

Iraqis in Yemen concerned about the possibility of the chaos due to the ongoing violence in Iraq:

Iraq chaos

By PETER WILLEMS

"I have lost hope," said an Iraqi engineer living in Yemen after unexpected violence erupted in Iraq this week. "After the war began, I was hoping for it all to end quickly, for there to be security and democracy to replace the regime. Instead there is only killing and bloodshed."

On Sunday, supporters of Shiite cleric Muqtada Al-Sadr rioted in several cities, including a suburban area of Baghdad, Sadr City. Eight US soldiers and at least 45 Iraqis were killed.

The riots were sparked by the arrest of one of Al-Sadr's top aides, Mustafa Al-Yacoubi, on charges of murdering Abdel-Majid Al-Khoei, considered by many one of Al-Sadr's rivals. Al-Sadr's followers had already been angered by the closing of his weekly newspaper on March 28, as Americans accused the newspaper of urging violence against US soldiers.

Up until this week, US forces were facing an insurgency led by Sunni Muslims. But after clashes on Sunday, US forces may have to deal with new resistance made up of some Shiite groups. In Iraq, Shiites make up 60% of the population and has rarely had clashes with US soldiers since the coalition forces invaded a year ago.

Thousands of Iraqis have come to Yemen for over the past decade. Some came for better opportunities while the Iraqi economy suffered in the nineties, while others came to avoid oppression under the Saddam Hussein regime. It is estimated that the largest Iraqi Shiite group in the Middle East living outside of Iraq is in Yemen.

Many have anticipated returning

home after the United States ousted Saddam Hussein. But after the violence this week, many view their country as turning into chaos and cannot see Iraq becoming a safe place in the near future.

"Nothing tells us that something will be good in the next few months or even years," said Muhammed Abdul Hameed, an Iraqi teacher in Yemen. "I was very afraid to go back under Saddam, but now the situation is worse. People are dying all the time and all we really want is security."

The US government has planned to hand over sovereignty to an interim Iraqi government on June 30. Even though some US officials now have doubts that the US can follow through, US President George W. Bush said on Monday that he would stick to the June 30 deadline.

Before this week's uprising, some Iraqis in Yemen said that an Iraqi government would do a better job of building security than the United States because it would know more about the people and the Arab culture. But after the clashes, many say that a new government would not be able to succeed in pulling the country together in a lawless atmosphere.

"The Americans handing over power on June 30 is impossible," said Yassir Al-Hatem, an Iraqi student at Sana'a University. "With all this chaos, there would not be enough security and fighting would get even worse."

Some are also not satisfied with the US plan to install the interim government. They are suspicious of the government and want to be able to elect a government under their own power.

"This will not be a real government," said Dr. Erfan Al-Shammari, an Iraqi doctor at Hadda Hospital. "This one is created by the US government, not by the Iraqi people."

Analysts are also concerned that some Shiite groups may join the Sunni insur-



Iraqi Shi'ite supporters of cleric Muqtada al-Sadr celebrate near a burning U.S. Army truck in the Shuala neighbourhood of Baghdad April 5.

REUTERS

gency. One Iraqi Sunni in Yemen said that he is so fed up with the conditions in his home country that he hopes the Sunnis and Shiites work together and urge the coalition forces to leave.

"I support Al-Sadr's position," said the Iraqi. "He represents the feelings of all Iraqis. The United States has done nothing so far, like no rebuilding and no security, so it is about time they leave, and I can see both Sunnis and Shiites together demanding that the Americans leave."

But there is also concern over a possible civil war in Iraq. Some believe that if

security continues to deteriorate, new political groups may pop up and start grabbing power. Although the leading Shiite cleric Ayatollah Ali Al-Sistani has been supporting peaceful protests during the US occupation, some believe that Al-Sadr led the riots this week to help him build his position. Mussab Al-Zarqawi, the alleged leader of several attacks in Iraq, released a recording recently that criticized Iraqi Shiites and Shiite leaders and accused them of being the allies of Jews and Americans.

"A civil war could happen," said Al-Hatem. "I wouldn't be surprised if there

were assassinations and fighting after groups emerge to take power if this lawlessness goes on."

Doubts are also surfacing about whether the US Administration developed a solid plan to deal with Iraq after the regime fell. According to the Pew Research Center poll, 57% of Americans believe that Bush has no clear plan for bringing about a successful conclusion in Iraq. Many Iraqis in Yemen agree.

"The United States said to the Iraqis before the war that they would come and let us be free and liberated," said Saad Al-Hussein, an Iraqi barber in Yemen.

"But what is this? This is liberty? Is this what they planned? I don't think they knew what to do from the beginning."

Before violence sprang up this week, many Iraqis in Yemen made plans to return home soon. But after widespread clashes on Sunday, many have changed their minds and are planning to wait longer.

"It is terrible over there. There are no answers, no solutions, no way of knowing what the future will be like," said Abdul-Hameed. "I don't know when I'll be able to go back."

Al-Tagamou Weekly suspended & Thabet taken to jail... again: **Attacks on the press continue**

By MOHAMED AL-QADHI
YEMEN TIMES STAFF

The London-based Arab Press Freedom Watch (APFW) condemned the deputy prosecutor of the Sana'a Southern prosecution order of arrest of journalist Saeed Thabet, first deputy of the Yemeni Journalists Syndicate (YJS) inside the court hall.

Deputy prosecutor Mohammed al-Himairi ordered the arrest of Thabet after he asked for his mobile charger.

Thabet was taken to the room of the deputy prosecutor after the court judge listened to the last hearing and decided that the verdict in the case would be passed Tuesday, April 13.

The intelligence agents kidnapped Thabet from the street March 5th on charges of "spreading false information" on the thwarted assassination attempt against Colonel Ahmad Ali Abdullah Saleh, Commander of the Republican Guard and Special Tasks Forces. Thabet, correspondent of the

London-based Quds Press agency was put in custody for 72 hours. His mobile was taken as evidence of his "crime".

This behavior on the part of the deputy prosecutor astonished the audience, journalists and lawyer who refused to leave the court room before Thabet is set free. The court judge was informed of the case and he ordered that Thabet should be set free.

