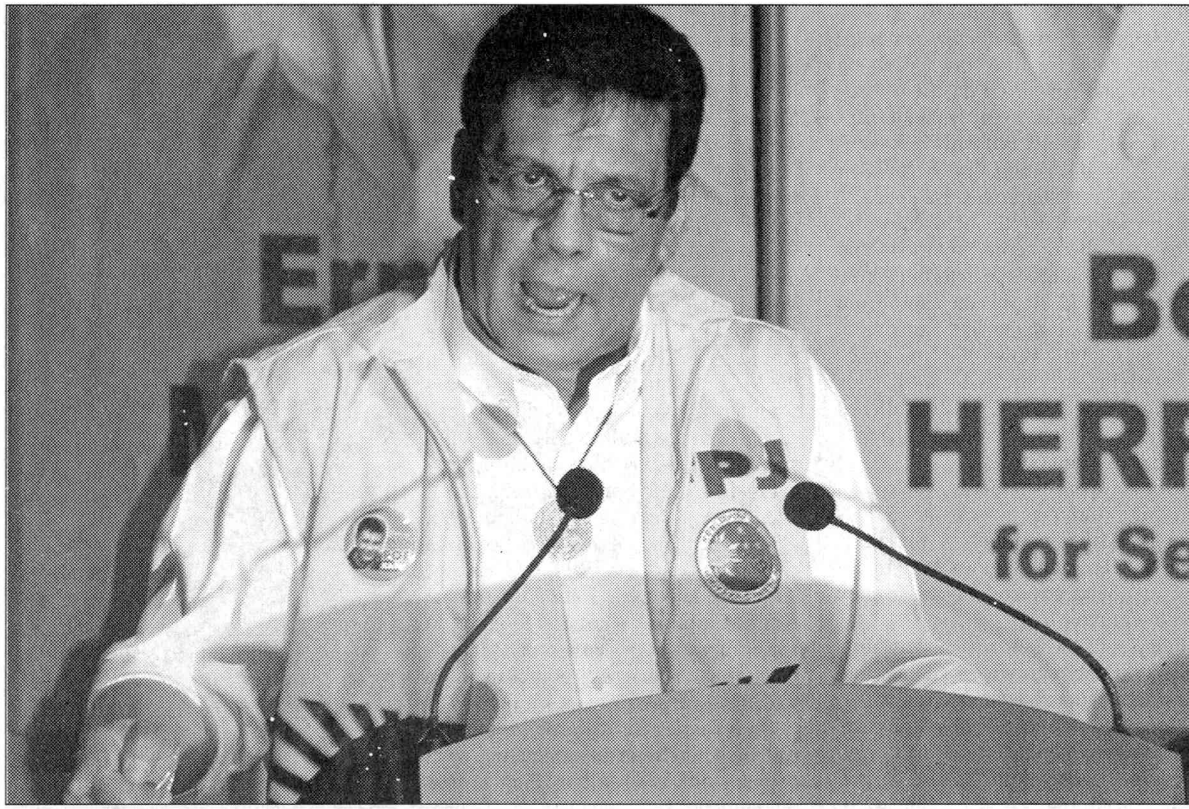
In Bacolod, the heart of the nation's sugar industry, posters of the main contenders were plastered on hospital walls, school gates and trees. But in the central city of Cebu, people seemed more concerned about a transport strike than election antics.

In keeping with the overwhelming Roman Catholic faith in the nation of 82 million people, most of the candidates began the day of festivities and politicking with some quiet moments at prayer.

Raul Roco, a former education secretary in third spot for president, mixed spirituality with image-building by attending a private mass with retired Manila archbishop Jaime Sin.

Sin was instrumental in marshalling million-strong street protests that built on middle-class anger over corruption to chase Joseph Estrada from the presidential palace three years ago.

Estrada, also a film star, won the last presidential elections in 1998 by a record margin but Arroyo, his vice-president, took over when the movie hero was ousted.



Philippine's movie action hero Fernando Poe Jr., the front runner in the May presidential election, speaks to his supporters during a proclamation rally in Manila on February 10, 2004. Philippine politicians burst onto the campaign trail on Tuesday, keeping the issues to a minimum as they turned up the theatrics and rhetoric full blast. REUTERS

Roco, wearing one of his trademark flowery Hawaiian shirts, toured a university, a public market and a large shopping mall.

Senator Panfilo Lacson, a former national police chief who made waves last year by accusing Arroyo's husband of corruption, worked to raise his fourth-place standing by returning to his roots in the Cavite area near Manila in a long motorcade.

Escorted by 20 police outriders and hundreds of vehicles, he stood up through the sunroof to wave to cheering supporters.

Candidates will expand their platforms over the next three months.

But Filipinos generally can expect motherhood statements on how to deal with rampant corruption, pervasive poverty, a debt mountain of \$60 billion, an economy trailing many of its Asian

neighbours and a peso hammered by election uncertainty.

"This time we want to hear specifics," the Philippine Star said in its editorial on Tuesday.

"The next six years will determine whether we can ever regain our footing in a highly competitive globalised environment or whether we will be doomed to be the basket case in a region long associated with dynamic growth."

## Taiwan on agenda as China, U.S. officials meet

BEIJING, Feb 10 (Reuters) - Senior Chinese and U.S. military officials were due to discuss the sensitive Taiwan issue during annual consultations on defence which began in Beijing on Tuesday, a Chinese Foreign Ministry spokeswoman said.

China, which considers Taiwan a breakaway province, has urged the United States to rein in Taiwan President Chen Shui-bian, who intends to hold the island's first ever referendum alongside presidential elections in March.

Beijing sees the referendum as a provocative move towards independence and has warned of war.

"The Taiwan issue is the most central and the most sensitive issue in China-U.S. relations," spokeswoman Zhang Qiyue told a news conference.

The United States switched diplomatic recognition from Taiwan to China in 1979, but remains the island's main arms supplier. U.S. President George W. Bush has cautioned both sides against unilaterally changing the political status quo.

U.S. Undersecretary of Defense Douglas Feith and Xiong Guangkai, deputy chief of the general staff of the People's Liberation Army, attended the vice-ministerial-level defence consultations, which are due to end on Wednesday.

"Chinese (civilian) leaders and military leaders will clarify China's stand on Taiwan to the U.S. side again during the consultations," Zhang said without elaborating.

The annual consultations began in 1997. The fifth round was held in Washington in December 2002.

## Fresh fighting erupts in Ethiopia town, many killed

ADDIS ABABA, Jan 10 (Reuters) - Between 40 and 75 people are feared to have been killed in fresh ethnic fighting that erupted at a gold mine near the western Ethiopian town of Dima, United Nations and diplomatic sources said on Tuesday.

A source said that on January 29 an armed Anuak group descended on a gold mine located 23 km (14.29 miles) west of Dima and butchered people working at the mine.

"The next day people whose family members were killed, launched a revenge killing against Anuaks living in and around Dima town," the source said. "Between 40 and 75 people may have died in the two-day violence in and around Dima."

It takes a while for information to trickle into the capital Addis Ababa from remote towns due to poor communication.

Dima is located some 250 km west of Gambella, where human rights groups said hundreds of people were killed in December following clashes between the Anuak and Nuer ethnic groups, who have traditionally clashed over land.

Officials said the government had no comment of the killings in Dima but had launched investigations.

The U.N. refugee agency UNHCR and the World Food Programme (WFP) have evacuated all their international staff, a UNHCR source said, adding that a refugee camp in

Dima was not affected by the clashes.

An estimated 4,000 residents of Dima town have fled to the nearby town of Mizan due to the violence, the sources added.

In a weekly bulletin released last Friday, WFP said security conditions in the Gambella region had "deteriorated significantly" over the last few weeks.

"These security incidents come on the heels of similar incidents that took place in Gambella area in mid-December 2003, which resulted in the loss of lives and damage to property," the WFP said in the bulletin.

Aid workers said up to 15,000 Anuaks have fled into Sudan.

## Indonesia's Suharto to be checked for trial fitness

JAKARTA, Feb 10 (Reuters) - Indonesia's top prosecution office has set up a medical team to examine whether former president Suharto could stand trial over graft allegations, an official said on Tuesday.

Prosecutors have been trying to put the 82-year-old former strongman in the dock since a court found in late 2000 that he had a communication disorder making him unfit to face trial.

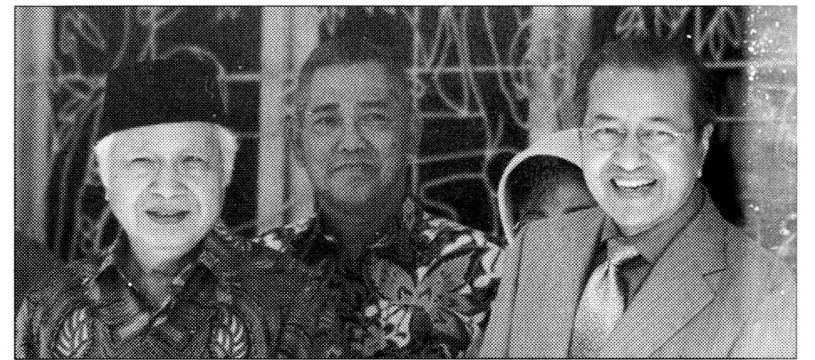
Last weekend assembled reporters saw a fresh-looking Suharto standing and walking without help when he met former Malaysian leader Mahathir Mohamad at his central Jakarta mansion.

"The doctors are ready to conduct an examination and the attorney general's office is currently coordinating with the family," said Kemas Yahya, spokesman for the attorney-general's office.

"Recently, he met Mahathir and people received an impression that he was healthy. We don't know whether he is physically fit or not. That's why he must be examined," Yahya told reporters.

Suharto's 32-year rule ended in 1998 amid social unrest. Critics accuse the former autocrat and his family of amassing as much as \$45 billion during his term in office, but attempts to bring him to court have failed.

Suharto and his family have denied any wrongdoing and no member of his immediate family has been jailed for



Former Malaysian prime minister Mahathir Mohamad (R) and former Indonesian president Suharto (L) smile at a private meeting at Suharto's residence in Jakarta, Feb. 7. REUTERS

graft. Suharto's youngest son, Tommy, was convicted on corruption charges but a Supreme Court ruling overturned that conviction.

Tommy Suharto is currently serving time after a court sentenced him in 2002 to 15 years imprisonment for masterminding the murder of the judge who handed him the graft conviction.

A survey last year showed a majority of Indonesians, fed up with what they see as ineffective government, prefer Suharto-style autocracy to the democratic rule of current leader Megawati Sukarnoputri.

Suharto's fall prompted hopes of democratic reforms, an end to corruption and human rights abuses, and also a quick recovery from the Asian financial

crisis that helped trigger his downfall. But except possibly in the first area, Indonesia has fallen short of the progress optimistic analysts hoped for.

In the coming election, the Suharto family will be a presence through a party established on his orders which will field his elder daughter as its presidential candidate.

Some analysts say the party could do well by capitalising on people who care less about criticism of Suharto over human rights and corruption than the party's promise of economic growth and social stability.

Others say Suharto is so discredited that even voters putting top priority on those issues will look to other candidates who emphasise them.

## Somali kidnappers wanted money: former UN captive

NAIROBI, Feb 10 (Reuters) - Somali gunmen who seized a U.N. security officer were motivated by money rather than politics, the recently freed German said on Tuesday, adding his captors so admired his military expertise they ended up offering him a job.

"They wanted to keep me as their commander," German U.N. worker Rolf Helmrich told a news conference in Kenya, three days after being released unharmed near the Somali port of Kismayo.

U.N. officials said no money was paid for Helmrich's release from 10 days in captivity and there was no suggestion that the gang of a dozen kidnappers had grabbed the 60-year-old former German air force lieutenant colonel for political motives.

The reasons for his kidnapping have been a focus of keen interest among Somali watchers following killings of Westerners in Somalia last year, widely believed to have been carried out by Muslim militants opposed to any Western presence in the lawless Horn of Africa country.

A British couple, Richard and Enid

Eyeington, who taught at a school in the breakaway northern enclave of Somaliland, were shot dead in October in their residence in the school compound.

The shootings followed the murder of an Italian aid worker, Annalena Tonelli, earlier that month elsewhere in Somaliland. The three killings remain unsolved.

Seized last month while travelling near Kismayo, Helmrich said he spent his entire captivity in the open air and on the move, sleeping at resting places where the weapons of his youthful captors did double duty as camping tools.

Helmrich said his kidnappers were what he described as freelancers not closely affiliated to any established militia.

During his ordeal, he said, he tried not to think about all the things that might go wrong and instead concentrated on what was happening around him. Inevitably that meant focussing on guns and chatting to his captors about their weapons.

"We were handling guns, East German-made Kalashnikovs," Helmrich said, adding his captors

warmed him when he showed that he shared their fascination with weapons.

He said he ended up sleeping between two rocket-propelled grenades which his captors gave him as weights to stop the Indian Ocean sea breeze blowing his flimsy bed mat away.

"It was a very, very screwed up situation I can tell you," he told reporters at U.N. offices in Nairobi, the administrative headquarters for the world body's Somalia operations.

Helmrich was handed over to U.N. officials in Kismayo late on Saturday and flown to Kenya on Sunday. Helmrich said that after a break he would be prepared to return to his job, one of the most dangerous in the U.N. system.

U.N. staff or consultants are kidnapped periodically in Somalia, often for use as bargaining chips by Somali former U.N. workers dismissed by the organisation and seeking compensation.

Most are freed unharmed after clan negotiations. Somalia has lacked central authority since its military leader was toppled in 1991. Rival warlords have carved the country into fiefdoms.

## Japan PM untroubled by war criminals at shrine

TOKYO, Feb 10 (Reuters) - Japanese Prime Minister Junichiro Koizumi said on Tuesday he is not troubled by the fact that war criminals are enshrined at a controversial shrine which he has visited regularly, to the anger of other Asian nations.

Asked if he felt reluctant to visit Tokyo's Yasukuni Shrine because war criminals are enshrined there along with the nation's other war dead, Koizumi said: "I have no such feeling."

The prime minister has visited the shrine every year since taking office in 2001, most recently on New Year's Day,

a visit which was condemned by South Korea and China, both victims of Japan's wartime aggression.

Yasukuni is dedicated to Japan's 2.5 million war dead since 1853, including wartime prime minister Hideki Tojo and 13 other convicted "Class A" war criminals.

Koizumi said during a debate in parliament that in Japan one does not criticise the dead, adding that he had no intention of commenting on how China or South Korea treated their dead.

He also said his Yasukuni visits were to pay respect to those who died and to

vow that Japan would never again wage war.

"I think that is a very natural feeling as a human being. I have no intention whatsoever to change such feelings just because other countries say 'Do this, do that'," Koizumi said.

The comments come amid reports that Koizumi is considering a trip to China, which was tentatively set in 2002 but was put off following Beijing's anger over a visit he made to Yasukuni.

Public broadcaster NHK said last week that Koizumi was considering visiting China later this year.

## French law to also hit pupils denying Holocaust

PARIS, Feb 10 (Reuters) - France's new ban on religious emblems in schools will also affect pupils denying the Holocaust or refusing to take part in biology or physical education courses, Education Minister Luc Ferry said on Tuesday.

Speaking before the National Assembly was due to vote for the ban on its first reading, he said the preamble of the law would make clear pupils must follow the official curriculum. He told Europe 1 radio this meant "they have no right to contest the contents of a course, for example the programme on the Holocaust in history or human reproduction in biology or (ending) physical education".

Teachers have complained in recent years of growing problems with Muslim pupils who interrupt history lessons to deny the Nazis slaughtered Jews; boycott classes on human reproduction, saying they are immodest; or refuse to attend physical education. They have also reported that Muslim pupils sometimes repeat anti-Semitic memes they see on Arabic satellite television. Paris is trying to block transmission of the Al Manar station, run by Hezbollah's Hizbollah party.

Ferry said the passage recalling pupils' obligations would be in the preamble to the law, which aims to ban conspicuous religious emblems from schools in order to keep religious discussions out of the classroom.

The law "will keep classrooms from being divided up into militant religious communities", he said, noting

there had been a "spectacular rise in racism and anti-Semitism in the past three years".

He did not say whether pupils who rejected the full curriculum could be expelled from school. The law allows schools to expel girls who consistently refuse to uncover their hair.

A large majority of deputies were due to vote for the law later on Tuesday and pass it on the final reading in mid-March. It enjoys wide support among voters, but Muslims complain it is discriminatory because it mainly targets Islamic headscarves.

Ferry said he would hold consultations with all concerned religious and cultural communities to determine how schools should apply the law from September. A circular letter to school principals laying down the guidelines for applying the law will say it bans Muslim headscarves, Jewish skullcaps and large Christian crosses, officials have already announced.

It is not clear whether it would also ban Sikh turbans, which the 5,000-strong Sikh community in the Paris area says are not religious but simply practical head coverings because they do not cut their hair.

Ferry said the law was widely misunderstood abroad, where Islamic and Christian leaders have criticised it.

"In many countries, they think we are going to ban adult women from wearing headscarves in the street. That's completely false," he said. "They talk about women's rights, but we're talking here about children."

## Belgian minister warns of royal row with Iran

BRUSSELS, Feb 10 (Reuters) - Belgium could face a diplomatic crisis with Iran if a member of the royal family went ahead with reported plans to make the son of the late Shah godfather of his new-born child, Foreign Minister Louis Michel said on Tuesday.

Prince Laurent, younger son of King Albert, told reporters after his daughter, Louise, was born last week, that he was thinking of asking a Muslim friend to be her godfather. The Belgian royal family are Roman Catholics.

Belgian media said Laurent was referring to Reza Pahlavi, the U.S.-exiled son of the shah, who was overthrown by an Islamic revolution 25 years ago. A palace spokeswoman called the reports "speculation" and declined comment.

The minister said he had contacted the royal household about the reports which were "not at all not confirmed to me".

"Diplomatically it would be extremely

difficult to keep relations intact with Iran in the way we have today if (the reports) were right," Michel told local RTBF radio.