Continued on page3

21 killed in a horrible traffic accident

By YEMEN TIMES STAFF

Twenty one Yemeni citizens were killed and more than 54 injured last Tuesday in a horrific traffic accident in Yareem, Ibb governorate, a local official said. The accident resulted from the crash of a tanker carrying containers crashed into a qat souq (traditional market), smashing four cars full of people and damaging other shops when its driver lost control of his vehicle's brakes.

Continued on page3

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Girls' Health Conference

On Tuesday 6 April, the Second National Conference on Girls' Health began. More than 100 men and women representing private organizations, government authorities, academic experts and activists in the field of women's and child rights participate in the conference, which is organized by the Women's National Committee in Aden. The two-day conference discusses several scientific working papers focusing on four points: the reality of female circumcision (problems and progress achieved); the religious message and Islamic legislative view on female cir-

cumcision; the importance of eliminating this phenomenon, including field studies and experiments and a discussion of the expertise of relevant associations; and the role of the media in introducing new scientific means and curricula.

This second conference comes following efforts to evaluate and follow up the implementation of the recommendations of the previous conference, to enhance and expand the Islamic legislative role and to increase awareness and change understandings of this phenomenon.

Act signs first service agreement under free zone authority

Aden Container Terminal (ACT) continued its relentless emergence from low growth to reach high monthly volumes of container handling.

On 31st March 2004 Yemen Free Zones Public Authority signed a Prime Customer Service Agreement with international shipping line, Pacific International Lines (PIL) of Singapore, the first after taking over from PSA. OPM Aden, ACT's terminal operator, was instrumental in putting the parties together for this landmark agreement. Mr. Dirhem Noman, Vice Chairman of Yemen Free Zones Public Authority and Chairman of Aden Free Zone, signed the agreement on behalf of the Authority.

The service Agreement will anchor PIL as special customer at ACT in recognition of their support for ACT in the past and to encourage them to increase substantially their throughput at ACT to almost double their current level, by making it their base port in the

Red Sea region. In return for volume commitment, PIL will enjoy a slew of benefits such as a performance guarantee, which together with other incentives are expected to make PIL's services more efficient and competitive in the region.

For the Free Zone Authority, this is another milestone in the success of ACT and more such agreements are in the pipeline. Interest from other shipping lines is emerging, as ACT under OPM Aden has markedly improved its services and as ACT's strategic position in the region as a transshipment hub is being revisited, with negative perception of the Limburg incident fading away and confidence gradually returning to the customers of ACT.

ACT officials were quick to point out that while more such agreements are expected to be signed, PIL will always take a special position in ACT as a prime customer.

Brutal killings in Taiz

YEMEN TIMES
TAIZ BUREAU

Taiz, April 2, 2004- Al-Mataly region, Al-Musrah Province witnessed a brutal incident, resulting the death of Abdullah Ahmed Othman at the hands of his father. The father struck his son on the head and in the lower chest area with an axe following the eruption of a dispute between the two. The son died immediately.

A contractor, Mahyoud Saeed Abdullah, 45 years old, and Abdulrageeb Abdo Saeed, 25 years old were both killed when Abdulaleem Mahboub Ibrahim, 27 years old, raked the two with gun shots from his machine gun. A 60-year old lady named Saoud Nouman Ghalib was also injured. Preliminary reports indicate that Ibrahim attempted to escape, but the security forces were able to apprehend and arrest him. He is believed to be mentally unwell.

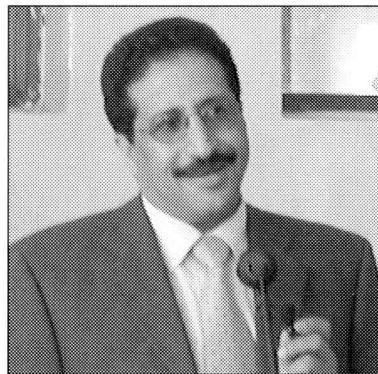
Electronic-Learning Classroom opens in Sana'a

First Middle East Partnership Initiative

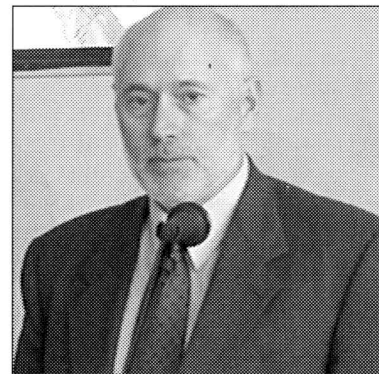
Sana'a, April 6, 2004- Yemen's Minister of Education, Dr. Abdulsalam Al-Jawfi, and US Ambassador, H.E. Edmund Hull, jointly dedicated the first classroom realized through the Middle East Partnership Initiative (MEPI) e-learning for Yemen. The first in a series of electronic-learning activities took place at Al-Quds Secondary School for Girls, at a total cost of 1.6 million USD from MEPI. The opening ceremony was attended by the Minister of Education, Dr. Abdulsalam Al-Jawfi, Minister of State and Mayor of Sana'a, Ahmed Al-Kohlani, and representatives of the Ministries of Planning and Development and Telecommunications.

Dr. Al-Jawfi explained the importance of incorporating computers into schools. The opening of this first class comes as part of plan to install similar classes in a number of schools, 10 of which are funded by US Development Agency. The Minister stated that he expects that this will be the beginning of US assistance in implementing the plan in the governorates of the Republic coinciding with the intention to make use of computers accessible to all schools. The Minister urged the Americans to increase support in this field.

The US Ambassador, H.E. Edmund Hull, pointed out that internet services and electronic-learning have become essentials to achieve development in the 21st century. The Ambassador cited Malaysia, India and Singapore, which benefited tremendously from informa-



Dr. Abdulsalam Al-Jawfi



Mr. Edmund Hull

tion technology in facilitating their roads toward development. He added that Yemen has chosen its road toward economic, social and development and to improve living condition for its people. In this respect, it is very important that Yemen joins in the information revolution which is the best method to connect the people with each other throughout the Republic and to bypass the difficulties associated with geography. Electronic-learning is considered the first step to be utilized in the development of Yemen. The Ambassador concluded his statement by congratulating Al-Quds High School for its victory during a fierce competition to obtain this project and saying that the students would definitely benefit from this new capability amid a globalized market.

The Cultural Attaché of the US Embassy distributed a statement clarify-

ing the capabilities, governorates and schools included in the US electronic-learning project, as follows:

The schools in Sana'a are:

- 1- Al-Quds Alsharif located in Al-Wahda Neighborhood
 - 2- Al-Shaheed Al-Loqaya at Al-Loqaya Square
 - 3- Al-Shaheed Sinan Hatroum in Sa'awan
 - 4- Fatima Al-Zahra'a in Al-Rawdha
- The schools in Aden are:
- 1- Ma'arab Secondary School for Boys in Al-Maalla
 - 2- Bakattheer Secondary School for Girls in Crater
 - 3- Mugama Al-Shab Al-Tarbouy for Girls in Little Aden
 - 4- Abdul raheem Al-Ahdal for Boys in Dar Saad
 - 5- Battheeb Secondary School for Girls in Al-Mansoorah

A contractor blocks school entrance and destroys nearby house

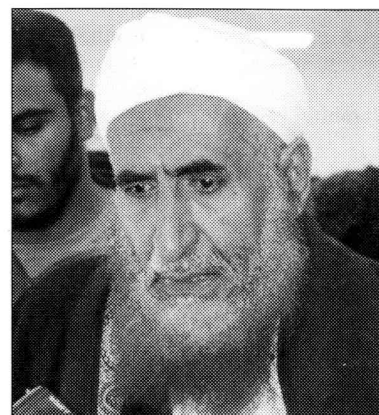
Yemen Times
Taiz Bureau

Following the work of some citizens headed by Mr. Tarboush Qassem Al-Qadase to establish a mosque and school for the teaching of the Quran, the citizens were astonished to find that a contractor, Ali Ahmed Al-Hadad, had occupied the lands and begun destroying a nearby house with heavy equipment. The gateways were blocked using armed men. This took place in collusion with the police of the Al-Huban, which arrested the owner of the destroyed home and forced him to accept a settlement. Citizens in the neighborhood filed a petition in protest.

Ba Jamal: Al-Zindani is not a terrorist

Prime Minister, Abdul Qader Bajamal, in a statement issued to Al-Sharq Al-Awsat Newspaper in the last two days, stated that Yemen does not consider Sheikh Abdulmajeed Al-Zindani, Chairman of the Islah Al-Shoura Council and accused by the USA of funding terrorists, a terrorist. Yemen has not received any proof to substantiate the US claims and when Yemen receives anything it will look into it. The Premier praised Yemeni-American cooperation in combating terrorism, which has assisted Yemen in making progress in the fight against terrorism.

The PM pointed out that suspects in the bombing of USS Cole, in 2000, which resulted in the death of 17 American sailors, will appear in court during the coming few weeks after the



Sheikh Abdulmajeed Al-Zindani

security authorities recaptured 15 suspects who escaped from prison last year.

Readers' Voice

Yemen Times features "Readers' Voice" a popular way for our readers to interact with us. This is your opportunity to have a say on world and local affairs.

This edition's question:

How do you think the current events in Iraq would develop?

- The Coalition Forces will withdraw due to too many casualties.
- The Coalition Forces will establish law and order.
- A civil war would occur.
- Peace will be maintained after coalition forces give in demands of al-Sadr Shiites

last edition's question:

Do you think that there will be a split between Arab leaders on the place and time of the Arab summit?

- Yes 51.2%
- No 9.7%
- I don't care 39%

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Firing of Taiz Public Works' Director

During last few days, Director-General of Taiz Public Works Office, Eng. Najeeb Al-Hemyary, was fired. He is currently in Sana'a, attempting to regain his post. The decision to appoint Eng. Saeed Shaiban, Deputy for Technical Affairs, as the acting director was welcomed by workers in the office.

This decision came following instructions from the Governor of Taiz, Judge Ahmed Abdullah Al-Hujry, and is part of deliberate efforts to eliminate corruption and to confront power centers interfering with the provision of security and stability in provinces of governorate.

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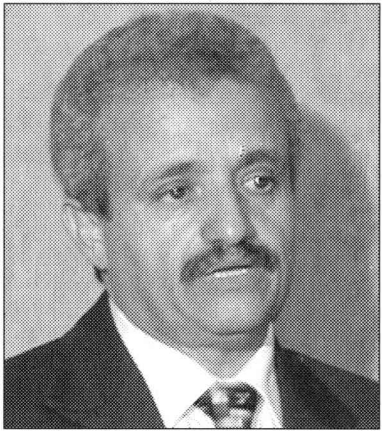
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Expertise in development work
Excellent organisational skills
Excellent IT skills including spreadsheets
Excellent English and Arabic.

Yemenia inaugurates offices in Johannesburg and Dar Al-Salaam

BY HASSAN AL-ZAIDI
YEMEN TIMES STAFF

Yemenia Airlines inaugurated last Saturday and Sunday new routes to Johannesburg and Dar Al-Salaam, in South Africa and Tanzania, respectively, within the frame to re-open the routes suspended in February 2000.



Mr. Abdullah Ahmed Al-Kibsi, Director-General of Administration Affairs, inaugurated the new office by cutting the tape, officially commencing the official opening of Yemenia office at Dar Al-Salaam following the

arrival of the plane, while the Yemeni plane continued its flight to Johannesburg.

Yemenia اليمنية

A big celebration was held on Johannesburg on the occasion of the inauguration of Yemenia office, attended by a large number of representatives of the Arab diplomatic corps, Arab and Islamic communities and travel agencies in the city.

The Director-General, in his speech, emphasized the importance of the development of economic, commercial and social relations between two great nations, Yemen and the Republic of South Africa. He pointed out that Yemenia Airlines sees a lot of potential for investment cooperation including in the field of tourism, and thus has decided to operate two weekly flights to Johannesburg.

Yemeni Ambassador to Pretoria, H.E. Mohamed Muharum, cited the continuous development of bilateral relations between Yemen and South

Africa. He also congratulated Yemenia Airlines for this accomplishment.