"It seems to me diplomatically very difficult, not because of the qualities or lack of qualities of the person in question but simply because he is the son of the Shah of Iran, and today there is a different regime in Iran," he said. Prince Laurent was well aware of the difficulty, he added.

The issue could also complicate efforts to end a stand off over two girls who took refuge in the Belgian embassy in Tehran in December demanding to return to their mother in Belgium.

An Iranian judge in December backed the Iranian father, Shahab Salami, accused by Belgian authorities of having kidnapped the girls for failing to return them to their mother after taking them on holiday in Greece last August. The two governments have been trying to resolve the issue through quiet diplomacy.

## Afghan guerrillas now less than 1,000

BRUSSELS, Feb 10 (Reuters) - The number of hard-core Taliban and al Qaeda guerrillas in Afghanistan has dropped below 1,000 and their strength appears to be waning, NATO's top commander said late on Monday.

The assessment was at odds with the general perception but U.S. Marine General James Jones, speaking to reporters on a military plane after visiting Afghanistan, said he was returning with a rosier perception of the security threat.

"I came away with... a new sense of the level of the threat, which is quite a bit lower than I had thought," he said, adding that the number of "really hard-core fighters that remain ... is quite a bit less than I thought: under a thousand."

His comments were based on briefings at the headquarters of U.S.-led Operation Enduring Freedom, whose 10,600 troops are hunting die-hard Taliban militia and al Qaeda agents.

Jones said it was essential to tackle Afghanistan's growing drug trade, preferably by Afghan forces rather than foreign troops, because it was "an economic lifeline which probably fuels what's left of the Taliban and al Qaeda".

The Taliban recently shifted the focus of its jihad, or holy war, against foreign soldiers to target troops in big cities, where they say they have dozens of would-be suicide bombers, and away from remote rural areas in the south and east.

A Canadian soldier was killed in the capital, Kabul, last month by a suicide bomber, and a day later a British peacekeeper died in a suicide car bomb attack.

The Taliban claimed responsibility for both attacks, and also said they were behind a December suicide bombing in which five Afghan security officials were killed in the capital.

Jones, putting final touches to a plan for NATO to expand its Kabul peace-keeping operation into the provinces, said the suicide bombing was "a worry but also a sign of desperation".

"I think what they try to do is to have these attacks near simultaneously in different parts of the country so it gives the appearance of more mass than there really is," he said.

Jones said those briefing him felt the guerrillas were running out of energy or funds, or just getting tired.

U.S.-led forces ousted Afghanistan's ruling Taliban and routed al Qaeda fighters after the September 11 hijacked aircraft attacks on New York and Washington in 2001.

Despite a swift military victory and the establishment of a new Afghan government, al Qaeda and Taliban forces periodically stage bomb attacks or battle U.S. troops.

Jones said he would feed the latest intelligence into plans for the forces required to protect NATO-commanded Provincial Reconstruction Teams, groups of soldiers who carry out small reconstruction projects or provide security for aid workers.

He said the 19-nation alliance was aiming to set up five new PRTs before its summit in Istanbul at the end of June, which — with the one already under ISAF's command and the 12 reporting to Operation Enduring Freedom — would take the total to 18.

# Kerry looks for wins in Virginia, Tennessee

WASHINGTON, Feb 10 (Reuters) - Democratic front-runner John Kerry hopes to build on his commanding lead in the party's presidential race on Tuesday with wins in the Virginia and Tennessee primaries.

Kerry, a four-term Massachusetts senator, swept three Democratic nominating contests over the weekend and has won 10 of 12 states in his drive for the right to challenge President George W. Bush in November.

Wins in Virginia and Tennessee would give Kerry his first victories in the South and help dispel doubts about whether a Massachusetts liberal can compete in the traditionally more conservative region, which could be critical in a November matchup with Bush.

A Kerry sweep also could knock out of the race one of his two Southern rivals, retired Gen. Wesley Clark of Arkansas and Sen. John Edwards of North Carolina, who are looking to spring upsets or at least score second-place finishes that will propel them on to the Wisconsin primary on Feb. 17.

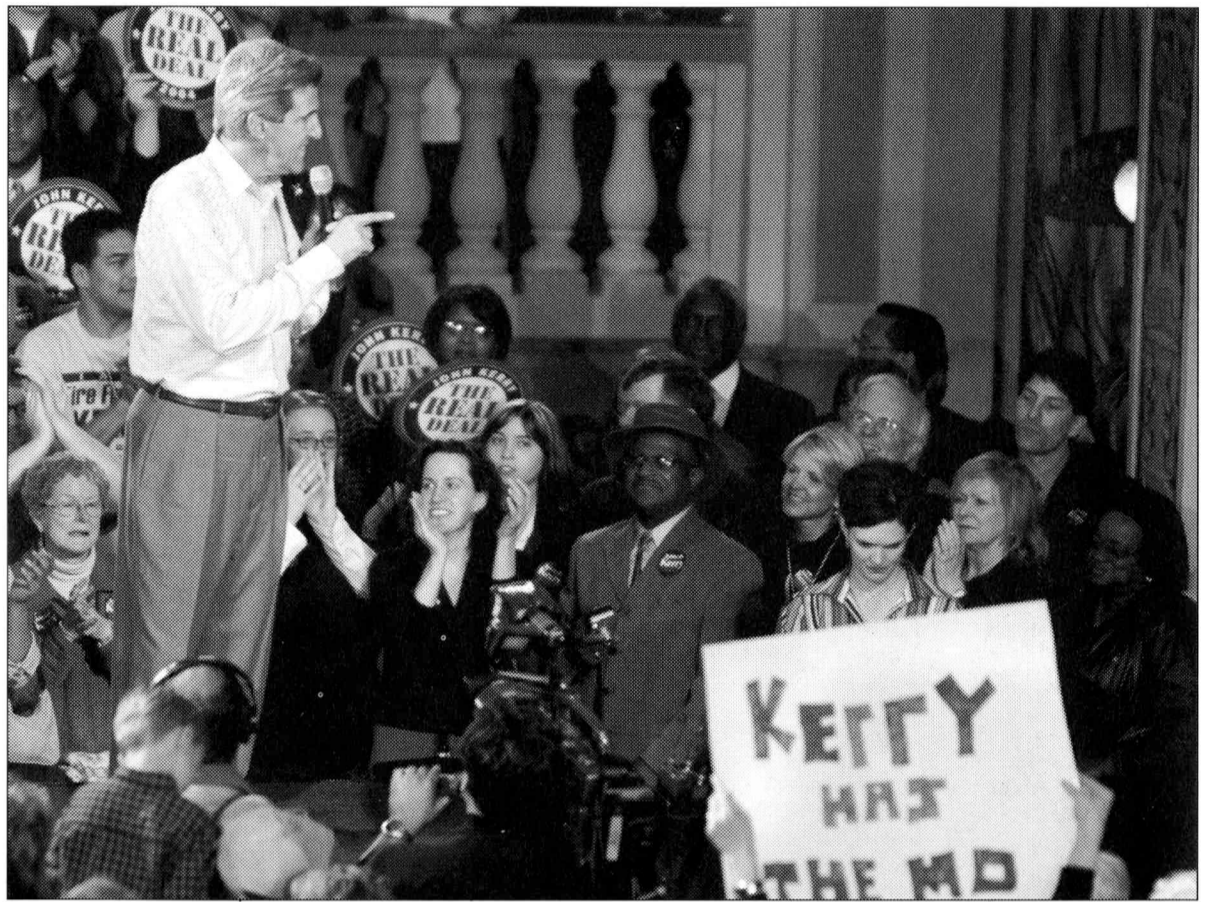
Both Clark and Edwards promise to roll on to Wisconsin no matter what happens on Tuesday, but Clark in particular could be endangered by a third-place finish in Tennessee, where he has focused his campaign.

Former front-runner Howard Dean already has looked past the two Southern states to concentrate on Wisconsin, where he had promised to make a last stand against Kerry. On Monday, the former Vermont governor said he would stay in the race past Wisconsin, win or lose.

"I can't quit on all the people who are depending on me to raise the issues that we have raised," said Dean, who has waged an outsider campaign based on opposition to the war in Iraq and Washington-based special interests.

A total of 151 delegates to July's nominating convention are at stake in Tennessee and Virginia, where Kerry leads in opinion polls. A Reuters/MSNBC/Zogby poll on Monday showed Kerry with a huge lead over Edwards in Tennessee.

Edwards and Clark skipped the weekend's contests in Michigan,



U.S. Democratic presidential candidate Senator John Kerry (D-MA) speaks as a supporter holds a sign reading Kerry Has the Mo" at a campaign rally in Memphis, Tennessee, Feb. 9. Tennessee holds its primary election February 10. REUTERS

Washington and Maine, all won by Kerry, to concentrate on Tennessee and Virginia after beating Kerry last week in South Carolina and Oklahoma, respectively.

Those are Kerry's only two losses on his drive to the nomination, and he has started looking ahead on the campaign trail to the fight with Bush.

He ignores his rivals and has concentrated his attacks on the president's economic leadership, his ties to special interests and his shifting justification for going to war in Iraq.

Kerry on Monday ridiculed a new White House report predicting the creation of 2.6 million jobs this year.

"I've got a feeling this report was

prepared by the same people who brought us the intelligence on Iraq," Kerry told a crowd in Roanoke, Virginia, noting the U.S. economy had lost more than 2 million jobs under Bush.

### Rivals seek to curb Kerry momentum

Kerry's rivals still hope something will derail his nonstop momentum and give them a chance. Even after the Wisconsin primary, which could amount to a final showdown with Kerry for all of his remaining rivals, about 75 percent of the 4,322 delegates will remain to be chosen.

That could leave the door open for

an opponent who survives Wisconsin to make a final charge against Kerry heading into March 2 primaries in big states like California, New York and Ohio.

Kerry's rise has been fueled in part by a belief among Democratic voters the decorated Vietnam War veteran offers the best chance to beat Bush in November.

Clark and Edwards have argued that as Southerners they would be able to beat Bush in the South, a huge boost for Democrats who have struggled in the region in recent elections.

That argument will lose some luster if they cannot beat Kerry in the South.

## WRAPUP 1-US says al Qaeda plan civil war in Iraq

BAGHDAD, Feb 10 (Reuters) - The United States said an al Qaeda operative was plotting to provoke a civil war in Iraq as U.N. Secretary-General Kofi Annan expressed concern over divisions among Iraqis on a plan to assume power.

U.S. officials in Baghdad said U.S. forces had seized a computer disc that contained a letter outlining the plan written by Abu Musab Zarqawi, who Washington suspects of links to Ansar al-Islam — a Muslim militant group operating in Iraq.

"There is clearly a plan on the part of outsiders to come into this country and spark civil war, breed sectarian violence and try to expose fissures in the society," Brigadier-General Mark Kimmitt, the top U.S. military spokesman in Iraq, said.

"We believe the document is credible and we take the threat seriously."

Dan Senor, chief spokesman for Iraq's U.S. governor Paul Bremer, said the 17-page letter proposed attacks on the shrines and leadership of Iraq's Shi'ite Muslim majority, whom Arab Sunnis and Kurds fear could dominate a future government.

"The document... talks about a strategy of provoking violence targeted at the Shia, the Shia leaders in the hope that it would provoke reprisals against other ethnic groups in the country," he said.

In Washington, Secretary of State Colin Powell said the letter al Qaeda was under pressure, but had not given up.

"With respect to the letter itself, it's very revealing. They describe the weaknesses they have in their efforts to undercut the coalition's effort," Powell said.

"But at the same time, it shows they haven't given up. They're trying to get more terrorists into Iraq... But they will not succeed."

Iraq's U.S. occupiers have long said they suspect al Qaeda has played a role in the insurgency against U.S. troops and particularly in attacks on civilian targets in Iraq.

In October, Washington offered a reward of up to \$5 million for information leading to the arrest or conviction of Zarqawi.

He is also suspected of orchestrating the murder of U.S. diplomat Laurence Foley in the Jordanian capital in 2002. Zarqawi was sentenced to death in absentia by a Jordanian court last year for plotting attacks against U.S. and Israeli targets.

### U.N. concerns

In New York, Annan spoke to U.N. Security Council members about the electoral team he sent to Baghdad on Saturday to see whether elections could be held quickly, as Shi'ites want, or recommend alternatives for selecting Iraqi leaders before the United States relinquishes power on June 30.

"I am concerned that there is no consensus yet on the best way to handle the transition," Annan said, according to his speaking notes. "Many Iraqis have been calling for elections before June 30. Others disagree and prefer other options for choosing the members of Iraq transitional institutions."

He told reporters the team, led by veteran U.N. official Lakhdar Brahimi, a former Algerian foreign minister, had met members of the coalition and a variety of Iraqis.

"I think the work of the team is going extremely well," Annan said. "So far, so good. The atmosphere has been good."

Annan said the team would soon meet Ayatollah Ali al-Sistani, the most revered cleric among Iraq's Shi'ites, who make up 60 percent of the population.



A U.S. soldier removes barbed wire from a street in the centre of the Iraqi capital Baghdad, February 10, 2004. The United States said an al Qaeda operative was plotting to provoke a civil war in Iraq as U.N. Secretary-General Kofi Annan expressed concern over divisions among Iraqis on a plan to assume power. REUTERS

Iraqi political sources say most Sunni leaders told Brahimi they opposed early elections, while most Shi'ites said polls could be held before the June 30 deadline.

A U.S. plan for caucuses instead of direct elections to select a national assembly provoked massive protests by Iraqi Shi'ites after Sistani rejected it.

U.S. President George W. Bush wants U.N. help to arrange an early transfer of sovereignty to Iraqis, an effort to ease the postwar violence in the country and dispel concerns of extended U.S. rule as he faces a tough re-election fight in November.

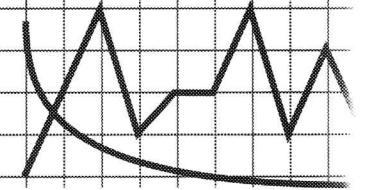
U.S. defence officials said forces in Iraq have taken into custody another of the Pentagon's top-55 most-wanted officials from toppled President Saddam Hussein's government.

Muhsin Khadr al-Khafaji, identified as a former Baath Party chairman and commander of the Baath militia in the Qadasiyah governorate, was No. 48 on the U.S. list and the "three of diamonds" in the deck of playing cards given to U.S. troops.

Saddam's former lieutenant, Izzat Ibrahim al-Douri, is the highest-ranking official on the list who remains at large, coming in at No. 6.



# YT Business



## Yemen's economic reform program

# Why price hikes may fail



BY MOHAMMED HAYDER  
FOR THE YEMEN TIMES

**C**riticism against the course of the economic reform program of the government continues because of rising prices that are scheduled.

The reform also seems to disregard corruption policy.

The government on the other hand has complained on many occasions of corruption and its spread inside the administrative machinery of the state and in various areas of economic and social areas.

This expression by the government is more felt that the citizen who is overwhelmed by the situation and feels the heavy impact of corruption throughout the eight past years, since the implementation of the program was kicked off in 1995.

We cannot at any rate take seriously into consideration what the government has termed the policy of price rise, without any objective justification, as "price reforms," even though it is carried out at circumstances necessitating the reform process.

Reform would necessarily require a big amount of creating balance between what is economic and what is social. The absence of such equilibrium would lead to failings in the policies of the economic and financial reform, and it would cause the program to lose its credibility in addressing the real reforms and expose it to failure, as the case now is.

The government is focusing on carrying out price rise doses and making it the central issue of the reform processes, disregarding the reform of other central and more vital issues mentioned in its financial statements over the past years.

It is not necessary to have the prices rising in all cases, for sometimes it is necessary to have the indicator at lower scales, and relatively firm price indicators, because that is a major factor for the stability of the national currency and purchasing power, and for the economic and social stability in general.

The relative stability of prices also helps much to encircle inflation, unlike the price rise that would cause continuous drop in the economic performance and deterioration of social situations and the increase of the volume of unemployment and poverty.

The program is characterised largely by a contradiction of policies and

precepts.

On the one hand, the program calls, among other things, for lowering the rate of inflation and the rise in rates of gross domestic product growth, fighting poverty, stability of prices and improvement of living conditions of the population, but the price hike dose to be introduced in this year, embodied by reducing the subsidiary of oil and its products prices to YR 40 billion after it was in the budget of he year 2003 at YR 48.1 billion. And this is at the expense of the citizen's living. How can we practically imagine that the program would realize such goals while it is in a condition of ambiguous vision of an integrated strategy for the program?

Comparing the volume of overall estimation of the 2004 budget to that of 2003 we find a deficit by 3.99%. This deficit represents a group of failures the national economy is suffering and embodied by economic burdens reaching percentages ranging between 2 to 3% of the GDP in the past years.

The government has to bear the responsibility of results of the policies and measures of the reform program, and to evaluate its performance in a way to achieve relative balance, economically and socially.

Before carrying out this assessment

operation, the government has to halt implementation of the new price dose for this year, which is intended to mainly raise prices of oil and its products, that consequently would lead to multi-lateral dangers and damage such as:

- continuation in the rise of prices of foodstuffs, transport and communications and other vital services,

- continuation in the increase in rates of poverty and unemployment in the society,

- continuation in the rise inflation, growth and deterioration of the Yemeni rial, as well as retreat in growth of investments, resulting from weakness of savings growth. It would keep dependence on borrowing loans and foreign aid, a process managed in a non-economic mentality,

- drop in rates of GDP growth and an increase in the rates of the growth of the state budget deficit.

The government has been used in previous times of implementing the program to choose the suitable timing it sees suitable for carrying out the decision of raising prices of commodities.

This time it could be anytime after the Eid holidays and then it could be fully prepared for to subdue any possible reactions by those targeted by the new dose.