The new Yemeni route, to Dar Al-Salaam and Johannesburg, also stops at the capital of Comoro, Morone, considering Yemenia is the national airline of Comoro.

The re-opening of the route to Johannesburg received a wide welcome, especially from the Arab and Muslim community there. 150 passengers left Johannesburg via Yemenia Airlines on board its second flight in their travel plan, including transit passengers to Saudi for Omrah (half pilgrimage), and nearly 50 passengers headed to France and the UK from Moronie airport.

Yemenia Airlines earlier held a celebration to mark this occasion at Sana'a International Airport. Mr. Abdullah Al-Kibsi, on behalf of Captain Abdul Khaleq Al-Qadhy, CEO of Yemeni Airlines, confirmed



the intention of Yemenia to expand its routes, especially to Africa, considering Africa is an important commercial and economic partner for Yemen. He pointed out that Yemen intends to operate to Dacca, Bangladesh and Istanbul and after the arrival of newly purchased aircraft. The expansion plans will include flights to China and an increased number of flights to Europe in modern planes, including Boeing 737(800) and the new Airbus 335.

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Applications to be mailed to:

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Continued from page 1

Attacks on the press continue

Representatives of global pro-freedom organization Amnesty International witnessed the court hearing.

The YJS condemned in a press statement the behavior of the prosecution, considering his action as a violation against press freedom. It demanded that all NGOs and journalists should express their solidarity with Thabet and condemn the behavior of the deputy prosecutor, which "damages the reputation of the democratic experience in the country."

Thabet expressed his anger and told Yemen Times that "this behavior should not go unpunished as the deputy prosecutor does not have the right to issue orders of arrest; he is a part of the problem for which we are in court."

On the other hand, the al-Tagamou Weekly was suspended by the ministry of information as the printing press of al-Jeel told the editors of the paper that the ministry of information ordered them orally not to print the paper that comes every Monday. However, the

deputy minister of information Mohammed Shaher denied that his ministry ordered the suspension of the paper. He said that there might be technical problems behind the suspension and some measures that the people in charge of the paper did not complete, pointing out that they did not fulfill the procedures the ministry asked them to do.

However, Secretary Editor of the paper issued by al-Tagamou al-Wahdawi opposition party said that they were not informed by the ministry that the paper was suspended. However, Yemen Times learnt that the ministry of information received a complaint from the Saudi embassy in Sana'a against the paper for criticizing the measures by the Saudi authorities against those educated reformers in the kingdom. Nabeel Subai'e wrote last week an article in the last page of al-Tagamou entitled "the Terrorist Kingdom" in which he strongly criticized imprisonment of some reformers in Saudi Arabia.

21 killed in a horrible traffic accident

An official told Yemen Times the accident caused 65 casualties, including 21 deaths. The death toll is expected to go up. He said that the rescue operation continued for over 3 hours.

Yemen is one of the top countries in number of traffic accidents commensurate to population. It was reported that

28 people were killed last week because of a number of traffic accidents but the accident of last Tuesday was among the most terrifying of its kind. The traffic authorities say that neck-breaking speed, reckless driving, and lack of maintenance of vehicles are among the main reasons behind the problem.

Seminar on the role of information in society

The Faculty of Information, in cooperation with the Students' Union, organized this week a seminar on the role of media organisations in deepening culture in society. The seminar recommended designating cultural responsibilities to specialists concerned and involved in culture. This is based on the premise that cultural responsibilities are tied with creativity, innovation and ingenuity, before it is an administrative job.

They also recommended the holding of permanent book exhibitions at reasonable and subsidized prices to enable all to purchase. They emphasized the importance of preserving the architectural style, folklore, theaters, cinemas, libraries, playgrounds and gardens, considering them as bases for strengthening the culture of society.

Yemen introduces new security regions

The Ministry of the Interior has completed final preparations to create 12 new security regions in 9 governorates, as part of the third phase of the security redeployment. The new security deployment includes Dhamra, Marib, Amran, Raimah, Lahj, Al-Beidha, Taiz, Sana'a, and Abyan Governorates.

These new security stations come as part of Yemeni efforts to combat terrorism. The first and second security redeployments resulted on the arrest of wanted terrorist elements, including suspects implicated in the bombing of USS Cole.

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Battles flare as Iraqi Shi'ites vow resistance

NAJAF, Iraq, April 6 (Reuters) - Militiamen loyal to radical Shi'ite cleric Moqtada al-Sadr fought gun battles with foreign troops in southern Iraq on Tuesday, with their leaders vowing to resist the U.S.-led occupation.

The United States has vowed to arrest Sadr, accused of leading a wave of bloody confrontations with U.S.-led forces.

But his supporters vowed on Tuesday to fight until occupying troops left populated areas and prisoners were released.

Fighting between his followers and Italian troops in Nassiriya killed around 15 Iraqis and in the town of Kut witnesses said two Ukrainian armoured vehicles were in flames.

Sadr's militia, known as the Mehdi Army, has held violent protests and launched attacks in several Iraqi cities in recent days to protest the detention of one of his aides and the closure of a militant newspaper by U.S.-led authorities.

"This insurrection shows that the Iraqi people are not satisfied with the occupation and they will not accept oppression," said a statement from the cleric, which an aide read at a news conference in the Shi'ite holy city of Najaf.

The U.S. army said three more American soldiers had been killed in Shi'ite areas of Baghdad.

Heavy fighting was also reported in the Sunni Muslim towns of Falluja and Ramadi, west of Baghdad, as U.S. Marines mounted a major operation to root out guerrillas. Residents said gunfire and blasts were echoing across Falluja.

NEW FRONT

U.S. troops have long faced daily attacks in the "Sunni triangle", including Falluja. But the fighting in Shi'ite Muslim areas represents a new front for occupying troops trying to pacify the country ahead of a June 30 handover of sovereignty to an Iraqi government.

U.S. President George W. Bush has insisted the violence by Sadr's supporters would not derail Washington's plans for Iraq.

But a new opinion poll as Bush cam-



Sheikh Abdel al-Satar al-Bahadli, an official of Iraqi Shi'ite cleric Moqtada Al Sadr, talks with their supporters near the occupied governor's residence in the southern city of Basra April 5.

paings for November re-election showed support among U.S. voters for his handling of Iraq had fallen to a new low of 40 percent — down 19 points since mid-January.

The U.S.-led administration said on Monday an arrest warrant had been issued several months ago for Sadr in connection with the murder of another Shi'ite cleric last year.

Sadr's supporters said he was in his Najaf office and pledged to fight any attempt to detain him.

A Pew Research Center poll which reported the slump in approval for Bush's handling of Iraq also found 44 percent of Americans wanted U.S. troops withdrawn from the country.

U.S. Democratic Senator Edward Kennedy, a key backer of Democrat John Kerry's bid to unseat Bush in November, said Iraq had become "George Bush's Vietnam".

A senior U.S. army official said the Pentagon was looking at sending more troops to Iraq if the situation deteriorated, but believed it already had enough soldiers in place.

SHI'ITE UPRISING

Fighting has raged between Sadr's supporters and foreign troops since clashes in Baghdad and Najaf on Sunday killed at least 48 Iraqis, eight U.S. soldiers and one Salvadoran soldier.

The U.S. army said two soldiers had been killed in the Shi'ite Kadimiya neighborhood of Baghdad on Monday and another in the same area on Tuesday. All three attacks involved fighters armed with rocket-propelled grenades.

A Health Ministry spokesman said that in Baghdad 66 Iraqis had been killed and 317 wounded in the violence that began on Sunday. The impoverished Sadr City district has seen some of the heaviest clashes with U.S. troops.

In Nassiriya, 375 km (235 miles) south-east of Baghdad, clashes between Italian troops and Sadr's militiamen erupted before dawn as 500 Italian soldiers mounted an operation to dislodge fighters in control of key bridges in the town.

Paola della Casa, a spokeswoman for the U.S.-led Coalition Provisional

Authority in the area, told Italy's Ansa news agency that about 15 Iraqis had been killed. An Italian officer in the town told Reuters that 12 Italian soldiers were wounded.

"We launched a large-scale operation this morning to restore public order to the town after two days of civil unrest," Major Simone Schiavone said. "The city was divided in two, with the bridges under their control. We had to go in and sort out the situation before it deteriorated."

Clashes were also reported in the southern towns of Amara, where British troops are stationed, and in Kut.

The U.S. military said four Marines had been killed on Monday in the volatile al-Anbar province, which includes Ramadi and Falluja. The Marines have launched a major new mission to pacify Falluja, imposing a curfew and sealing off roads.

The mission — "Operation Vigilant Resolve" — follows the killing and mutilation of four U.S. contractors in the town last week. A cheering crowd set the bodies ablaze and hacked them up.

Algerian women seek rights beyond female candidate

ALGIERS, April 6 (Reuters) - A woman is running for president of Algeria for the first time this week but the Muslim country's women are still second-class citizens in their private lives, rights activists said on Tuesday.

They face no apparent discrimination in public life in the North African country of 32 million people, which has many top female magistrates, five women in the cabinet and 30 in its parliament.

Campaigners say it is another story at home.

Louisa Hanoun, 50, leader of a small, Trotskyite left-wing party, is running in a presidential election she is not expected to win, with opinion polls crediting her with up to eight percent of the vote.

But her candidacy has put the spotlight on a family code tailored for a male-dominated society.

"In our country a woman can become President of the Republic but she has no control over her private life," said Akila Ouared Abdelmoumene, head of a leading women's rights group.

President Abdelaziz Bouteflika, favoured to win a second five-year mandate in Thursday's vote, has been accused of ignoring a 1999 election promise to grant more rights to women. He is making the same pledge in his current campaign.

Pressure increased on the government to reform the 1984 family code after neighbouring Morocco markedly increased women's rights in marriage and divorce last year.

"Algeria is a straggler in North Africa when it comes to the status of women," said Lucie Pruvost, a French Islamic law expert and author of a book on Algerian women.

The country's family code forces them to seek approval from a male relative to marry, authorises polygamy and gives men the right to divorce without a motive.

"How come our vote counts in full, when at home we're like a half-person," said Ouared Abdelmoumene, who has moved home four times since 1992 because of death threats from Islamists.

MORE HIJABS

Hanoun has not focused her presiden-

tial campaign on women's rights, preferring to attack privatisation or plans for Algeria to join the World Trade Organisation. She has, however, said that "the current family code sanctions discrimination".

Inspired by Islamic sharia law, the Algerian family code after divorce grants the man the use of the family home, even if his former wife wins custody of the children.

"Many women, even those who have a job, end up on the streets with their children, homeless," Pruvost said.

Women's rights groups have campaigned for two decades for the family code to be drained of its religious content and treat men and women as equals.

Last year, they joined forces to set up an organisation called "20 ans, barakat!" (20 Years, That's Enough), which runs information campaigns notably aimed at schoolgirls.

"More and more young girls wear the hijab (Muslim headscarf) because they're being taught to do so at school, that it's a religious duty," said a mother of two girls who wear the hijab while she does not.



Algerian President and candidate in the forthcoming Algerian presidential elections, Abdelaziz Bouteflika, arrives for a pre-election campaign meeting in the eastern berber city of Bouira March 23. Presidential elections are scheduled for April 8

Jordan sentences 8 to death for US diplomat murder

AMMAN, April 6 (Reuters) - Jordan's state security court sentenced eight Islamic militants to death on Tuesday for their role in killing a U.S. diplomat in an assassination blamed on followers of Osama bin Laden's al Qaeda.

Libyan Salem Saad bin Sweid and Jordanian Yasser Friehat, who were accused of shooting diplomat Laurence Foley on the doorstep of his home in October 2002, were among those given the death sentence.

Chief Judge Fawaz al-Baqour also handed down death sentences on six fugitives in absentia.

Two other Jordanian defendants in the dock, Mohammad Damas and Mohammad Amin, were sentenced to 15 and six years hard labour respectively. The case was dismissed against another defendant for lack of evidence.

They were all charged with conspiring to carry out "terrorist acts that caused the death of a person and possession of an unlicensed automatic

weapon."

The court said the defendants conspired to carry out attacks against U.S. and Israeli targets in Jordan, including plans to attack a military airport in Amman used by U.S. transport planes in the run up to the U.S.-led war against Iraq last year.