### Could provide jobs, infrastructure

## Who will produce glass in Yemen?

BY ABDULAZIZ MOHAMMED ABDULLA  
YEMEN TIMES ADEN BUREAU

**M**any reports validate that Yemen needs industry to attract jobs and also Arab and foreign investment.

For instance building a cement factory in Abyan would provide many job opportunities for the labour in that area and realize comprehensive development that could extend to other districts of the governorate.

Such a development would not only provide job opportunities but also services and infrastructure there, such as roads, houses and trade shops.

There were previous efforts before the unity aimed at studying the economic feasibility of building a glass industry, and a glass factory was destined to be built in the southern and eastern governorates for flat, coloured

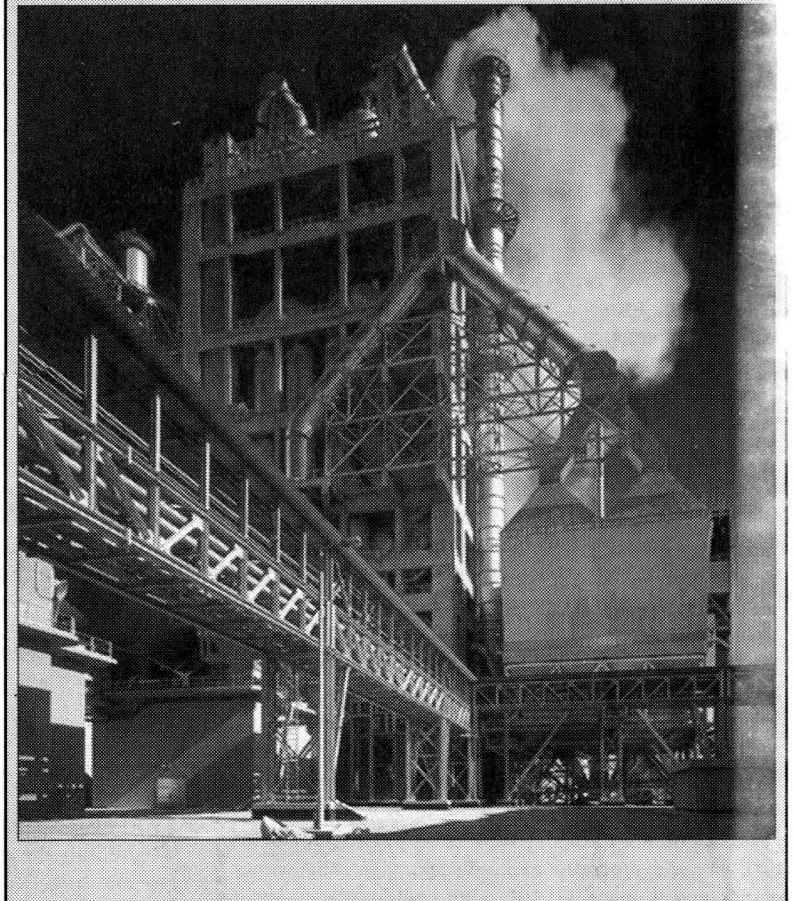
and white glass.

Other efforts were also exerted for using some of the capital from the northern governorates in cooperation with Jordanian businessmen. Unfortunately those efforts and follow-up have been frozen since 1999 for unknown reasons.

Nowadays, after confirmed availability of raw materials in various areas, such as Haja, Shabwa, Abyan, Hadramout, and Hudeida, including industrial mud that is available in Sana'a, Sa'da, Lahj, Ibb, Hudeida, and Hadramout, will we see a project built for the glass industry?

We are in great need of this industry especially since consumption of glass is very high in the country. All factories of beverages in many governorates are big consumers of glass bottles, plus the factories of fruit juices also consume large quantities of glass containers.

We need glass also in the construction industry of houses and buildings.



## OPEC springs surprise oil output cut

**O**PEC on Tuesday agreed a surprise cut in output limits from April, sending world oil prices up sharply.

The deal slices production limits for the group that controls half the world's oil trade to 23.5 million barrels a day from April 1.

Ministers said the Organization of the Petroleum Exporting Countries would also immediately eliminate 1.5 million barrels a day of leakage being pumped above existing supply quotas.

Oil prices rose on the pact, a repeat of last September's unexpected supply reduction.

U.S. crude at 1530 GMT was up 66 cents at \$33.49 a barrel, valuing OPEC's reference basket well above the group's preferred \$22-\$28 target range.

"It's a clever move by OPEC, giving the market some support before the second quarter," said Oystein Berentsen, head of crude trade at Norway's Statoil.

"But given how much they are leaking people will want to see how much of the cut they implement. There's a question mark over their credibility."

The deal is designed to help defend oil prices as demand slackens and world oil inventories build after the northern hemisphere winter.

"The inventory, where it is now, is fine, we don't want to see it building," said Saudi Oil Minister Ali al-Naimi. "We don't want to see a precipitous fall in prices."

For consumer nations the deal looks like a threat to world economic recovery and a reminder that OPEC appears prepared to defend prices that are above its official \$22-\$28 target range.

A spokesman for the White House said: "It is our hope that producers do not take actions that undermine the American economy ... and American consumers."

"It's a big call," said Kevin Norrish of Barclays Capital in London. "Our own view is that OPEC does not need to cut by as much as it appears to be aiming at."

Saudi's Naimi said projections for a heavier-than-normal seasonal second quarter fall in demand could not be ignored.

Forecasts, including those of the West's energy watchdog the International Energy Agency, are for second quarter demand to undercut world supply by as much as four million barrels a day, more than double the normal seasonal gap.

Saudi Arabia's insistence that it wants \$25 for OPEC's crude will be put to the test as it decides export flows for the spring.

Riyadh appeared to have softened its tone on oil price policy since OPEC last met in December. Naimi said at the time that higher prices were justified by the impact of the weak dollar on producers' spending power.

Since then, and again in Algiers, he has made a point of re-emphasizing Riyadh's commitment to OPEC's central \$25 target. **Reuters**

# Yemen & Pakistan: Steps for developing economic relations

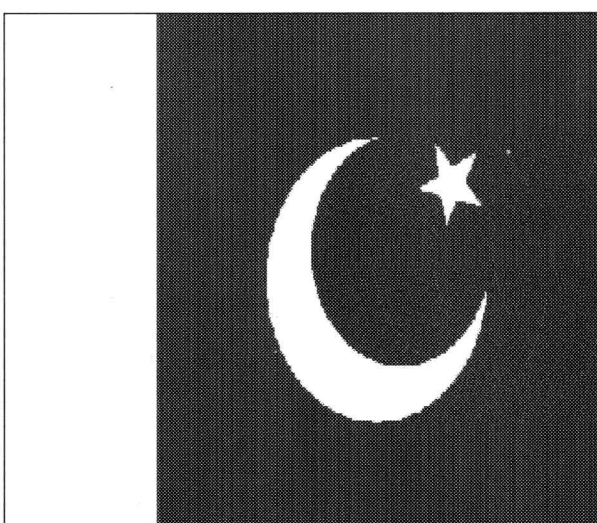
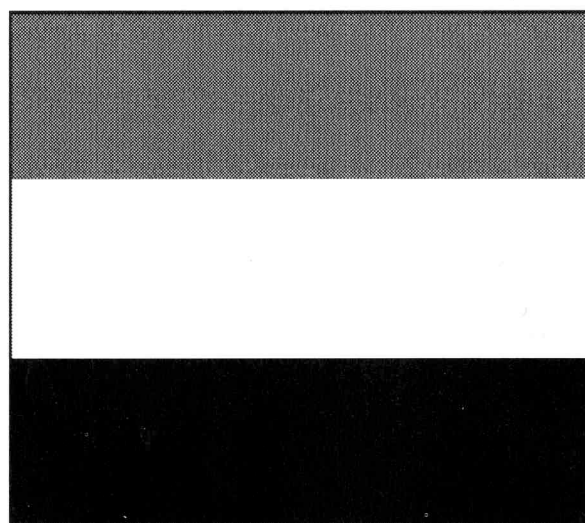
By Mahyoub al-Kamali  
Yemen Times Staff

**M**eetings of the fourth session of the Yemeni-Pakistani joint committee are scheduled to be held in Sana'a 14-15 February 2004 where there would be discussion concerning the existing bilateral cooperation.

The joint committee would discuss 17 projects on cooperation in various fields the major of which are an agreement on avoiding dual taxation, the trade exchange, health, education, culture and endowments as well as guidance and information.

The two sides are also to discuss an agreement on cooperation between the federation of the chambers of commerce and industry, technical education and vocational training as well as specifications and standardization's.

Yemen and Pakistan have been connected with trade cooperation relations since 1972. The volume of trade exchange between the two countries amounted in 2002 to around YR 3.73 billion, of which 3.42 billion the volume of Pakistani exports to Yemeni market and 309 million worth the volume of Yemeni exports to Pakistani



market.

Yemen is willing to develop its trade relations with Pakistan and the equilibrium of the balance of trade between them, especially that the volume of trade surplus is still tilting towards Pakistani exports to Yemen by YR 3.11 billion.

The joint committee had held its first meeting in the Pakistani city of Karachi in 1988 when it had agreed to develop the areas of trade exchange between the two countries. And in 1991 the second session of the committee was held in Sana'a where there had been a signing of a minutes on

cooperation in trade, industry, agriculture, construction, communication, fish, health, culture, and tourism areas and Yemen then obtained a loan of five million dollars.

In 1999 the third session of the committee was held in Karachi and the two sides signed an agreement on economic and technical cooperation and another agreement for protection and encouragement investment in the two countries.

In 2001, the two countries signed an agreement on air transport which in turn enhanced the agreements already

concluded by the two sides and those agreements included protocols and understanding memoranda and executive programs for strengthening and developing areas of bilateral cooperation.

It is therefore the government of Yemen desires to see the fourth session in Sana'a producing positive results for evolving trade, economic and investment relations with the government of Pakistan. Yemen also seeks to benefit from Pakistani administrative and technical experiences as well as in the field of textile, leather, glass and plastic materials industry.

## Words of Wisdom



Individuals must be held accountable for the way they handle property, especially if it is publicly owned. Thus, drivers of government vehicles, operators of machines, an other people who have direct responsibility for government assets have to be constantly brought under supervision. By the way, this would also apply to traffic violations by government drivers. They should be made to pay for the tickets.  
*Prof. Abdulaziz Al-Saqqaf, (1951 - 1999)*  
Founder of Yemen Times



## OUR OPINION

# Government has hurt itself

The government's actions last week in brutally and swiftly imprisoning merchants of cassettes that include criticism of government policies was in my opinion quite an unwise step, even for the sake of the government.

I, along with millions other Yemenis, actually didn't know about the tape until the government took action against sellers and producers. This triggered a feeling of curiosity to know just what this tape contains.

Later on, I had the opportunity to listen to it in one of the taxis of Sana'a. The tape did include some harsh criticism against the government and its way of dealing with the country's affairs. But it did not include false accusations or invalid information. All the poet did is simply convey feelings of millions of poor Yemenis, and reflect the realities of the country.

"What the government did makes us believe more in the content of this tape" the taxi driver told me. "It also made us listen twice and three times to the tape and made us think twice about what it talks about." he added.

I am afraid that for the government, the idea of launching such a severe arrest campaign against even the simple vendors in the streets back-fired, as more people became interested later, either buying it directly or borrowing the tape and making illegal copies.

To my personal surprise, I even found some converted the tape to digital audio format for online listening. This cannot be stopped, unless the use of the Internet is forbidden.

How could the government stop it then?

What is more puzzling is how official sources claim that the reason for this crackdown was because the tape was not licensed. Many have made a mockery about this, as they know that some government officials have been turning a blind eye to other illegal cassettes, and have never before launched such a harsh campaign against earlier illegal audio tapes discovered in the market.

This also contradicts that the first thing asked by police concerning the tapes was "Was it made by Islah [the main opposition party]?" If it is a matter of being without a license, why politicize the whole affair?

Just as we are trying to show the world and ourselves that we are democratic, and are seeking to enhance our democracy in every way through enabling freedom of the press and expression, we have exposed to the world through such action that it is not about.

In conclusion, the idea behind the tape may have been too daring, but the steps following it prove to be worse in harming the government's reputation.

The only ones that could be so happy for this would be the opposition and the poet himself, who is now, with the help of the government, among the most popular and beloved poets in the country.

The Editor



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## Secrecy involving Sheikh al-Mouayad is one injustice

# War on terror has winners and losers



BY ABDULLA SALLAM  
AL-HAKIMI  
FOR THE YEMEN  
TIMES

I'm not here in the position for defending Sheikh al-Mouayad or attempting to acquit this virtuous man who the German government handed over to the American authorities that accuse him with charges pertaining to terror, as was then reported by media. The German measure had ended a period of ten months al-Mouayad had spent in custody in Germany. Nevertheless, I do not want necessarily to give the impression that I do not want to defend al-Mouayad. But this could be rather an impossible task due to the utter secrecy of information regarding charges against him and evidence those charges based on.

Since the American administration has led its campaign on against terror, it has been following a variety of policies, which include launching a direct destructive war against a state and occupying it, as what happened in Afghanistan, carrying out special operations of liquidation and bloody assassinations, as in Yemen, or a large-scale and random arrests of persons and keeping them in excluded prisons in closed American military bases, or killing large numbers of detainees and prisoners of war whose hands and feet are chained, as is the case in Guantanamo base and Afghanistan.

Part of the American administration policy in this regard are the intensified and large-scale chasings of persons, political parties, and political, financial educational, cultural and charitable organizations and taking despotic and excessively severe measures against them all over the world.

Regretfully these instances of measures and practices are carried out according to a highly secretive and ambiguous program to the extent that one does not know why people are arrested and why are some of them released, if they were set free.

People also wonder about the reason why properties and assets of political parties, organizations and societies and individuals are frozen. All that is done amidst utter secrecy and extreme violation of all legal conditions and requires of human rights and dignity. This is a dangerous and disagreeable precedence, particularly when practiced by a superpower claiming protection and care of democracy, liberalism and human rights.

The situation has reached the top-most danger and chaos when the American administration added other pretexts and justifications to that of fighting terror and terrorists justifying for it what it wants to realize and the policies to take against any country it chooses as a target. The added pretexts and causes are such as weapons of mass destruction, dictatorship, violations of human rights and democracy and alike of justifications. By this policy the greatest military power in the world has dictated an unprecedented international situation characterised by two major features:

1-The United States, as the sole superpower in the world, unilaterally decides to wage wars on small countries and occupy them militarily, regardless of the fact that they are independent sovereign states and internationally recognised members of the international community.

A stark example is what happened to the republic of Iraq in launching a comprehensive war of aggression against it, toppling its legitimate polit-

ical system and occupying its territories under pretexts of its possession of WMD.

The latter allegation was refuted and proved groundless by international weapon inspection teams. However, the occupying forces could not find the simplest evidence on that allegation up till now despite of their full colonialist domination over the entire land of Iraq.

This situation pushed the occupation troops to promote another pretext, i.e. dictatorship and oppressiveness of President Saddam Hussein's regime against his people. The United States of America has also propagated that it has exposed itself to dangers of the war and its material and human sacrifices just in sympathy with the people of Iraq to grant them the expensive gift of democracy.

2-The world's sole superpower has unsheathed the sword of threat, intimidation and sanctions against any of the world independent states it wants. The U.S. administration has granted for itself alone the outright right for granting "indulgence documents" and issuing "certificates of good conduct" to this state or that and categorizing those states as evil and good according to its criteria and interests. Though up till now the American list of "rogue" regimes is confined to mainly North Korea, topping the list are also countries like Iran, Saudi Arabia, Syria, Lebanon, Palestine, Pakistan as well as of Egypt, Sudan, Somalia and Yemen.

The list is liable to be beefed up continually whenever the world superpower interests and targets necessitate that. This policy does not differentiate between a hostile or a friend or an ally because the goal is the land and its wealth and situation and not the philosophy and orientation of the political system.

This newly-effected international situation has stripped the international organisation with all its bodies of its role and responsibilities for regulating and steering courses of relations and cooperation among the world nations and keeping security, peace and stability between them. The sole world superpower the individual having the right to determine and steer the world affairs. We have to regretfully admit that the United States of America has been able with military and financial might to force many world states to give it whatever it wants of privileges and presence on their territories, and to abide by all its demands and conditions, even if that contradicted their national sovereignty.

To discuss sheikh al-Mouayad's case I would like to point out that he wanted to travel to Germany, whether for medical treatment or for other reasons, and he was granted the German visa, according to which he traveled to Germany. There were not any points against him as being persona non grata. Granting a visa to a person by any country means he is not forbidden from entering that country and accordingly he should guaranteed safety and respect and good treatment as long as he respects that country's laws, otherwise he would be asked to leave that country. But arrest that person and hand him over to another country in dependence to accusations based on the latter's vision, it is something too difficult to be accepted, regardless of the international agreements the American administration has trampled and disregarded.

For instance in Yemen, where the tribal characteristic is prevalent, tribes traditions and norms, dictate, among other things, that in case there is a state of personal vengeance between one

person and another and if by chance the two have greeted each other on that day the one demanding the vengeance has no right to take vengeance against that person throughout that day. If the two adversaries shook hands on that day the period prohibiting revenge can be extended for several days. Measuring on this, the granting of a visa by a certain country to a person could be an assurance pledge that must be observed and respected.

In Islam, the protection of a seeker of refuge is a must even if he were an arch enemy of Muslims. Thus it would have been better for Germany, the friendly country that is respected and appreciated by the Yemenis not to grant sheikh al-Mouayad and his companion an entry visa or to ask them to leave the country or handing them to their own country. Many people ask about the reason why the United States did not ask the Yemeni government to hand over sheikh al-Mouayad to it for detaining and trying him. Was the whole what happened meant for deforming the image of Germany in the eyes of the Yemeni people?

On the other hand, a certain pressure on another state for handing over one of its nationals to be tried and interrogated according to its own laws and then punishing him, would be a precedent that would entail the most serious consequences, most of which is the destruction of the concept of the state and loyalty of its people. It would cancel the national loyalty of the individual.