Among the six fugitives sentenced to death was Ahmad Fadheel al-Khalayleh, better known as Abu Musab Zarqawi and the alleged mastermind of Foley's murder. Washington says he is a senior al Qaeda operative.

Zarqawi was already sentenced to death in absentia last year for plotting attacks on Westerners.

Zarqawi led a group of Jordanians opposed to their kingdom's moderate rulers who were drawn to al Qaeda bases in Afghanistan.

Before the verdict, state prosecutor Mahmoud Obeidat had asked for the harshest penalty for "the ugliness of the crime that targeted Jordan's security and stability and that led to nega-

tive impact on the country's economy and security."

Jordanian authorities said the accused had confessed to Foley's murder and re-enacted the assassination.

Defence lawyers angered at the verdict said their clients' testimonies were extracted under duress.

"Is this your verdict or that of (U.S. President) Bush? We had nothing to do with the killing and this is unjust," shouted Damas, sentenced to hard labour.

Relatives of the convicted men were furious.

"The sentence is unjust, our boys are innocent. They didn't know the diplomat and they didn't kill him," said the sobbing mother of Damas after hearing the verdict.

"I am proud to have a son like him," she said.

Jordan's close U.S. ties and 1994 peace with Israel are unpopular with many in the conservative kingdom and there is strong support for Islamist groups in some areas.



Relatives of Jordanian Islamic militants wait outside a military court in Amman, April 6. Jordan's state security court sentenced eight Islamic militants to death on Tuesday for killing a U.S. diplomat Laurence Foley in an assassination blamed on followers of Osama Bin Laden's al Qaeda.

REUTERS

Iran vows to speed up nuclear cooperation with UN

TEHRAN, April 6 (Reuters) - Iran pledged on Tuesday to accelerate its cooperation with the U.N. nuclear watchdog in a bid to prove it is not seeking nuclear weapons, but also pressed to end U.N. inspections of its atomic facilities by June.

Mohamed ElBaradei, head of the U.N. International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA), told reporters after meeting Iran's nuclear chief Gholamreza Aghazadeh:

"Mr Aghazadeh committed that Iran will do everything possible to accelerate the process of resolving the outstanding issues."

The International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) seeks clarification of how traces of weapons-grade uranium came to be found at the Natanz enrichment plant south of Tehran and a workshop at the Kalaye Electric Company.

If enriched to a low level, uranium can be used to fuel nuclear power stations. But further enrichment can make it suitable for use in warheads.

Iran promised Britain, France and Germany last October it would suspend uranium enrichment and accept snap atomic checks.

The agency also seeks answers on Iran's omissions of key atomic technology from an October statement that included undeclared research on advanced "P2" centrifuges that can make weapons-grade uranium.

The United States accuses Iran of pursuing a nuclear weapons programme, but Tehran says its nuclear ambitions are confined to generating electricity.

In a show of goodwill, Aghazadeh said Iran would suspend making and assembling atomic parts from April 9, something it agreed to do by March.

END INSPECTIONS IN JUNE

Aghazadeh told reporters Tehran asked for inspectors to conclude their work before the next IAEA board of governors meeting in June, where Iran's conduct will be reconsidered.

"Iran strongly expects this case to be



Mohamed ElBaradei (L), head of the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) speaks with Iran's Nuclear Chief Gholamreza Aghazadeh after holding talks in Tehran April 6. ElBaradei said Iran had agreed to accelerate cooperation with the IAEA.

REUTERS

closed...in June," he said.

These words chime with hardliners who won a massive majority in February's parliamentary elections and who have been calling for Iran to demand a deadline to end U.N. inspections.

Conservative commentator Hossein Shariatmadari, writing in the Siyasat-e Rouz daily, said Iran should follow North Korea and pull out of the nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty if inspectors want to continue their work past a Tehran deadline.

Shariatmadari was appointed editor of the hardline Kayhan newspaper by Supreme Leader Ayatollah Ali Khamenei who has the last word on all state matters.

Last month, the IAEA passed a resolution deploring Iran's failure to declare potential arms-related activities. Iran initially blocked U.N. inspectors after the resolution but said on Sunday a new team would arrive in two weeks.

ElBaradei said a new team would arrive on April 12.

Hawks in Washington are trying to get the U.N. Security Council to impose sanctions on Iran for breaching IAEA commitments.

Iran said on Sunday that it had no nuclear sites hidden from U.N. inspectors.

A group of Western diplomats who follow the IAEA had said recent intelligence prompted suspicion Iran had not stopped enriching uranium but had moved enrichment activities to smaller sites, out of view from the United Nations.

"We haven't seen any indication, nor have we got any information that they have been moving (enrichment activities)," said ElBaradei.

However, Western diplomats stuck by their comments to Reuters and insisted the report was correct and ElBaradei's denial based on a technicality.

Memorial marks grisly deaths of Belgians in Rwanda

KIGALI, April 6 (Reuters) - Ten Belgian paratroopers were battered to death on the first day of Rwanda's genocide with such force that their bodies were pulped beyond recognition.

Belgium unveils a monument of 10 stone pillars in Kigali on Wednesday, each symbolising one of the men, who were serving as U.N. peacekeepers when they were killed on April 7, 1994.

"The soldiers were strong, solid and tough, like the pillars," said First Sergeant-Major Alain Titelbach, pointing to the men's initials engraved at the base of each stone, which also bears hash marks representing the years of each one's life.

The eldest was 32, the youngest 23.

The grisly murder of the peacekeepers by Hutu extremists who went on to kill some 800,000 Tutsis and Hutu moderates in 100 days of slaughter prompted Belgium to withdraw its soldiers from its former colony in the heart of Africa.

Some Belgian officers were so humiliated by their country's decision to abandon Rwanda that they shredded their blue berets on the tarmac of Kigali airport as they left.

The Belgian troops were the backbone of a small U.N. peacekeeping force stationed in Rwanda in 1994 and their withdrawal was followed by the failure of other Western nations to take decisive action to prevent the genocide.