We are with the punishment of criminals and not to leave them at large, but why should not America or any other country ask the authorities of the country to which those criminals belong to interrogate, try and punish them?

Sheikh al-Mouayad was socially well-known as one of the outstanding philanthropists in Yemen and has worked throughout most of his life for the establishment of a charitable foundation "The charitable Ihsan Foundation" in the capital Sana'a. Through this foundation he kept extending help to around eight thousand poor families, especially during the fasting month of Ramadan. He has also founded a teaching center for the sons of poor families to get free of charge education and learning various branches of knowledge, including the science of computer and languages as well as providing them with free of charge medication.

The fasting month of Ramadan has been evidence on those poor people loss of such a philanthropist to help them overcome difficult circumstances of living. The American administration has never thought, even for one moment, about such a bitter humanitarian situation and this has invoked resentment and anger of the people against the American administration.

The bitter fact is that as the American administration has begun its war against the so-called terror, it carried out the freezing of activities and assets of a large number of humane charitable establishments and foundations throughout the world that consequently led to deprivation of millions of the poor in the world of those foundations' humanitarian help, under the pretext that those establishments finance terror, even without having real evidence on that.

This pursuit arouses hatred against the American administration and its policies and creates fixed conviction among large segments of people to be in sympathy with those so-termed as terrorists, as long as such philanthropy acts and assistance of the poor are presented by them.

COMMON  
SENSE

By Hassan Al-Haifi

## What exactly is the Zionist lobby - a la MEMRI?

One of the most intriguing subjects concerning American "civil society", is the awesome number of advocacy groups, with a diversified wide span of subjects from gun control to the opposite, to gay marriages to the opposite, not to mention the hundreds of thousands of charities and civil rights organizations, some of which have international footing. Immersed in this sea of genuine to bizarre causes comfortably floats a large network of Jewish and Zionist organizations, whose purpose is solely to advocate for the Zionist cause and insure that American foreign policy is geared to upholding the cause of the existence and upkeep of the Hebrew State in Palestine - Israel. It is very difficult to get an exact counting of the organizations that are intertwined in this large network of well integrated and well organized (and of course well-funded) organizations, but it would probably not be an exaggeration to put this labyrinth of advocacy as the largest in number and the most aggressive in nature. The United States Constitution and most of the local and federal statutes encourage civil society growth and consider civil society an integral part of the American body politic that is indispensable. This encouragement is accorded in the form of tax freedoms and even subsidization and thus leads to a healthy, generally transparent and participatory non-government sector, which is quite effective in upholding civil rights and addressing serious social issues. In fact, NGOs in the United States are quite often partners with Federal, State and Municipal Governments in the provision of essential social services.

Many people have the misconception of believing that the Zionist Lobby is just some lobbying organizations that run around the halls of the US Congress or State or Local Legislative bodies, or engaged in the political activities of the political parties (both Democrat and Republican, as well as the other independent parties), and that is the only area of interest to those who support Israel. The fact of the matter is that the Zionist or pro Zionist organizations in the United States are probably the most numerous organizations that advocate or work for the advancement of a single cause in the United States (which incidentally is not really an "American" cause per se) and while many of these organizations are not at all bashful about their objectives or purposes (such as the United Jewish Appeal or the Anti-Defamation League of B'nai Brith), there are quite a number of pro-Zionist organizations that one would probably never consider as having anything to do with the Zionist cause, and may even appear to be trying to "foster 'Arab-American' relations". These fuzzy or shady Zionist organizations are often found in the areas of the media and the dissemination of information. The general purposes of such information channels are twofold: One is to project a beautiful image of the Hebrew State as one being so close to the liking of the American and western citizen (with less success in the latter) and an important front line defense arsenal of American interests and even American and Western "values". The other is to ensure that the image of the Arabs, in particular (without any distinction between religious affiliations; i.e., Christian and Moslem Arabs) and Moslems in general is such that they represent the antithesis of anything that American stands for, on top of being barbaric nomads and uncivilized rapists (Remember the movie, *Two Women*, starring Sophia Loren).

Of course, one will never find these shady organizations revealing their real intentions, but many Westerners and even Americans have been kind enough to enlighten their public and us about the real non-genuine intents of such organizations. In the case of the Middle East Research Institute (MEMRI), we have what seems to be on the surface an organization that works to disseminate some of the work that appears in the Arab Press and media among western readers (viewers and listeners). The organization MEMRI, according to Dr. Alan Balboni, of the University of Nevada (Dr. Balboni did his PhD on the Zionist Lobby) states: "... was founded by a retired Israeli general, is funded by wealthy Likud Zionists, mostly Americans, and has one goal - to find material in Arab media that criticizes Arab society and then disseminate this material as broadly as possible across the globe in order to indirectly and cleverly develop sympathy for Israel and Zionism." Mr. Brian Whitaker of the Guardian Newspapers Unlimited, also has brought some interesting insights on this dubious organizations, by the way they rush into translating Arabic articles or reports that often show the downsides of the Arab World and tells us that MEMRI is "based in Washington but with recently-opened offices in London, Berlin and Jerusalem.

Its work is subsidized by US taxpayers because as an 'independent, non-partisan, non-profit' organization, it has tax-deductible status under American law." When asked to check into a MEMRI quick translation of articles, Mr. Whitaker find himself suspicious of MEMRI because of its very secretive nature: "Its website does not give the names of any people to contact, not even an office address" On the other hand, Whitaker points out: "the stories selected by MEMRI for translation follow a familiar pattern: either they reflect badly on the character of Arabs or they in some way further the political agenda of Israel." The Guardian article may be found in the link, <http://www.guardian.co.uk>, which we recommend our readers to look into, to see that what we are saying is also seen by academicians and journalists in the West, who are advocating for limiting the strength of the overtly strong Zionist lobby that is not just dubious in nature, but eats at the taxpayers' hard earned incomes with no meaningful returns on investment.

# Saddam's last secret

CHARLES PAUL FREUND  
FOR REASON

President George Bush has now agreed to appoint a commission to examine the performance of U.S. intelligence regarding Ba'athist Iraq, especially errors concerning weapons of mass destruction. Dr. David Kay, the retiring head of the team that has gone in search of such weapons, has credibly concluded that, notwithstanding confident administration claims—and a near-universal consensus—to the contrary, “we were almost all wrong” about Iraq’s WMD stockpiles: There weren’t any. Given how much time the commission will have for its inquiry—its report won’t be due until 2005—I hope it takes up an aspect of this issue that apparently looms as a central mystery: Why, if Saddam Hussein had nothing to hide, did he behave as if he did?

For example, when the UN asked Saddam’s regime for records proving that it had destroyed all caches of WMD that Iraq was known to have had in the past, Saddam failed to provide such evidence. Instead, his government offered records that indicated it had destroyed some of these weapons, but left open the question of what had happened to the rest. The distinguished journalist Timothy Garton Ash aptly pronounced the voluminous but inconclusive Iraqi report to be “the world’s longest suicide note.” If Saddam had indeed destroyed all his old WMD, why did he make no serious effort to persuade the UN of it? Why did he send the UN a report that suggested otherwise?

When UN inspectors returned to Iraq in 2002, they sought to interview Iraqi scientists in private. Most such scientists refused to grant any interviews unless a Ba'athist minder was present, or unless the interviews were taped. If these scientists had no knowledge of WMD caches, why didn't Saddam encourage private interviews? Dr. Kay and his team have since spoken to numerous Iraqi scientists, and Kay cites these interviews in concluding that reports of Iraqi WMD were mistaken. What prevented Saddam from encouraging interviews that would have helped exonerate him of American and British charges?

Indeed, UN arms inspectors received inadequate cooperation from the regime, as Hans Blix himself complained. Blix, in his reports to the UN, was clearly skeptical about U.S. and British claims concerning the nature and extent of Iraq's weaponry. But he was also openly critical of the lack of cooperation from Iraqi officials. “It is not the task of the inspectors” to find evidence of weapons destruction,” Blix told the UN last February. “Iraq itself must squarely tackle this task and avoid belittling the questions.”

In sum, the U.S. and Great Britain could not have gotten away with their WMD argument before the UN if Saddam Hussein had not behaved

throughout the entire pre-war period as if those charges were legitimate. What lay behind Saddam's actions?

Of course, Saddam himself is in custody, but we've yet to hear what he has to say about anything. In the meantime, a number of theories have been floated to account for his pre-war behavior.

For example, there is the theory of self-serving machismo. According to this view, which David Kay himself considered, Saddam's public posturing toward the UN and the U.S. was guided by regional expectations of “Big Man” behavior. As a self-styled champion of the Arabs, Saddam could not appear weak. If an open admission that he had destroyed his WMD was perceived (by, say, the “Arab street”) as tantamount to weakness, Saddam would risk his regional standing. Thus, he was compelled to act as if he was still armed with weapons of which the West disapproved.

Does this make sense? A devious machismo is actually implied in the U.S. charges against Saddam; it is consistent with secret stockpiles of proscribed weapons. But is it consistent with actually destroying your weapons and then pretending that you have something to hide? That seems less like machismo than what journalist Ash called it: suicide. It's posturing with a vengeance, since the posture involves placing a gun at your own head.

Besides, who says that Pan-Arabist machismo excludes weakness or even defeat? Don't forget that Saddam was able to claim victory of sorts in the 1991 Gulf War simply because he survived it. That's why he was still a Big Man. If Saddam had demonstrated that he had no WMD, he could have revealed George W. Bush as a liar while pulling Bush's UN justifications from beneath his feet. This time, Saddam would not only have survived, he would have added to his scimitar-wielding swagger.

But there are other theories to consider. For example, there's the possibility that Saddam didn't have any WMD, but he thought he did. According to this view, Ba'athist underlings created a Potemkin arms-program edifice that somehow persuaded Saddam that he had stores of proscribed weapons when he had nothing of the kind.

Could something like this have happened? If it did, it would make Saddam Hussein the biggest political farceur since Rufus T. Firefly was president of Freedonia. Like all retrospective conspiracy theories, however, this view makes more demands on credulousness than it can satisfy: Whoever is at the center of the plot has foreseen all problems, and no unanticipated consequences arise until Bush goes to the UN. Nevertheless, this thesis may well be favored within the intelligence community, since if Saddam thought he had proscribed weapons, what do you want from people sitting in Langley, Virginia?

One might add all sorts of variations. For example, Saddam's actions could

be interpreted as reasonable, at least from his point of view. That is, he refused to cooperate with inspectors because he believed them to be spies. As for the incomplete records of weapon destruction that he offered the UN, that was just an everyday bureaucratic screw-up that could happen anywhere. (But Saddam's actions helped strengthen the case for a war that overthrew him, thus undermining any “reasonableness” scenario.)

Or maybe Saddam was just a disengaged loon, relishing the pretense that he was a great novelist and filling his palaces with unredeemable kitsch, and otherwise behaving irrationally. (But there's evidence, such as the “resistance” communications found with him when he was arrested, that suggests he was reasonably engaged. Even so, I'll stipulate that, whatever else turns out to be true, Saddam's political judgment had become as execrable as his taste.)

Of course, there's still the thesis that Saddam really did have WMD stockpiles after all. This would mean that it is not U.S. intelligence that is in error, but Dr. Kay. During his Meet the Press appearance Sunday, President Bush himself suggested that this may yet prove to be the case. (But if Bush brandishes an Iraqi vial of Something Dangerous in the middle of the presidential campaign, we'll be arguing about it for the rest of our lives.)

One last thesis to consider: Saddam acted like he had something to hide because he was hiding something. According to this scenario, “Iraq was in clear material violation of [UN Resolution] 1441. They maintained programs and activities, and they certainly had the intentions at a point to resume their [weapons] programs. So there was a lot they wanted to hide because it showed what they were doing that was illegal.”

Who thinks so? Actually, these are the words of Dr. David Kay, testifying last month before the Senate Armed Services Committee. That would be the same Dr. David Kay whose conclusion that there were no WMD stockpiles set off this flurry of conjecture to begin with. Thus, the very man who opened this “mystery” about Saddam's behavior also offered a reasonably comprehensive solution to it. Yet while one conclusion (“we were all wrong”) is quoted ubiquitously, the remainder of his remarks remain relatively obscure.

True, Dr. Kay's conclusions—among them, that “the world is far safer with the disappearance and the removal of Saddam Hussein”—don't exonerate bad intelligence, they don't justify administration exaggerations, and they don't address the damage that has apparently been done to U.S. credibility. But they do seem to provide an informed context for understanding and judging all these matters. Why, then, has there been so much conjecture over a matter whose apparent solution lies in plain sight? Turns out the world is filled with “mysteries” with seemingly obvious solutions.



## BBC machinations

BY JOHN PILGER  
FOR THE NEW STATESMAN

Shortly after the collapse of the Iraqi regime, the BBC's Today programme sent Andrew Gilligan to Baghdad. Gilligan's reports were unlike anything the BBC had broadcast. They contradicted the official Anglo-American line about “liberation” and made clear that, for a great many Iraqis, the invasion and occupation were at least as bad as life under Saddam Hussein.

This was heresy, prompting Alastair Campbell to move Gilligan to the top of his list of “rants”, as Greg Dyke has described them. “Gullible Gilligan” was Campbell's term of abuse, which meant that the reporter was on to something. Like his subsequent report that the government had “sexed up” its Iraq dossier, Gilligan's conclusion was right, and has since been repeatedly proven right. There is no liberation in Iraq. There is a vicious colonial occupation. The government “sexed up” not one, but two dossiers.

Campbell's attacks were reminiscent of those orchestrated against other journalists who have distinguished themselves by departing from the script. For telling the truth about the carnage of Queen Victoria's favourite war, in the Crimea, the Times correspondent William Howard Russell was damned as a traitor. For revealing the human cost of the American bombing of North Vietnam in 1965, James Cameron was smeared as a “dupe of communism”.

“When they call you a dupe,” Cameron told me, “what they are really complaining about is that you are not their dupe.” The BBC bought the exclusive rights to Cameron's film, then suppressed it; just as it suppressed The War Game, Peter Watkins's brilliant recreation of Britain under nuclear attack; just as it suppressed or doctored countless works that sought to explain the British war in Northern Ireland, such as Article 5, Brian Phelan's play about torture, and Colin Thomas's film City on the Border. Thomas was ordered by BBC chiefs to cut a scene which showed a gravestone that read, “Murdered by British soldiers on Bloody Sunday.” He refused, and resigned.

A barrister called Brian Hutton, representing the Ministry of Defence, is remembered from the Bloody Sunday inquest in 1973 for his tirade at the coroner, who had dared suggest that the soldiers had

no justification for shooting 13 people dead. “It is not for you or the jury,” said Hutton, “to express such wide-ranging views, particularly when a most eminent judge has spent 20 days hearing evidence and come to a very different conclusion.” The eminent judge was Lord Widgery who, as we now know, oversaw yet another gross miscarriage of justice. In the obsequious Hutton, Blair had the right man.

The parallel of Iraq with Ireland is instructive. Among those currently mentioned as a new BBC chairman is John Birt, the former director general made a lord by Blair. During the late 1980s, Birt decreed that the views of Irish Republican representatives could be broadcast only if an actor mimed their words. This was finally abandoned after a group of journalists (myself included) took such an abuse of freedom of speech all the way to the European Court.

The current exhumation of Birt may be a joke, but I doubt it. For in many ways Birt was an authentic voice of the BBC. He was a champion of what the more pompous at the BBC call “rigour”. He demanded corporate discipline and built a Kafka-like bureaucracy to order. Will Wyatt, one of Birt's executives, has written the following about the current acting director-general, Mark Byford, another Birt man: “I expect him . . . to restore the level of rigour that existed under John Birt.”

Ah, the “rigour”. Not once was Blair called to account for the human cost of his sanctions policy in Iraq, let alone his invasion. Alastair Campbell was allowed to walk away from Newsnight without serious challenge to his preposterous “vindication” by Hutton.

How is this “rigour” viewed from afar? In the Australian Financial Review on 31 January, Brian Toohey, his country's most distinguished investigative journalist, recalled that Panorama on 23 September 2002 claimed to have “hard evidence” about Iraq's weapons of mass destruction. “It did no such thing,” wrote Toohey.

“Instead, it presented a load of nonsense which bolstered the case for subsequent invasion. One of the programme's prime sources was an Iraqi, whom it described as ‘credible’. The programme fell hook, line and sinker for his claim to know that a secret biological weapons laboratory existed under a major hospital in Baghdad [and] Panorama had the gall earlier this month to attack a BBC radio news item (Gilligan's), which correctly

reported concerns among officials about the accuracy of British government dossiers on Iraq's WMDs.”

That edition of Panorama was not untypical of the BBC's coverage of the build-up to the invasion, and the “war on terror”, or indeed any war fought or supported by the British establishment in living memory. None of this is conspiratorial; it is a venerable tradition. Following the example set by the BBC's founder John Reith, who secretly wrote propaganda for Stanley Baldwin's Tory government during the General Strike, the hallowed principle of impartiality is invariably suspended when the establishment is threatened, especially when it decides to pursue its imperial tradition and join the United States in subverting other nations by violent or other means. By channelling and amplifying established agendas, devoted practitioners of “impartiality” minimise the culpability of governments, prime ministers and their allies.

It was hardly surprising that a recent German survey of the world's leading broadcasters' coverage of Iraq found that the BBC gave just 2 per cent to demonstrations of anti-war dissent - less than even American broadcasters - even though the demonstrators probably represented a majority of the British people.

This is the “rigour” whose recent lapse Wyatt and Byford lament. It is the rigour, as Robert Louis Stevenson put it, of “your sham impartialists, wolves in sheep's clothing, simpering honestly as they respect”. It is the rigour of false respect for a corrupt elite, of “that combination of mediocrity and ambition: death to the spirit”, as the historian Norman Stone wrote.

There have always been honourable exceptions, and the emergence of one of them explains why the Blair gang became hysterical when Andrew Gilligan told the truth about their “liberation” of Iraq and a deception intended to cover their violence - a violence that took up to 55,000 lives, including 9,600 civilians: a violence that kills or injures 1,000 Iraqi children every month as a result of unexploded cluster bombs that the British military scattered in urban areas: a violence which has again contaminated much of Iraq with uranium. This crime, and this alone, is the single issue crying out to be reported with genuine rigour, not “inquired into” by yet another establishment panel clearing an exit for those responsible.

## Sharon's arrogance & America's collusion

BY MAHER OTHMAN  
FOR AL-HAYAT

Of the indications and manifestations of the Israeli power's arrogance, which is sky-high with Ariel Sharon's government, is that the latter did not carry out any meaningful negotiations with the Palestinian Authority; claiming that the Palestinian side has no partner whom can be negotiated with. Sharon applied the policy of denying the existence of “the other.” Thereby weaseling out of implementing any commitment to “the other's” advantage; by instigating against the Palestinians' elected president and historical leader Yasser Arafat, besieging him in his residence-“district” in Ramallah, and preventing him from moving outside the walls of

this building, with American complicity, at the highest levels.

Based on the “logic” of this same claim, Sharon went public with two hellish plans, with which he intends to get the 1948 war to its desired Zionist results, which means: controlling the largest area of lands with the least number of Arabs - the indigenous people. Both plans are complementary. The first, which he called unilateral separation from the Palestinians, calls for the evacuation of 17 out of 21 Jewish settlements in the Gaza Strip. Sharon will not be satisfied with this plan that he is marketing in the American administration, which is likely to accept it in this election year. He has always said that he would not leave the Jordan Valley under Palestinian control. Thus, Sharon would have guaranteed, with the con-

sent of the Bush administration, the impossibility of establishing a Palestinian State that is likely to survive in the future.

As for the second, complementary, plan that is part of the Zionist ideology's equation (the least number of Arabs), it suggests exchanging lands between Israel and the Palestinian “mini-state” that could be established in the future. The exchange includes giving the Palestinian state regions with high Arab population density. Thus, Israel is rid of a part at least of what it considers an Arab demographic nightmare. Should Israel be able to execute both plans within the American collusion coupled with Arab impotence, then the situation of the rest of the Arabs in Israel would be miserable and prone to the pressures of captures and exile.

*Textile work a long-standing tradition***Let's celebrate Yemen's artisans**

By IRENA KNEHTL  
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FOR THE YEMEN  
TIMES

**N**o longer limited to their traditional uses, the growing demand for Yemeni crafts items as souvenirs, decorative objects and fine art has created the opportunity to reinvigorate these time-less traditions, and see them perpetuate themselves through commercial enterprise.

Enabling artisan communities throughout the country to take advantage of these new income-generation opportunities while simultaneously preserving this time-honored traditions, is at the core of Yemen's drive for sustainable development.

Creation and pristine values of grandfathers shall, forever, remain as evidence of the rich cultural heritage and customs that continue to inspire. They are also among the most endangered aspect of Yemen's heritage.

This art has lived and thrives in Yemen with a vigor for millennia. Yemeni artisans have carved a name for themselves through their production of a remarkably broad array of items, ranging from such beautiful ornamental silver ware to hand-woven baskets, rugs, and camel trappings.

**Dye-making**

Dye-making for example, is one such endangered craft. It is an ancient Yemeni tradition dating back at least the first millennium BC had dwindled to just a single workshop at Zabid, where indigo was being used to dye cloth and other materials of beautiful shades of blue and purple.

Production of the dye stuff itself had ceased altogether.

Indigo dyestuff is derived from the Indigofena Tinctoria plant which was once prevalent in many region of Yemen. The process of transforming the plant into usable indigo is a laborious and time-consuming one, taking roughly two days to transform numerous kilos of the plant material to the solid dyestuff.

The dye-makes will fill a large earthenware vat, roughly one meter in diameter with the plant materials and allow it to soak in water for several hours. The plant material is then removed and a tool called "mamaal" is used to vigorously stir the solution, causing the release of the indicant, the compound in the plant that creates the blue color we associate with indigo. Once complete, the dried dyestuff can be stored indefinitely and used by dyers when needed.

The process of dyeing itself is also lengthy and laborious. The procedure of indigo dyeing has once challenged dyers in the four corner of the world. Each indigo atelier has its own techniques, even its own secrets. How a particular indigo dyeing tradition has solved the mysteries of the dye is of interest to other indigo dyers.

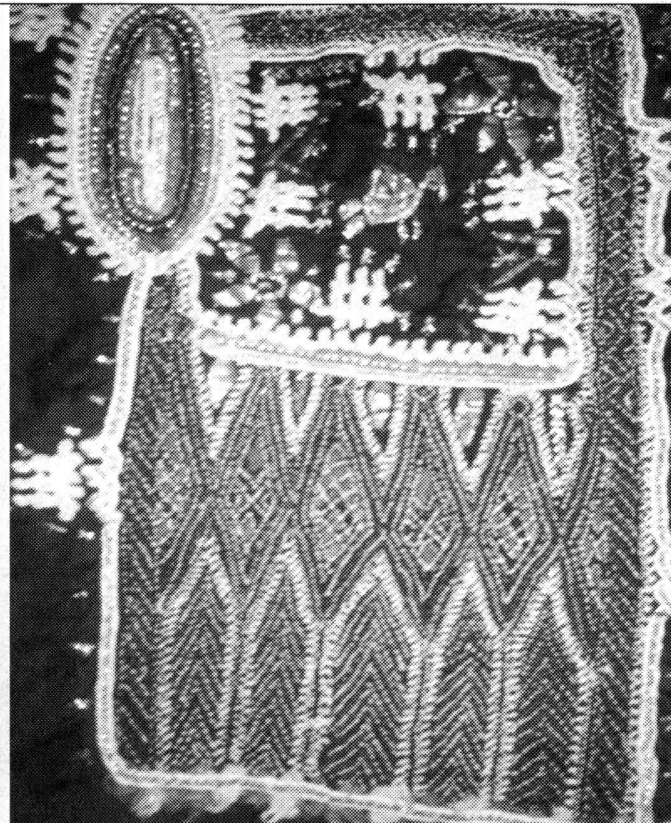
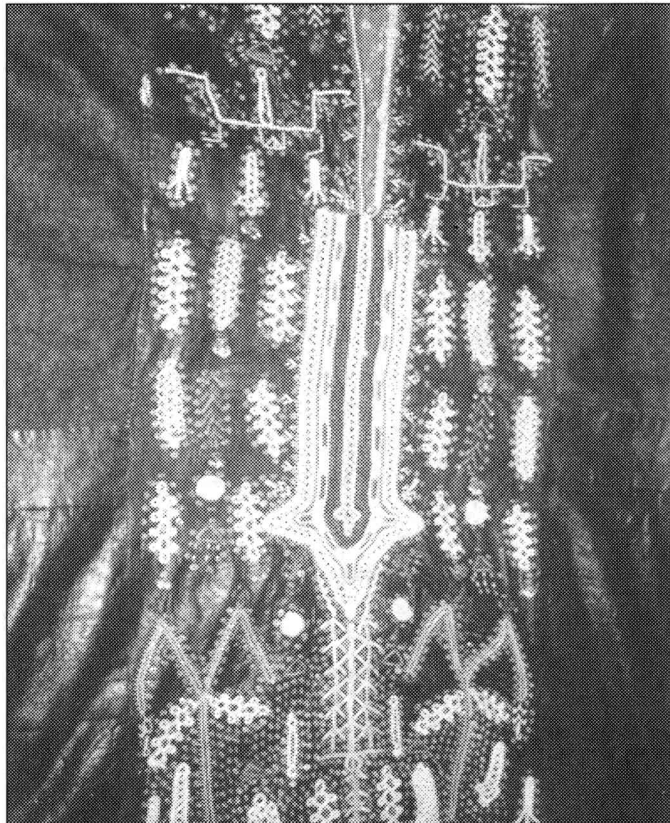
Indigo used to be favored by the highland tribesmen and women for their turbans and dresses has long been a major industry in the Tihamah, in particularly Zabid. Here indigo was cultivated in great quantity in the medieval period. Today indigo is no longer a domesticated plant, it has gone back to its wild state and natural spread.

Production of dyestuff should be revitalized, dyeing should be reinvigorated and new markets for indigo products should be targeted locally, regionally, and internationally. Traditional skills will be once again being passed on to a new generation.

**Decorated textile**

The manufacture of decorated textiles and pottery, for example, is one of the earliest human creative activities found in almost all the ancient civilizations of the world.

The deep-rooted importance of textiles in the social and religious life even of the most isolated Yemeni peo-



An attractive variety of textile work and traditional costumes

ple suggests a lengthy indigenous tradition of several thousand years. The tradition of textiles in Yemen has to do with deep-rooted association of textiles and fundamental concepts of women creative abilities and powers linking real and symbolic role with fundamental beliefs of fertility and ritual.

Later influences are apparent in the discrete regional textile designs, stemming from the many centuries of trade. Despite these recognizable influences of historical importance, Yemeni wearers over the centuries have absorbed and reinterpreted motifs and techniques into a rich blend of indigenous characters that is unsurpassed in its variety.

The role and use of decorative clothes permeates every face of Yemeni life is adept and fundamental aspect of culture. The motifs incorporated into the cloth surface and the occasions of its use life at the very heart of Yemeni life, and are a potent statement to the world, view and feeling to the tone, character and quality of life, its moral and aesthetic style, and mood.

The close association between individual design and motifs and poetic metaphors and proverbs creates for the Yemeni wearer and the society a tangible, ordered realization of its social structure with the textile consumes resembling "the skin."

In the context of socially binding ceremonies may subtle dimensions are stated through the visible sign on textiles. They represent overt symbols of group identity and markers of relationship between the group. Weddings, in particular, are more than just occasions for decorative and colorful finery. The socializing dimensions of costumes are important symbolic markers of the respective status of families, in the relationship of the husband as taker and husband as giver.

The different dye colors and motifs reflect the individual status of the wearer. In Yemen the customs until recent remained a vital force in the society and ceremonial occasions are conducted with as much vigor as in older times. They reflect the continuity of this tradition and the richness of its appearance is a striking signifier of the unique beliefs and quality of Yemeni life.

**Embroidered sentiments:**

All Yemeni embroidery takes the form of costume decoration for both men and women and are very ornate and richly embroidered with silver thread and worked in a variety of different techniques and patterns which differ from region and in many cases from village to village. A place of origin could be identified by the style and the way it was embroidered. Elaborate costumes incorporating other textiles were worn during all the major life-cycle ceremonial occasions when the closest of human and social bonds

were renewed and extended:

For her I would give the  
Green fields by the water canal.

O blossoming scent,  
He who smells that scent  
He will offer golden coins.

Welcome scented flower  
Your smile the light of lighting

My bride price is thirty rifles  
And thirty she-camels.

O Sind, O Hind  
If rainfall reaches your ears  
Think not that it is the rain  
But a river of tears.

Like a full moon her beauty  
And like palm trees her stature  
Why do you ask for sunlight and  
moonlight?

In a garden of roses,  
The caravan of Yemen  
awaits the caravan of Sayan.

I wish I were a rose  
Placed on my bellowed window  
He would not open  
And I am too shy to come in.

O almond, o nut  
A flowerpot on my window.

The winds will blow on him.  
And the rain will wash him.

I was a master of joy  
And a master of songs  
But today upon my heart  
A mountain is falling.

My eyes cried a river of tears  
And watered the land that never get  
rains.

My heart is heavy concealing its burden  
Just like a camel loaded for the caravan.

Be aware of places once inhabited  
By your beloved ones.  
Like dreams at night they seem to  
have  
Never existed at all.

I swear by dust-colored gazelles  
In mirage - glinting deserts  
Roaming among thorn-trees, and  
lote-trees  
The highest degree of glory and  
honor.

Convey my greetings to Saleh  
With the finest perfumes, mixed  
with rose water,  
ambergis, and saffron.

How many singers before me  
And there are songs usung

For you I will ask a night stretching

Form the East

Whose daughter is she?  
Whose daughter, this dear one?  
She is the daughter of one  
Who knows how to write  
And read the Book.

I wish I were a bird  
With powerful wings  
I would shield my beloved  
From the burning sun.

My heart no longer loves this life.  
If I am exhausted on the day of glory  
The hardships of time have left my  
heart  
Numb.  
Where I can I get another heart  
In this lifetime?

For us every grains of its soil  
Is worth a fight!

Precious stones and pearls remain  
Changeless for all time.  
Nor do sapphires change, nor coral.

Welcome rains that fills  
Yemens villages and town.

Irrigate the gardens of Yemen  
Make green and bring forth every  
flowering branch  
All the trees are in bloom!

**Persian and Egyptian fame**  
The textile industry within all

regions of the Islamic world received encouragement from all caliphs, princes and assigned governors of the dominions. Together with antiques, spun textiles were the preferred articles considered as gifts exchanging during various memorials, or occasions. One of the factors that also encouraged the development and prosperity of this industry during the Islamic era was the fierce competition among the caliphs and princes as who will send every year the most elegant "Kiswa", i.e. clothing cover of the Holy Kaba.

Persia and Egypt had their fame in the industrial manufacturing of textile. During the pre-Islamic times and later days ancient kings of Yemen according to historical sources had established workshops for textile production. Even before Islam, substantial volumes of excess production used to be exported, while the "Holly Kaba" itself had been annually covered with particular unique patterns of cloth sheets made of Yemeni origin fibers. The same sources reveal that "Al-Wasayel" was the term locally known for the garment piece that had its textile pattern and was made in Yemen only.

Manufacturing continued throughout the Islamic era. What distinguished that specific brand, or range of textile, was that its decorating proceed through addition of particularly colored fibers, pre-mixed with a specific dyeing materials. To some extent, that decoration may to day resemble the abstract painting work known within the ethics of

modern art. The historical sources indicate that Sana'a, during Al-Abbasi ruling caliphate, had special industries of textile. Moreover, they were all produced during the reign of Bani-Yafers family then the state rulers in Yemen.

It is believed that cotton was first cultivated in South West Arabia around 3000 BC. And textiles once were the most important commodities produces in Yemen. Cotton production in the Tihamah but also in the southern governorarest has been promoted.

Despite unfavorable economic factors the Tihamah cotton it is supplying the cotton factory in Sanaa with raw materials for a reinvigorated textile industry centred on the capital.

In the Tihamah, weaving has been practiced traditionally in Zabid, Bay al-Faqih, Al-Marawiah, Hodeidah, al-Durayhimi and al-Manzar. The Tihamah weaver produce a multi-colored length of cotton cloth which can be used as shoulder cloth, or a bed-spread, or a sarong, or a multi-purpose cloth.

The combination of colors are seemingly endless, although the stripes invariably run lengthwise along the cloth.

In the end, Yemen traditional craft industries should soon have renewed cause for celebration as the country's priceless living heritage is ushered into a new era of opportunity and independence.

*\* Note: All verses are from "Lyrics from Arabia"*

**A short story****A gnawing hunger**

By ABDULQAWEE SALIM AL-AREEQI  
abdulqawee@yahoo.com

**I**n Alwazzana Weight, men in this quit village, mothers usually go up the housetop to call their children home before sunset. Today unexpectedly, children came back earlier as soon as they could observe the smoke rising out of the chimneys and smell food stimulating their appetite even from faraway.

Hamdan shuffled up the dark stairs with hope to have a delicious meal tonight. His mother had been preparing for a big meal since the early morning. As he stopped at the kitchen doorstep, tears were rolling down his face because of the smoke coming out of the burning firewood.

His mother was still busy preparing dinner, moving gently with her sleeves rolled up. She had already lit that old oil-lamp. Then she took an eaten-away pan off the fire with boiling water in it. "Come on! Hurry

to the bathroom "she said imperatively." No food before having a shower!" "But it's very cold in here!" mom "he argued."

"Don't worry. The water is hot enough and you won't feel cold. It has been long age since you had a hot shower," she added.

"But I'm hungry," he said.  
Having left the bathroom, Hamdan put on the clean clothes that were kept in list mother's wooden box. They still had the pleasant smell of camphor. Mother, then, put delicious dishes made of pottery on the table. "Where did you get the meat, mom?"

He asked. "And why particularly today?"

"It's the special night of mid-Shaban," she explained.  
"You have to eat well and go to bed in clean clothes. Weigh-men will visit you at night to weigh you as they do with other children. If they found you light, they would be angry and you would not grow up properly.

"But where did you get the meat?" he asked again.

"I slaughtered the cock: she answered."

"Which cocks?" he asked surprisingly.

"My cock, with the big red comb? Who will accompany me? No, No, I won't eat. I want my cock alive. I want my cock alive," he shouted.

Mother tried convincing home but in vain. Long after waiting and weeping with grief. Hamdan asked. "Did he crow before you slaughtered him?"

"No, he didn't," she answered angrily. "Just eat silently."

Hamdan slept that night after eating meat and drinking broth. He dreamt of the weigh-men. Soon before sunrise, Hamdan woke up and started looking for his cock and it's crowing. He went out wandering with a strong desire to sea his lovely cock with its red comb and golden feathers. He wished that it had been merely a nightmare.

# Ghost town exposes Sudan's hidden war

By MATTHEW GREEN

The drone of the bomber's engines grew louder, sending Sudanese rebels hurrying between the mud houses below.

"Don't run — hide!" ordered one of the guerrillas, and his comrades crouched behind boulders in a seemingly futile attempt to escape from the aircraft circling overhead.

A low whistling sound heralded the payload of bombs which smashed into an abandoned hut across the street. A pall of black smoke billowed into the sky and a feeling of relief coursed through onlookers spared from the blast.

The raid on the Sudanese side of the Chad-Sudan border town of Tine on January 26 was a rare glimpse into the kind of attacks that aid workers say have forced tens of thousands of refugees to flee villages across western Sudan in recent months.

Women and children trekking across the frontier into Chad bring tales of similar bombings by Sudanese government planes and attacks by horse-riding "Janjaweed" militia, who they say are sent by the government to burn

their villages.