Soon after Belgium's departure, the U.N. Security Council slashed the peace-



Survivors of Rwanda's 1994 genocide, sisters Henriette Mutewaraba (R) and Chantal Rutayisire (L), hug in front of the Gisozi memorial site March 29, where Henriette works as a tour guide. REUTERS

keeping force to an ineffectual 450 men, most of them poorly trained and ill-equipped to stop the killing of up to 8,000 people every day for three months.

The memorial at a former military camp where the paratroopers were tortured and murdered is being opened as part of week-long ceremonies marking the tenth anniversary of Rwanda's mass killings.

Belgian Prime Minister Guy Verhofstadt will attend the opening of the monument, along with other senior government officials and family members of the victims.

The building where the Belgians were killed has been left as it was 10 years ago,

riddled with bullet holes and pock-marked by grenade blasts.

The room where their bodies were found remains eerily empty save for an engraved copper plaque bearing their names, portraits and personal details.

The 10 pillars stand slightly taller than a man and end at abrupt angles, symbolizing lives cut short, said Titelbach, adding that the carved stone was imported from the Namuroise region of Belgium, where the dead paratroopers hailed from.

An 11th pillar representing hundreds of thousands more who died during the genocide stands inside the building along with displays showing what happened in Rwanda in 1994.

Suharto's former party inches ahead in Indonesia poll

JAKARTA, April 6 (Reuters) - The former party of ousted Indonesian strongman Suharto was marginally ahead in vote counting on Tuesday following elections, but with less than two percent of the ballots tallied the race was wide open.

By early evening, with nearly two million votes counted, President Megawati Sukarnoputri's Indonesia Democratic Party-Struggle (PDI-P), with 18.39 percent of the vote, was neck-and-neck with Golkar at 18.42 percent.

A survey based on tallies at 1,461 randomly picked polling stations in 32 provinces showed Golkar won 22.7 percent of the vote, while Megawati's party came second with 18.8 percent.

"It looks like PDI-P has been abandoned by some people who voted for it in 1999," said Rustam Ibrahim, head of the Institute for Social and Economic Research, which helped run the survey. "Actually, Golkar has not reaped any gain... What they have done is maintain that level."

In the 1999 parliamentary vote, Megawati's PDI-P was first with 34 percent. Golkar won 22.5 percent.

Investors shrugged off the painfully slow official count, pushing the Jakarta stock market up nearly three percent on Tuesday. Election observers said any reliable indication of the winner could take as long as a week.

The result of Monday's election in the world's most populous Muslim nation will shape the race for the country's first direct presidential vote in July. With no candidate likely to win a majority in that election, coalition-building will be crucial in the run-up to the vote.

The Democrat Party of Megawati's former security minister, who quit during a row with her last month, was third in vote counting with 12.07 percent, a strong showing given its status as a new party. The Prosperous Justice Party (PKS), an Islamic party that campaigned on a strong anti-corruption message, was fourth.

"We don't expect any meaningful information for probably five to seven days," said Hank Valentino of the U.S.-based International Foundation for Election Systems. He said urban areas would be tallied first, skewing initial results. He said voter turnout from the 147 million strong electorate was thought to have been above 90 percent.

MEGAWATI BEHIND

Most opinion polls ahead of Monday's vote showed Golkar likely to unseat Megawati's party as the largest in parliament, although without a majority, as many years for the firm leadership and economic growth of Suharto's 32-year rule.

They also showed Megawati trailing former security minister Susilo Bambang Yudhoyono in the presidential race.

Monday's elections for the 550-seat parliament and local legislatures went off largely peacefully and were billed as history's biggest one-day vote. It was only the second democratic poll since

Suharto's fall.

The absence of major unrest and good showings for mainstream parties should support stocks and the rupiah currency. The Jakarta bourse closed up 2.8 percent on Tuesday at 771.5 points.

Dealers anticipate secular nationalist parties such as Golkar and PDI-P are likely to emerge the winners, meaning little change in economic policy.

"As long as those two big parties are there, it will be positive, but for newcomers the market will want to see first. We don't really like surprises," said a sales chief at a major local securities firm.

The election has also been seen as a test of the popularity of conservative Islamist parties in the wake of bomb attacks by militants linked to Osama bin Laden.

But so far there is little sign political disillusionment has brought increased support for Islamist parties, except for the PKS, which has won support for its integrity and determination to stamp out graft.



Indonesian parliamentary speaker and Golkar party chairman Akbar Tandjung speaks to reporters at his party headquarters in Jakarta, April 6, 2004. Golkar, the former party of ousted Indonesian strongman Suharto, was marginally ahead in early vote counting on Tuesday following parliamentary elections but with less than two percent of the vote counted the race was wide open. REUTERS

China stamps its authority on Hong Kong

BEIJING/HONG KONG, April 6 (Reuters) - China, fearingf growing calls for greater democracy in Hong Kong, tightened its grip on the city on Tuesday by ruling that it alone will determine the shape and timing of elections.

The widely expected ruling came as a blow to pro-democracy activists in Hong Kong ahead of legislative assembly elections in September.

But some analysts in the city said Beijing's move could backfire, triggering a protest vote in favour of pro-democracy groups in the September poll.

"Beijing is assuming total control over political change in Hong Kong," said Hong Kong political commentator Andy Ho.

"It is trying to cool aspirations for democracy here, telling Hong Kong that it has control, but instead of doing that it is heating things up."

Financial markets were, however, unruffled and there was little sign of tension in the former British colony returned to Beijing in 1997.

A top committee of China's parliament on Tuesday passed a review of Hong Kong's "Basic Law", or constitution, giving Beijing full control over the territory's political reform.

Tsang Hin-chi, a Hong Kong member of the top-level Standing Committee of China's National People's Congress, said the ruling was for the good of the people.

"It is very mild and very clear," he said. "People should not blindly oppose it, but put the best interests of Hong Kong people first."

Hong Kong's constitution says the city's nearly seven million people can directly elect their leader and all their lawmakers from as early as 2007 — something they have never done before either under the British or after the handover.

But that prospect is remote now that Beijing has the overriding authority to

decide if electoral changes are even needed.

In Hong Kong, about 30 pro-democracy activists marched to government headquarters. Some carried wreaths symbolising the death of democracy.