Few outsiders reach the areas to check the accounts, but a visit to Tine yields evidence that Sudan's government has launched an offensive against rebels in the west of the country in which civilians are paying a heavy price.

The government has blamed the refugees on rebels, but witnesses speak only of raids by Sudan's armed forces.

"We don't even know why we're being bombed," said Ibrahim Daoud, 36, lying with a shrapnel wound in his thigh in a hospital tent on the Chadian side of the border, along with about 20 other Sudanese men, some with legs amputated.

Beyond the human toll, the diplomatic implications of the violence may reach all the way to Washington.

The United States has pressured Sudan to work towards ending a separate, 20-year-old civil war with rebels in the south, hoping to rebuild ties with a country it lists as a "state sponsor of terror" and which once hosted Osama bin Laden.

The International Crisis Group think-tank warns that the attacks in the west could undermine any peace deal for south Sudan and has urged the

United States to lean on Khartoum to stop its raids and start negotiations.

Rebels said in early February they would attend talks with the government in Geneva to allow aid distribution in Sudan's western Darfur region, although it is unclear whether the negotiations will lead to progress towards a durable ceasefire.

## Abandoned

On the border at Tine, which lies about 1,000 km (620 miles) east of Chad's capital N'Djamena, talk of peace feels a long way from the reality of a town overshadowed by war.

Fear of government bombs has turned the Sudanese side into a ghost town. In the Chadian half, donkeys pick their way between ramshackle buildings and men wander past in white robes in scenes that have changed little since antiquity.

Despite its timeless feel, Tine's Chadian section has suffered one of its biggest shocks in years with the arrival of thousands of refugees, some of the 100,000 Sudanese who began pouring across a 600-km (370 miles) stretch of the border in March.

Signs of the new arrivals are everywhere. Outside town, a woman's crimson shawl flutters in the branches of a tree — like a flag marking the spot where her family had just arrived to bed down on the sand with little food or water.

"The army comes, then the Janjaweed, then the bombing," said a man named Abdallah. "They can destroy any village."

Residents say the war has hit commerce in a town serving traders driving camels between Sudan, Chad and Libya, although there did seem to have been an increase in demand for one thing — car spare parts sought by Sudanese rebels.

## Mistrust

They kept a low profile, but in late January it was easy to find guerrillas or their sympathisers in Tine, including a 36-year-old named Musa who said he had given up life as an immigrant delivering pizzas in Washington to back the cause.

The government has since said it has captured the Sudanese side of the town, although rebels are active elsewhere.



A Sudanese rebel views the rubble of a house that was destroyed by a Sudanese government aircraft when it bombed the Sudan-Chad border town of Tine earlier this month, Jan. 26. Sudanese refugees fleeing into Chad say the government has stepped up its bombing campaign in the past two weeks, accusing government forces of targeting areas only inhabited by civilians. Fighting between Sudan's government forces and rebels has intensified in the west of the country in the past year, in contrast to progress towards ending a separate, 20-year civil war in the country's south. REUTERS



Sudanese refugees fleeing attacks by government forces in western Sudan arrive outside the town of Tine on the border with Chad. Tens of thousands of Sudanese have flooded across the frontier in recent months to escape attacks by government bomber aircraft and militiamen they say are sent by the authorities to chase them from their villages. REUTERS

Insurgents in the west say they are fighting years of discrimination by the government against black African farming communities in favour of nomadic Arabs in the barren region, dismissing Khartoum's denials that it treats the area unfairly.

The rebel Justice and Equality Movement (JEM) accuses the government of intensifying its efforts to crush the rebels since December to avoid having to make concessions like those granted to southerners at peace talks in Kenya.

JEM says it would welcome peace negotiations brokered by countries like the United States — but mistrust remains high.

"They're killing, bombing and looting," said JEM general coordinator Abu Bakr Hamid al-Nur, speaking in a dried out river bed marking the frontier. "What they're saying is different from what they're doing...We don't trust them." REUTERS



The Sudanese half of Tine has been turned into a ghost town by fear of government bombing raids which have forced tens of thousands of refugees to flee into neighbouring Chad in recent months. REUTERS

## Faces of the dead haunt West Bank print shop

By MATT SPETALNICK

Business is usually so slow in Abu Hamza's print shop in the West Bank town of Jenin that he has little to do except drink coffee and watch his antiquated machines gather dust.

But when gunfire echoes in the streets outside or news comes of a suicide bombing in a nearby Israeli city, he knows he may soon have more than enough work to keep him busy.

The grimy, dimly-lit shop is one of two in Jenin that print what are known as "martyr" posters, which eulogise Palestinians who have killed or been killed in the conflict with Israel and cover almost every wall in town.

Since the Palestinian uprising began in 2000, they have become a regular feature of life across the West Bank and Gaza Strip, where they even adorn hospitals and classrooms.

Nowhere is this unsettling art form more visible than in Jenin and its refugee quarter, a militant stronghold seething with hostility towards Israel for its crushing military assault in 2002 and numerous raids since.

"If this continues, we will run out of wall space for our martyrs," said Mohammed Abu Hammad, leader of the Jenin cell of the al-Aqsa Martyrs Brigades, part of Palestinian President Yasser Arafat's Fatah movement.

During more than three years of violence, Jenin — with its proximity to the population centres of northern

Israel — has served as a launch pad for suicide bombers who have killed scores of civilians in the Jewish state.

Israel sees the glorified images of gunmen plastered throughout this poor town of 40,000 as incitement to further attacks, a point some Palestinians readily acknowledge.

But officials in Jenin pin the blame on Israel's military crackdown and insist the townspeople have the right to honour their dead — even the killers — as they choose.

### One-stop shopping

Abu Hamza's family has owned the small, commercial print shop near Jenin's main mosque since the early 1970s.

Before the uprising, they did a brisk business with Israeli customers. Relations broke down after the violence started and Israel imposed a military blockade of the West Bank.

Since then, Abu Hamza, 24, has printed posters commemorating the deaths of more than 100 of his neighbours, some of them friends or acquaintances. Fearing reprisals, he agreed to be interviewed only if an alias was used to hide his identity.

He offers one-stop shopping, a necessity considering the posters have to be up within hours to meet Islamic rules for quick burial. "Sometimes gunmen call me out of bed," he said.

A typical poster features a photograph of the grimly staring deceased posing with an assault rifle superimposed against the al-Aqsa Mosque in

Jerusalem or a picture of Muslims kneeling in prayer. The images are often surrounded by Koranic verses and lavish praise written in Arabic script.

Abu Hamza first scans the photo into an outdated desktop computer in his cramped outer office and lays out the format on the screen. He then moves to the backroom where he prints up 1,000 to 2,000 copies on a steel-grey machine.

He even sells the glue to stick his posters on walls and storefronts already so crowded with the faces of the dead that they often overlap.

If the dead person is a militant, his faction commissions the work. Al Aqsa is his biggest repeat customer. It picks the photo. The family has no say. When a non-combatant is killed, a coalition of local Islamic charities pays for the print run.

It is a quick cut-and-paste business but not very lucrative since Abu Hamza does it all at cost — up to several hundred dollars per job.

"I won't profit from my dead brothers," he said.

### Tears for old schoolmate, none for Israelis

Like many Palestinians, Abu Hamza sees suicide attacks not as terrorism — as does Israel and much of the international community — but as resistance to the occupation of Arab land.

In his work, he draws no distinction between suicide bombers who target Israeli civilians, gunmen killed fight-

ing Israeli soldiers and unarmed bystanders shot dead during tank raids.

"Each one is a sacred 'shahid'," Abu Hamza said, using the Arabic word for martyr, defined by Islam as one who dies during "jihad", or holy war, a guarantee of instant entry to paradise.

Hanging on a wall above his printing press is a poster of a former schoolmate who blew himself up in 2001 in a bomb-laden car he and an accomplice tried to crash into a bus.

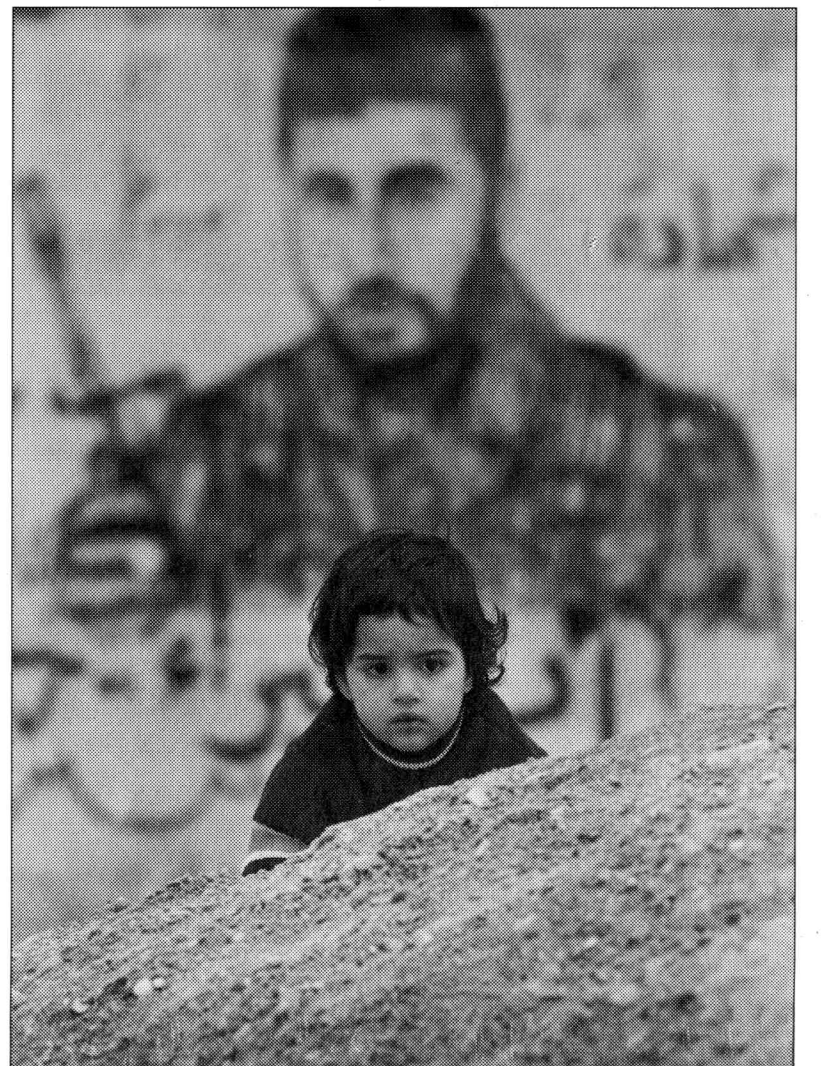
With ink-stained hands, Abu Hamza waved away the question of whether he felt any sympathy for the 60 people wounded. But he said: "I cried for my friend while I made his poster."

Once a poster goes up, no Palestinian will dare take it down because of fear of how the militants might respond. Israeli troops raiding the town have left their mark, sometimes daubing Stars of David across pictures of dead gunmen. Wind and rain have also taken a toll.

Mindful of how Israelis regard his work, Abu Hamza, recently married and thinking of having children, keeps his guard up.

Three months ago, soldiers ransacked his shop searching for information on the militant groups he does business with.

They found nothing. "I keep the plates and proofs hidden but within easy reach. You never know when I might need them." REUTERS



A Palestinian child plays in front of a big Palestinian martyrs poster in Jabalya refugee camp Feb. 9. REUTERS

# Local Press

Prepared by Mohammed Khidhr

26 September weekly, organ of Yemen Armed Forces, 5 February 2004.

## Main headlines

- Presidents Ali Abdullah Saleh and Hosni Mubarak discuss relations and Arab solidarity
- Situation in Palestine and Iraq, and current developments significant files before the summit
- beginning of next April, Arab foreign ministers discuss reforming the Arab League
- Sana'a embraces a world symposium on cultures and civilization
- Omani interior minister in Sana'a next month to sign agreement on security cooperation
- National strategy for wages and salaries on table of the cabinet soon

On the Yemeni-Saudi relations the newspaper's political editor wrote saying when we talk about the Yemeni-Saudi relations we certainly talk about brotherly, exemplary and concrete relations based on truthfulness, fraternity and neighbourhood. They would not at any rate get shaken for merely writing an article in this newspaper or that in which the writer tries to muddle them. Such attempts come out of ignorance about how deep their roots are and what the two countries have achieved in the field of common cooperation in all areas in various aspects and the two countries' leaderships keenness on developing those relations for the interest of both peoples.

The Yemeni-Saudi relations are deeper than to be hostage of tendencies of retaliation or domination or of a state of sterile thinking or governed by rumination of events of far past. They are governed by a group of firm constants that would not change however the events changed

or alliances altered in the region. We perceive that the sons of the two peoples understand the aim behind those writings and their motives and they are also understood by the reasonable personalities on whom the responsibility of exposing such goals lies.

Annas weekly,  
9 February 2004.

## Main headlines

- Al-Mouayad and his companion differ in evaluating the American treatment
- Human rights minister al-Souswa: Amending school curricula is for rectifying some concepts of accusing the socialist party of blasphemy
- Dr al-Eryani, a politician, not an oil merchant
- Denying his link to al-Qaeda and Abu Ali al-Harithy, Khalid Abdulnabi: Legend of Aden-Abyan Islamist army illusionary
- Banning imports of agricultural product anew,
- Yemeni-Saudi relations witness silent developments under American will
- Local council in Mahweet suspends directors-general and harasses journalists
- Chamber of Commerce demands postponement the implementation of the sales tax for ten years

Columnist Ahmed al-Shalafi says in an article the severest of what can happen now is that the Journalists Syndicate elections result in a similar way as the rest of other elections and the journalist as others would discover that he has lost the advantage of thinking and the choice of his decision.

If the pioneers of the society and its

## Main headlines

- Aden governor closes endowments office due to violations
- American troops arrest 15 Yemeni citizens in Djibouti
- A university student and five others at the political prison in Ibb declare hunger strike
- Sana'a University's piece of land case decided after 17 years
- Training course in Sana'a on women rights in Islam
- Following resumption of his trial, Al-Mouayad urges his family to retain a new lawyer for defending him
- Egyptian, Yemeni, Lebanese, Palestinian summit in Cairo
- Human Rights minister al-Souswa: America and Britain envelop Guantanamo detainees case with many complications
- Expected changes amidst leading security officials in Aden
- Saudi Arabia suspends building Saudi-Yemeni border fence
- Oil wells in Yemen rise to 130 wells
- Following the establishment of a Yemeni-Saudi tourist company, a symposium on Saudi investments in Yemen, next April
- Security men continue searching for implementer of fires in Socotra
- British intelligence helped America in spying on the UN Security Council
- Yemeni-Egyptian summit in Cairo
- Demanded a decisive stand versus the Israeli aggression and speeding up an end to Iraq occupation,
- President Saleh: Looking forward to seeing the next Arab summit coming out with brave historic resolutions
- Yemen-Egyptian summit discusses development of bilateral relations and reformation of the Arab situation
- Ex-Syrian president Amin al-Hafidh dies in Aleppo
- Civil Service minister discusses with representative of the World Bank mechanisms of implementing the administrative reform program for this year
- President of the Islamic International Academy for sciences arrives in Sana'a

leaders are not capable of controlling the destiny of their syndicate it would no doubt be the worst thing expressing the level that we may reach in the future.

We just want others, whether officials or ordinary people in our society, to understand that there is a journalist professional syndicate comprising of about nine-hundred members capable of giving a good example through their choice of capable leaders of the syndicate contributing to development of journalism and preserving this essential profession. Why don't all the journalists work together for regaining the prestige of journalism to be able to deal with the society's issues and reforming some of its defects and to communicate the voice of those unjustly treated truthfully?

If it is a must to speak truthfully the honour of the Yemeni journalist needs to be saved, not by an ethics charter but by honourable professional journalists who would not offend themselves or their profession. We don't want to exaggerate in saying that the elections can rectify the status of the some but it can be a basic step on the right direction. Finally what we fear most is that the elections could develop into a tribal reconciliation.

Al-Ayyam daily,  
9 February 2004.

## Main headlines

- committee for investigation with Aden's endowments office
- The Yemeni twins died before being transported to Saudi Arabia
- Aden governor could open file of housing society of Oil Production and Exploration Authority
- Medical supplies for Jibla hospital in Ibb continued, a Cuban medical

team pays a working visit

- Hadramout University prepares to celebrate the third week of the University Student

Dr Abdullah Ali al-Baity there are in our civil society many things it is supposed we must do. For instance in our schools and universities education is presented in a manner lacking of practicality and modern methodology. We have to understand that we have nothing to do with what is being taught in the Arab world of curricula and sciences. Those curricula do not benefit us much and they are prepared for challenging the Arab mentality. What do we want from a child aged seven years in order to study those texts and carry them repeatedly and is being punished if he does not comprehend them? In this age science does not mean anything and the final resultant is that there is nothing mentionable in his mind and rather most of those applying for the university are lacking of writing in a readable handwriting let alone to be beautiful. We infer from here that there is failure in the curricula or their recipient or the teachers.

We think the failure is in the curricula unless we do reformulate what we offer to our sons in the primary stages of education, i.e. in concentrating on the subjects of reading and writing and traditional arithmetic and the general culture. In this way the student would be able to comprehend and learn reading ad if we sow in him the love to read he would be able to drive his way in knowledge, all its branches. This would make our youth loving to get acquainted with things and learning them. The most apparent suffering of the students is the ability to comprehend and that is attributed to the weakness in correct reading of various kinds of knowledge.

# World Press

Major news items in leading international newspapers Provided by Xinhua

## Egypt

### Al Ahram

Egyptian President Hosni Mubarak and visiting Yemeni President Ali Abdullah Saleh on Monday reiterated their commitment to resolving the Palestinian issue and helping the Iraqi people regain control of their country as soon as possible.

The statement was made by Egyptian Foreign Minister Ahmed Maher following a summit meeting between Mubarak and Saleh in Cairo.

### Al Akhbar

Egyptian President Hosni Mubarak is to hold talks Tuesday with Lebanese Prime Minister Rafik Hariri, who arrived in Cairo on Monday while leading a high-level delegation including ministers of economy, finance

and agriculture.

The two leaders will discuss the current Arab situation and the preparations for an Arab summit which is due to take place early next month.

### Al Gomhuria

US officials said Washington had informed Israel of its opposition to any unilateral plan for disengagement from the Palestinians, pointing out that any plan must not be an alternative to the US-backed roadmap peace plan.

### The Egyptian Gazette

Egyptian President Hosni Mubarak will be in Turkey on Wednesday for talks with Turkish leaders on the Iraq issue and the Middle East peace process as well as the Cairo-Ankara ties.

## Nigeria

### Vanguard

The Nigerian federal government and the Nigeria Labor Congress agreed on Monday to seek a negotiated settlement on the controversial 1.50-naira (about 1.1 US cents) fuel tax.

### This Day

As oil ministers of member countries of the Organization of Petroleum Exporting Countries (OPEC) hold an extra-ordinary meeting on Tuesday,

Nigeria said it was pushing for a production quota of 3.0 million barrels per day.

### The Punch

The security outfit in the Niger Delta, the Operation Restore Hope, has begun the deployment of personnel in the six oil flow stations of the American oil giant Chevron Nigeria Ltd. shut in the wake of the ethnic war between the Ijaw and Itsekiri in March 2003.

## Japan

### The Hindu

The government announced Monday that there are no cases of bird flu or the highly pathogenic avian influenza in the country, contrary to the alleged sporadic reports from Haryana and the North-East. There was also no human-to-human transmission case in India.

### Hindustan Times

A 10-seat plane carrying Punjab Chief Minister Amarinder Singh

violated the no-fly zone over Prime Minister's residence before landing at the nearby Safdarjung Airport.

### The Statesman

Foreign Minister Silvan Shalom is scheduled to hold talks with Indian leaders Tuesday on ways to further strengthen the strategic relationship between the two countries, including collaboration on the Chandrayaan project, India's mission to the moon.

## Britain

### The Times

British Prime Minister Tony Blair said Monday the need to prove a suspect's guilt "beyond reasonable doubt" should be relaxed in serious criminal cases to make it easier to convict organized crime bosses and people traffickers.

### The Daily Telegraph

Michael Howard, the leader of British opposition Tory, stamped his personal authority on the party Monday by setting out a "moral case" for lower taxes and adopting a more tolerant stance on social issues than previous Conservative leaders.

### The Independent

Tough new law to drive unscrupulous "gangsters" out of business was

promised by the British government Monday in the wake of the Morecambe Bay cockling tragedy.

### Financial Times

Britain and France are to take a bold step towards closer defense cooperation, joining forces to create a string of highly-trained, rapid-deployment units for jungle, desert, amphibious and mountain operations.

### The Guardian

The British government will on Tuesday signal a change of direction ahead of a possible third Labor term, promising to release the energies of state schools and hospitals by lifting the dead hand of central control.

## Philippines

### Philippine Daily Inquirer

The most contentious political exercise since the 1986 snap election officially gets under way Tuesday, with all the presidential candidates launching their bids in various parts of vote-rich Luzon (in the northern Philippines).

### The Philippine Star

Philippine President Gloria Macapagal-Arroyo has not given any time frame for government negotiators to sign a peace

agreement with rebels (New People's Army and National Democratic Front), saying "The time frame for a peace agreement is not as important as the

need for it to be durable and meaningful to the lives of ordinary Filipinos," following reports that she wanted a peace agreement signed before the presidential elections on May 10.

Peace negotiations are due to get under way in Oslo, Norway Tuesday.

### The Philippine Star

The Philippine Department of Agriculture is set to ban the importation of chicken from the state of Delaware after the United States Department of Agriculture discovered the presence of the deadly bird flu virus that wiped out large poultry flocks across Asia.

## Pakistan

### The News

Abdul Qadeer Khan, founder of Pakistan's nuclear program who has confessed being involved in the illegal transfer of nuclear know-how, has not been granted a blanket pardon and may face further questioning, Foreign Office spokesman Masood Khan said on

Monday.

### Dawn

Pakistani Foreign Minister Khurshid Kasuri said on Monday that Pakistan will cooperate with the United Nations nuclear agency in a probe over the selling of nuclear expertise.

## France

### Le Figaro

In Tuesday's presentation of the budgetary propositions for the period 2007-2013 for the European Union, European Commission President Romano Prodi will have difficulties to justify his demand of an increase of 36 percent from 111.3 billion euros in 2004 to an annual average of 152 billion euros during 2007-2013.

### Le Monde

The second congress of the center-right Union for a Popular Majority (UMP) was transformed into a good-bye ceremony for Alain Juppe, who stays in politics during the appealing against convictions of illegal party financing. Warning against division, French Prime Minister Jean-Pierre Raffarin said

as successor to lead the party that backs President Jacques Chirac.

### L'Humanite

The parliamentary debates went on over a draft law banning religious symbols from public schools, ignoring the huge problem of integrating Muslims into French society.

### Liberation

The strike of journalists of the state-owned Radio France has left listeners without their daily dose of news for weeks.

They vowed to stay off as long as necessary if the government refuses to bring their salaries up to the same level as their counterparts at public televisions.

## Germany

### Die Welt

German Chancellor Gerhard Schroeder and French President Jacques Chirac do not want to interfere in the merge of Aventis and Sannofi-Synthelabo companies.

ruling SPD, Franz Muentefering, has failed to stop the inner party debate over the reform course of the government.

### Frankfurter Allgemeine Zeitung

The German auto industry suffers from falling car sales both at home and abroad this January.

### Handelsblatt

The new-nominated chairman of the

**أفراح أسرة جميل الملاحي**  
بين لضيف من الأهل والأصدقاء ومع فرحة العيد السعيد،  
احتفل الشابان /  
**جمال جميل الملاحي ، محمد صديق الأديمي**  
بعقد قرانهما الميمون  
وبهذه المناسبة السعيدة نرف لهم أجر التهاني  
والتبريكات وعقبال الزفاف إن شاء الله  
المعذنون :  
بشير طه الملاحي - نبيل طه الملاحي - عدنان عبد الله -  
هيايف عبد الرحمن - شكري عبد الله - محمد أمين ياسين - حسان صديق  
- لطفي علي المستني - وجميع الأهل في القرية وتمنوا وصنعا

Relationship between translation and text linguistics:

# Implications for the teaching of English as a foreign language



BY PROF. ABDULRAHMAN  
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Translation – as an act of mediating between two languages or perhaps between two cultures – is probably as old as language. For decades and until the early forties, the grammar – translation method was uncontested in the foreign language classroom. However, with the consistent reassessments of language teaching methods, translation courses have been the subject of bitter criticism and in most cases have been unduly abandoned. In view of this situation, I would like to propose a different approach to the teaching of translation based on the concepts and principles pertaining to the study of text – Linguistics. The basic argument underlying the discussion is that university translation courses – if adequately prepared and properly executed – can provide foreign language learners with an invaluable opportunity not merely to become competent translators but most importantly to perfect their understanding of and mastery over the two linguistic systems under consideration by investigating interlingual relationship between the two languages with view of the text as a source of empirical data. The following discussion and analysis are based on a contrastive study of material from English and Arabic texts. In each instance, texts will be viewed not as a chain of isolated sentences, but as a complex connected discourse with emphasis on the rules of textual cohesion across languages. The remaining part of the paper will explore the possible contribution, which Text-Linguistics can, to the teaching of translation in particular and to foreign language teaching in general.

## Foreign language teaching: the question of translation

Despite the pervasive need for proficient and competent translators in many developing nations, nothing has been seriously done particularly by universities and institutes of higher learning to address this problem. The university of Sana'a, Yemen Arab Republic (Y.A.R.) stands as living testimony of this ineptitude. Translation courses account for less than one percent of the total course requirements for English-majors. This is despite the Department of English's proclaimed policy that English within the context of the Y.A.R. is primarily needed for library and research purposes. The purpose being to prepare competent bilinguals who are expected to access policy – makers and the public reader to literatures in English – particularly in science and technology – via translation and/or interpretation. The failure of the Department of English to realize its perennial objective can be attributed to several factors. Firstly, the Department of English depends heavily on non-native speakers of Arabic who for obvious reasons have shown little interest in translation – teaching. Even those with some bilingual abilities are particularly dubious of the value of the translation class. And since the majority of the Department faculty members are on short-term contracts, they unfortunately lack the necessary time and enthusiasm to design and teach an effective translation course. Still worse, there are quite a few language instructors who strongly denounce translation as a poor method for teaching foreign languages.

It is against this background, which underscores the restrictive diction that the study of translation does not belong to the study of language and linguistics, that my paper is directed. In fact,

it is my intention in the first place to show why the study of translation can provide an optimal setting for advanced language and learning.

## Relevance of text linguistics to Translation studies

Though translation is as old as the contact of a language with alien speakers, the emergence of text – linguistics in the 1970s marked the beginning of a new interest in translation as a subject worthy of serious academic studies. Hornby (1985:22) argues vehemently that both text – linguistics and translation are "basically concerned with the text, not as a chain of separate sentences... but as a complex, structured whole, whereby coherence, cohesion, focus and progression are of primary importance".

Text – linguistics focuses primarily on text-theory and discourse analysis. Its advocates argue that sentence grammars are incapable of describing all the relevant aspects and mechanisms of language. Beaugrande and Dressler (1981:3) define a text as a "communicative occurrence which meets seven standards of textuality". These are cohesion, coherence, intentionality, acceptability, informativity, situationality, and inter-textuality (see Beaugrande and Dressler, 1983). In most cases, supporters of text-linguistics maintain that these seven standards are indispensable to efficient and effective textual communication. They further claim that appropriateness of a text is the agreement between its setting and the ways in which the standards of textuality are upheld.

From this brief overview of the premises of text-linguistics, one is apt to see the relevance of this new trend to translation theory and practice. Like text-linguistics, translation addresses all fundamental issues the science of language has to contend with, from the nature of linguistic meaning to the process of communication across languages. And since the measure of adequacy in translation is the degree of equivalence between the meaning of the original message and the meaning of the translated one, translators are thus required and duly expected to pay close attention to all contextual and situational factors underlying the original and the translated texts. Pergnier (1978:203) argues that the translator "is not a mediator between languages as such; he is also and perhaps in the first place, a mediator between two individuals or communities". Within this context, translation belongs to the realm of sociolinguistics since the aim of the latter is the study of language as a medium of communication between individuals and communities. Whereas text – linguistics wrestles with a host of issues (i.e. intersentential cross references, paragraph structure, rhetorical strategies of economy and elaboration etc.) to show how different textual strategies can produce different effects, translators are required to work along the same demarcation lines to be able to produce something that is identical in "meaning" and in "effect" – not only in "code" – to the message emitted by the original text-producer. In this sense, translation offers a wide range of possibilities for language teachers and compilers of teaching materials. It can prove particularly effective for analyzing comprehension problems which inevitably lead to problems in discourse processing and eventually to translation problems. These range from problems of lexical cohesion to sentence perspective and paragraph structuring strategies which would require in most cases knowledge of rhetorical devices and a good command of specific inference abilities to fill potential gaps in understanding the source language text.

In what follows, I would like to

demonstrate the relevance and applicability of university translation courses to language teaching and linguistics. The following discussion is intended to demonstrate how a carefully planned translation assignment could consolidate foreign language teaching.

## Translation problems: implications for foreign language teaching

Since the rules of textual cohesion and progression of thoughts vary from one language to another, the translator must transcend language in order to comprehend and eventually communicate the original message in its magnitude. As such, translation is not merely transposing from one language to another. It is in the words of Claude Namy (1978:25) essentially an attempt to build-up "a semantic bridge between two different cultures, two different thought worlds". In the analysis suggested here, two different bodies of original texts, in Arabic and English, are presented. The source language (SL) is presumed to be Arabic and the target language (TL) English. Arabic and English are completely different languages and share few similarities in structure, form and logical relationships. Unlike other Germanic languages, it is extremely difficult to set up simple equal rank equivalence in translation from Arabic into English. It is, therefore, the teacher's task to point out systematically such differences and to explain the level (s) at which such differences are likely to affect the translation process (i.e., lexical, structural, syntactic, stylistic, rhetorical etc.). Consider, for example, the following extract:

SL:

رفضت المحكمة العليا في إسرائيل أمس طلباً قدمه ثلاثة فلسطينيين من الضفة الغربية وغزة أصدرت السلطات الإسرائيلية ضدهم حكماً بالطرده قبل أشهر عديدة.

TL:

The Israeli Supreme Court overturned an appeal submitted by three Palestinians from the West Bank and Gaza who were ordered out of the country by the Israeli authorities several months ago.

The Arabic version of the text cited above was presented informally to a group of Arab students who – at the time – were enrolled in full-time course work at the University of South Carolina. The subjects (numbered 15) were asked to attempt to translate the passage into English and were permitted to use bilingual dictionaries. No time was set, but on an average all responses were submitted within 25 minutes. Here are samples of their responses.

(a) The Israel authorities convicted and deported three Palestinians from the West Bank and Gaza Strip. Yesterday, the Supreme Court in Israel refused the Palestinians' petition.

In the above example, lexical items are basically correct, but there is apparently a lack of textual coherence between the first and the second sentences. There is little to suggest that the situation or event in sentence one creates the necessary conditions for sentence two. Put differently, the Israeli refusal to accept the Palestinian's petition does not follow, as a rational response to the conviction and deportation as is the case in the original text. In addition, two items here are translated word-for-word (i.e. refused and petition) to which students' attention should be directed with specific emphasis on collocational problems associated with verbs, nouns and adjectives in a specific register (i.e. courtroom proceedings). In this instance, words such as "refused" and "petition" can then be replaced by "overturned" and "an appeal" respectively. Other contextually fit lexical elements could

also be explored. Students should be guarded against the fixation on equivalence, which as Hornby (1985:23) warns, could automatically induce students into isolating "lexemes and hunt for a corresponding dictionary entry for each individual item, without considering how the chosen English word relates to the translated text in the target language".

The university level translation course can offer the language teacher a valuable opportunity to explore the text stylistically. A careful analysis of the varying merits of alternative translations provided by the students can form the fundamental nucleus of a successful translation course. To achieve this goal, Christopher Tiftord (1983:55) recommends that teachers get the students actively involved in the translation process through feedback and continued 'Back-translation'. The pedagogical value of this approach is to put the students "in a position to make the comparison needed to locate the 'errors' within their own language. Furthermore, the back-translation approach would increase students' sensitivity to stylistic diversity and would thus guard them against the pitfalls of either 'undertranslation' or 'overtranslation'. Whereas overtranslation occurs when a student's version is too 'fussy' or excessively elaborative of the original text; undertranslation takes place when a student's version represents an overly simplified version of the original text (op. Cit). Consider the following example:

(b) The Supreme Court in Israel denied an appeal by three Palestinians in the West Bank and Gaza strip. Those Palestinians a few days ago were indicted by the Israeli court and were ordered to be taken permanently out of the country.

It is quite obvious that there are lexical and stylistic differences between (a) and (b). Such qualitative differences should be brought directly to the students' attention. Example (b) is too long compared to the original and the student should be able to deduce – through classroom interaction and teacher's back translation – that this length can be attributed to excessive repetition resulting from the student's failure to recognize proper 'anaphoric' devices to relate act one 'the denial of the Palestinians' appeal' to act two 'their deportation orders'. At this juncture, the teacher could solicit responses from the students on how to improve their communicative efficiency with a minimum expenditure of effort. This adds a problem-solving element to the translation course by sharpening students' perceptions of language contrasts as a means toward increasing their effort to achieve communicative appropriateness in language 2.

Translation exercises also offer a unique opportunity to explore issues pertaining to contrastive semantics, which could provide the theoretical framework for sensible and methodical vocabulary work. The underlined words and structures in examples (a) and (b) could be contrasted to determine their applicability to the textual function they fulfill (describing court proceedings) in a given register (ESP).

More examples could be cited to augment my contention that a well-designed university translation course provides a rare opportunity for a genuine integration of language teaching and linguistics. A prerequisite, however, is a commitment on the part of the instructor to create an optimal classroom atmosphere to discuss 'errors' and 'inaccuracies' and to explain them rationally in linguistic terms. A carefully chosen text is also instrumental to the ultimate success of translation as a legitimate tool for language teaching.

# Teacher-centeredness in higher education

BY SAMI AL-WOSSABI,  
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Teacher-centered classroom is indeed an unpleasant and overwhelming phenomenon that almost every classroom in English higher education in Yemen is suffering from. For example, in teacher trainees' classes where students are trained to be teachers of English and are supposed to be not only competent teachers but also good communicators, teachers appear to be the masters of the classroom. That is, they keep talking and talking without realizing, or may be intentionally ignoring, that many students are not following them. Those learners, on the other hand, look as lifeless as the chairs they are sitting on. To put it differently, they are physically present, but I bet, their minds are wandering off somewhere else. They are indeed passive learners who do not speak unless asked by the teachers. And, if they do they would certainly succeed someday. But because the lack adequate practice, they lack self confidence and consequently their faces turn red when they are asked to do so. The crux of the problem is that they are not encouraged on a regular basis to participate orally in the classroom.

Students can not be accused for such passivity. Rather it is the teachers who are to blame. Yes, whether we like it or not, it is always our fault since we are not able to provide our students with valuable learning experiences regardless of the size of the class which appears to be the favorable excuse for many nowadays. As an experienced classroom teacher I can vouchsafe that even careless and low level students get enthusiastic and highly motivated for the learning task in hand if the teacher creates a condition where they are made to feel valuable or worthy individuals who can learn and contribute to the overall discussion in the class. We must consciously and willingly change our attitude and the classroom ecology for the benefit of our students. We must realize that learning English in higher levels of education, particularly for teacher trainees involves not only the ability to listen, read, and write but also about to learn to act and think. These are the skills that teachers' trainees need most in their prospective teaching classes. Learning how to think and express thoughts and ideas cannot be accomplished in a teacher-centered classroom. It will only be successfully accomplished in an interactive classroom where teachers can content their talk and where teachers act only as a facilitator, a guide for their students in their developmental processes of learning. It is an admitted fact that over 80% of our Yemeni graduate teacher trainees in many teacher trainees institutions are not good communicators of English. One of the crucial reasons behind such a condition is indeed teacher-centeredness.

Thus, the role of the teacher even in literature classes is not to spend the whole time of the class (90 minutes) lecturing and lecturing in most cases to himself/herself as many students used to comment. Dear colleagues, bear in mind that students always express their unhappiness about such classes. Why don't we ask students to read the texts and then give them the opportunity to present their opinions even in one sentence? Why don't we guide them on how to go about reading their texts and analyzing them by, for example, providing them with study guides? Why don't we use writing,

reading and listening as tools for effective communication in the class?

Believe me, dear colleagues, there is no harm in following such strategies, no harm at all. Students will consequently participate more effectively and will feel the immediate advantage of being enrolled in such a participatory class. I have experienced using such strategies and I know how effective they are.

I know for sure that many teachers understand the importance of establishing such interactive learning atmosphere and how this atmosphere can be handled to strengthen the ability of the students to accomplish their learning goals. However, they may not find what I am saying here so convincing as many may ask "what about large classes?" I agree that this is a problem that occurs in many classes in higher education and cannot simply be avoided in our target teaching situations. Nevertheless, we must be aware of the ground realities of the system in which we are operating. I know many teacher-educators are teaching over 100 students in their classes and yet are able to make their classes interactive and meaningful. The mystery behind this is that they are creative teachers who always think of ways to keep their students' motivation high. They understand what suits their learners best in their learning processes (pair work/group work configurations), they value their students' participation, they recognize their students' accomplishments, they always try to create a climate of trust and acceptance with their learners, stimulate students' confidence through interactive activities, and more importantly, they try out many methods and teaching techniques till they are able to identify the best teaching procedures that fit into their students' needs and expectations.

Dear colleagues! Let students derive their curriculum whenever possible. Help them be independent learners, help them take the responsibility of their learning. I had been a student for four years majoring in English language teaching and I know what it means to listen to your teacher for almost two hours talking with little or no participation on the part of the students. When I became a teacher in higher education in the Faculty of Education, Hodeidah University (teaching almost 200 students only in first year and other 220 students in second year,) I did my best to keep my learners intellectually alive and interested even if we discussed topics other than the curriculum. This was possible simply because the students are the ones who brought up such topics. I felt the responsibility to offer them opportunities to participate, think, and act rather than be passive recipients in the class. The results were tremendously significant and most learners enjoyed their learning experiences and learnt how to be confident and not be afraid of making mistakes whenever they are asked to speak and express their stance, thoughts and ideas.

In conclusion, I need to mention that what I have mentioned above is based on my own observation as a student as well as a teacher and on the observation of many other teachers who would like to bring about a change in their classes. I believe, as do many others, that teachers are the main source of passivity, if any, in such a classroom. However nothing should prevent us to try out different procedures and techniques in our classrooms and come up with something that may work effectively in our teaching situations. Let us not take refuge behind excuses. If we do, that will only stifle our creativity and our potential to render our teaching meaningful to our learners.

# Merson goes abroad to fight addictions

LONDON (Reuters) - Paul Merson has left the country in a bid to overcome addictive problems, his club Walsall say.

"Paul has left the country to undertake a programme of treatment and rehabilitation further to his long-standing and well-publicised addictive problems," the first division club said in a statement on Tuesday.

"Walsall Football Club and the Professional Footballers' Association are fully supporting Paul and his family and would ask everyone to respect their privacy at this time."

Merson, then with his first club Arsenal, openly wept in public nine years ago when he admitted on television that he had a drink and drugs problem.

He also told newspapers last year that he was fighting an addiction to gambling.

"I've stayed away from drink and drugs but gambling has beat me, spanked me all over the place," Merson was quoted as saying.

Merson, 35, made his name at Arsenal when he won two league titles in 12 years before moving to Middlesbrough in 1997. He also had spells at Aston Villa and Portsmouth before joining Walsall last July.



Paul Merson has left the country in a bid to overcome addictive problems, his club Walsall says. A file photo shows Marcel Macha (R) of FC Marila Pribram fighting for ball with Aston Vila's Paul Merson during their Intertotto Tournament match in Pribram, July 16, 2000.

REUTERS/Petr Josek

## India seeks safety assurances for Pakistan tour

HYDERABAD, India (Reuters) - India players will seek safety assurances from their board before next month's tour of Pakistan, according to captain Saurav Ganguly.

"All I can say is that the board has to answer our security concerns," he told reporters as the team returned home from the tour of Australia.

Ganguly said he planned to meet the Board of Control for Cricket in India (BCCI) president Jagmohan Dalmiya to discuss player safety but added there was no uncertainty over their first test tour of Pakistan in 14 years.

India players have raised security concerns and three BCCI delegates are in Pakistan to assess the situation.

The Pakistan board has assured tight security for the players during the three tests and five one-day matches.

Political animosity between the nuclear neighbours, who came close to war two years ago, has eased in recent months with the governments agreeing to hold talks aimed at ending the decades-old dispute over Kashmir and other issues.

India were beaten 2-0 by Australia in the finals of the triangular one-day series after drawing the four-test series 1-1.

"Overall, it was a great tour for us except for the last two finals," said Ganguly.

"Only towards the end, we faltered. Otherwise, we performed remarkably."

### 7-Day Weather Forecast

Sana'a	Thu	Fri	Sat	Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed
Hi	27	27	27	26	26	23	23
Lo	6	7	6	6	4	4	2
	☀	☀	☀	☀	☀	☀	☀
Aden	Thu	Fri	Sat	Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed
Hi	30	31	31	32	30	30	32
Lo	22	23	22	21	19	18	17
	☀	☀	☀	☀	☀	☀	☀

### NON SEQUITUR BY WILEY



## Rusedski guardedly optimistic

LONDON (Reuters) - British number two Greg Rusedski says he is "cautiously optimistic" about the outcome of his drugs hearing in Montreal.

Rusedski flew into London from Canada on Tuesday and spoke for the first time to the media since Monday's hearing in Montreal into the drugs test he failed last July.

"I'm confident and we'll just have to wait and see," Rusedski, who was accompanied by his wife Lucy, said at Heathrow airport.

"We're cautiously optimistic so we are just hoping for the best," added the 30-year-old who tested positive for the banned steroid nandrolone during a tournament in Indianapolis in July.

Rusedski, who has denied knowingly taking performance-enhancing drugs, was grilled in Montreal by a three-man panel appointed by the Association of Tennis Professionals (ATP).

If found guilty, the 1997 U.S. Open finalist faces a two-year ban which would effectively end his career.

"I have no idea when I'm going to hear the verdict. It's anywhere between three to nine days. So all I can do is sit tight at the moment," Rusedski said. "I think things went fairly but we'll have to wait and see."

Seven players on the ATP tour were exonerated after an independent inquiry ruled last year that they had taken contaminated electrolyte supplements handed out by ATP trainers.

The ATP stopped its staff handing out the supplements in May 2003.

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1- a forest 2- a famine 3- a drought 4- a flood 5- an epidemic 6- a hurricane

الإجابة كما ينبغي أن تكتب نهاية العام

1-A forest is a very large wood. . 2- a famine is a shortage of food.  
3-A drought is a water shortage after a long period with no rain.  
4- A flood is deep water over normally dry land  
5- An epidemic is an illness that spreads quickly and effects many people  
6- A hurricane is a powerful storm with strong wind.

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Take better care of your financial matters. If you stay on top of your game, you can come into money unexpectedly.

**Taurus (Apr 20 - May 20)**  
Your emphasis should be on personal as well as business partnerships today. You may have to try a little harder if you want to keep the peace. Make the effort to plan something special.

**Gemini (May 21 - Jun 20)**  
Be empathetic toward your peers and you will get the same in return today. The more you do in unison with others, the more you will accomplish. This is not the time to back away from anything or anyone.

**Cancer (Jun 21 - Jul 22)**  
A romantic, one-on-one experience will be everything you could possibly hope for. Your honesty and sensitivity toward others will be very attractive. Be selective.

**Leo (Jul 23 - Aug 22)**  
You may have more to contend with than meets the eye today. Be prepared to listen to the problems and complaints of others.

**Virgo (Aug 23 - Sep 22)**  
Set aside some time for a serious discussion. A friend or relative may introduce you to someone who can influence you or change your life. A trip will lead to information that you least expect.

**Libra (Sept 23 - Oct 22)**  
You will have a very good handle on what it is you want to pursue and must not let your insecurity stop you. This is a perfect day to let your imagination wander while you take your talents to a new level.

**Scorpio (Oct 23 - Nov 21)**  
Prepare to impress everyone around you. You will have the ability to handle whatever comes your way. Your emotions will soar when someone you care about shows extra attention.

**Sagittarius (Nov 22 - Dec 21)**  
You may have to deal with some matters that you've been putting off. Get to the bottom of things and you will feel much better about yourself. You should put some effort into your home.

**Capricorn (Dec 22 - Jan 19)**  
If you are in love, you may want to start making special plans for Valentine's Day. The more you do to show someone how you feel, the more you will get in return.

**Aquarius (Jan 20 - Feb 18)**  
You may have to prove yourself today if you want to avoid complaints. Put in a little extra effort. You can make more money, but it will require patience, hard work and determination.

**Pisces (Feb 19-Mar 20)**  
Lots can be achieved today if you are quick to make your move. You will be extremely creative and you should take the time to develop some of your ideas. Your interaction with friends will lead to romance.



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# AL KASSIM SHIPPING CO. LTD. awarded the Golden Knight Prize by International Famous Association at CAIRO-Egypt



Mr. Sharaf Sallam Kassim, the Chairman of AlKassim Shipping Co. has been awarded the International Golden Knight Prize for the Economy and Shipping Transport Activity Pioneer in the Republic of Yemen together with other three Yemeni Businessmen. The prizes were officially awarded by the International Public Opinion Center on 15<sup>th</sup> January, 2004 to the above four Yemeni Businessmen in the official ceremony held at Samiramis Hotel at Cairo (Egypt) in the presence of selected media leaders, famous writers, politicians and top concerned people.

The Yemen community in Egypt from the Embassy, Media representative and Tuition fields at Egypt were presented to celebrate in this occasion.

Mr. Sharaf Kassim of AlKassim Shipping Co. is well known for the last 36 years in sharing the development of Shipping Services at Yemen Ports either at North or South sides of The Republic of Yemen, he also shared in the establishment of Yemen Chamber of Shipping and other main activities at Yemen Ports specially Hodeidah port.

Mr. Sharaf Kassim is one of the few businessmen whom has the capability of shipping experience and main principle know how in this speciality.

AlKassim Shipping Co. have represented many main shipping principals and ship owners during the past 30 years since its' establishment in 1976.



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**Netherlands Fellowship Programme**  
**The Royal Netherlands Embassy in Sana'a would hereby like to inform the public of the deadline for the Netherlands Fellowship Programme.**

**Eligible candidates who are accepted by the university in the Netherlands can apply to NFP.**

**Applications for the NFP (accompanied by letter of acceptance) need to be submitted to the Embassy no later than 15 March 2004. The applications form can be obtained from the Royal Netherlands Embassy on Wednesday only from 10.00 to 12.00 hrs.**

**For brochures, application forms or any further information on the Netherlands Fellowship Programme, please visit the consular section of the Netherlands Embassy on Wednesdays only between 10.00 and 12.00 hrs.**



Isn't this too much?

## Cannibal attracts interest from filmmakers

By DAVID CROSSLAND

The German cannibal convicted of manslaughter last week for killing and eating a willing victim has received several inquiries from film companies about making a movie of the sensational case, his lawyer said on Wednesday.

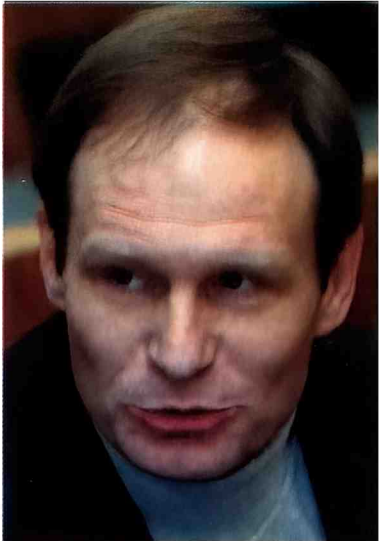
But the lawyer dismissed reports British actor Hugh Grant, famous for his romantic comedies, had expressed an interest in buying the film rights and playing the lead role. Grant's spokeswoman, Karin Smith, called the reports "absolute rubbish."

The cannibal, 42-year-old computer repair man Armin Meiwes, filmed the fetish-induced killing on video tape and the gory details of the case have caused shock and fascination worldwide.

"We've had inquiries from Germany and the rest of Europe," said Harald Ermel, who defended Meiwes in the two-month trial in Kassel, central Germany. He did not name any film companies.

"There is also interest from media wanting interviews and from book publishers," said Ermel, adding that Meiwes was likely to require a ghost writer for the memoirs he plans to write.

Ermel rejected media reports in Britain and Germany that Grant, who looks nothing like the stark-featured



Armin Meiwes was convicted of manslaughter but not murder on Jan. 30 for killing and eating a man who had asked to die, and he was sentenced to eight and a half years in jail. The court rejected the prosecution's plea for a murder conviction and life sentence because the victim had instructed Meiwes, shown in court Jan. 26, to kill him. (Pool via Reuters)

Meiwes, was trying to secure the film rights.

"There has been no contact on this between Hugh Grant and Herr Meiwes or his defense... This is evidently an erroneous report," Ermel

said.

Meiwes was sentenced to eight and a half years in prison last Friday but could be out in less than five years if he gets parole for good behavior.

Meiwes is popular with fellow inmates because he helps them write letters, Ermel has said.

The cannibal had fantasized since puberty about eating a man to fill a void left by the departure of his father, and advertised for victims on the Internet.

Psychiatrists judged him sane but severely disturbed and Meiwes has said he will undergo counseling in jail to rid him of his "fetish for men's flesh."

Meiwes escaped a murder conviction because his victim, a 43-year-old computer engineer, had wanted to be killed and even contacted Meiwes on the Internet asking to be eaten.

Prosecutors had demanded a life sentence and this week lodged an appeal against the conviction.

The case has no legal precedent and is set to go before Germany's Supreme Court, legal experts say. Ermel said it could take up to nine months before the appeal hearing begins.

"Where are we living?" news magazine Der Spiegel said this week in a report on the case. "Has all measure of the difference between normal and abnormal, right and wrong, of morality and decency been lost?"

Reuters

## Gibson mum on "Passion" scene

Actor-director Mel Gibson is keeping mum about whether he intends to cut or keep one of the most controversial scenes in his upcoming film about Christ's final hours — that of a Jewish high priest declaring a blood curse on Jews for the death of Jesus.

The New York Times, citing an unnamed "close associate" of Gibson, reported on Wednesday that he has decided to delete the scene from the film "The Passion of the Christ," before it is released in North American theatres on February 25.

A spokesman for the Hollywood star, who directed, co-wrote, produced and put \$25 million (14 million pounds) of his own money into the film, declined to comment on the report.

"It would be irresponsible of me to talk about a work in progress," publicist Alan Nierob told Reuters. Nierob said the scene in question was absent from an early cut he saw.

But a version of the film screened last month in Orlando, Florida, for 4,500 evangelical Christian pastors, included the scene, in which a Jewish mob demands Christ's crucifixion and the Jewish high priest Caiaphas declares, "His blood be on us and be on our children" when the Roman governor, Pontius Pilate, condemns Jesus to death.

Jewish leaders have warned that this passage, taken from the Gospel of Matthew 27:25, was often highlighted in the Passion Plays that flourished in the Middle Ages and helped spark centuries of anti-Semitism.

The Catholic Church repudiated the anti-Semitic reading of the Gospels at



Mel Gibson

the Second Vatican Council in 1965, stressing Christ's death was part of his divine mission and absolving Jews of responsibility for it.

The Anti-Defamation League has said it was especially concerned over that scene, urging Gibson to remove it from the film and to add a postscript imploring audiences "not to let the film turn some toward the passion of hate."

Gibson has said his film is meant to inspire "faith, hope, love and forgiveness" rather than to incite hatred. Responding in writing to a letter last month from ADL director Abraham Foxman, Gibson did not specifically address appeals for changes in the film. Instead he wrote, "It is my deepest belief ... that all who ever breathe life on this Earth are children of God and my most binding obligation to them, as a brother in this waking world, is to love them."

Rabbi Gary Bretton-Granatoor, interfaith consultant for the ADL, said he was concerned about the impression



the film will make, not on devout Christians, but on "all those people on the periphery of faith ... or who may carry some level of hatred or xenophobia against the Jews and use this film about the Passion to harden their hearts."

Even without the scene of the blood curse, Bretton-Granatoor said there was ample material he saw in the movie to reinforce a negative image of Jews.

The R-rated film, with dialogue in Hebrew, Latin and the ancient language of Aramaic, depicts Jesus being savagely beaten by Jewish authorities and Roman guards. The Jewish high priest strikes Jesus and spits on him, and the figure of Satan appears alongside Jewish authorities rather than Pilate, who actually sentences Jesus to death, according to those who saw the Orlando screening.

Bretton-Granatoor said many of the gory details of the crucifixion depicted in the film do not come from the four Gospels on which Gibson has the film is based. Instead, they appear to be drawn from the writings of a 19th-century Catholic nun by the name of Anne Catherine Emmerich.

He said that whenever the camera pans away from "the unremitting, unrelenting brutality" that dominates the film, "it cuts away to a group of Jews who look like they're enjoying an afternoon's entertainment."

Reuters

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