"Down with the interpretation!" they shouted.

Hong Kong leader Tung Chee-hwa pleaded for understanding at a news conference, saying Beijing's move was necessary for better understanding of the constitution.

"No harm has been done to the "one country, two systems" principle," he told reporters, referring to the high degree of autonomy promised after the handover.

Senior Chinese officials will arrive in Hong Kong on Wednesday to explain the interpretation to the city's legal experts and lawmakers, he added.



Qiao Xiaoyang, deputy secretary-general of Chinese National People's Congress Standing Committee, speaks at a news conference in Beijing April 6. REUTERS

New Sri Lanka PM calls for early peace talks

COLOMBO, April 6 (Reuters) - Sri Lanka's new prime minister was sworn into office on Tuesday and said hardline President Chandrika Kumaratunga was now in charge of reviving peace talks with Tamil rebels.

"They (talks) should start as soon as possible," new Prime Minister Mahinda Rajapakse told reporters as he left his house for the swearing-in ceremony. "We need peace."

He said Kumaratunga would be in charge of the peace process once the new government takes over after proving its majority in parliament, which is due to convene on April 22.

Direct talks with the Tamil Tigers, fighting for two decades for a separate Tamil state in the north and east of the island, broke down last April, although a two-year-old truce has held.

"The president will handle the peace process," Rajapakse said after 10 Buddhist monks blessed him in an early-morning ceremony.

But uncertainty surrounding the new government hit the markets, with the key Colombo all-share index plunging 9.5 percent.

Rajapakse also said neighbouring India, which intervened in Sri Lanka's rebellion in the 1980s before withdrawing after heavy troop losses, should take a larger role in trying to bring a permanent end to the war that has killed 64,000 people.

"India must come in as soon as possible," he said, adding that did not mean the role of Norway, which brokered the ceasefire, would be reduced.

FIRST PRIORITY

He said his first job would be to secure a majority in parliament.

"The first priority is that. We are very confident of getting a majority. I do not want to give names right now," he said of possible coalition partners.

Rajapakse, 58, will lead a government that is eight seats short of a



Sri Lanka's new prime minister Mahinda Rajapaksha at an election rally of the United People Freedom Alliance during the April 2 election campaign in Sri Lanka's southern city of Thangalle on March 29. REUTERS

majority in parliament, after his United People's Freedom Alliance won 105 seats in the 225-seat parliament in last Friday's general election.

The Ceylon Workers Congress, which represents Indian-origin Tamils in the island's tea plantations, has the eight seats the Freedom Alliance needs and is widely expected to do a deal, but the party said on Tuesday it was for now remaining neutral.

"We have not knocked on anybody's door, nor have we been approached officially," party leader Arumugan Thondaman told a news conference. But he added: "All options are open."

Under Sri Lanka's executive presidency system, Rajapakse is likely to play second fiddle to Kumaratunga, who is expected to name herself defence minister and possibly finance minister when the cabinet is announced in the next three or four days.

Wickremesinghe said on Monday the peace bid might be sidelined because the new government lacks a majority to push the process ahead.

Taiwan to hold referendum on shooting

TAIPEI, April 6 (Reuters) - Taiwan's opposition party threatened on Tuesday to call a referendum asking for an independent inquiry into the shooting of President Chen Shui-bian, an act they say cost them the presidential election.

Chen defeated Nationalist leader Lien Chan by less than 30,000 votes out of more than 13 million cast on March 20, a day after an unknown assailant wounded Chen while he was campaigning in the south.

Lien's lawyers have filed two lawsuits asking for the election and Chen's victory to be nullified and have demanded an independent investigation into the shooting be established.

"All we want is to find the truth," Nationalist spokesman Alex Tsai told a news conference.

"Unless President Chen Shui-bian gives us a favourable response by Saturday, we will begin collecting signatures before May 20 to initiate the country's first popular referendum to make an independent investigation commission a reality."

Chen initiated Taiwan's first-ever referendum last month, a ballot on boosting defences against China that was held at the same time as the presidential election. It failed because less than 50 percent of eligible voters took part.

China, which views Taiwan as a rebel province that must be reunited, saw the referendum as a dry run for a vote on independence, a step that could lead to war. Many Nationalist supporters boy-

cotted the ballot after Lien said it was illegal.

VOTES DENIED

The bill, scheduled to be reviewed by parliament on Friday, calls for a commission headed by the president of the government watchdog, the Control Yuan. Four Control Yuan members, five lawmakers and the procurator-general of the supreme court would round out the team.

The commission would also investigate Nationalist claims that 200,000 security personnel were barred from voting in the election due to the activation of the national security mechanism after the shooting, a figure the government denies.

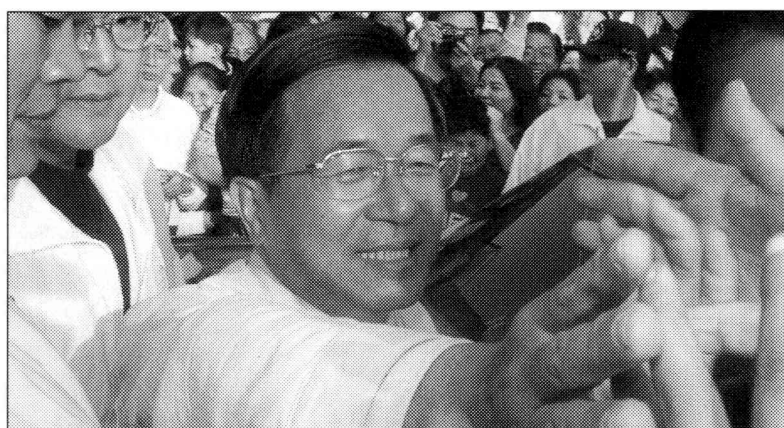
The Nationalists say most of these soldiers and policemen would have voted for Lien.

Lien has suggested the mysterious shooting was staged to win sympathy votes. Chen has dismissed the idea and says there is no need for an independent inquiry because all experts recommended by the opposition are welcome to join the existing investigation.

A popular DPP county magistrate Su Jia-chuan was named the new interior minister on Tuesday.

The cabinet has asked for the demonstration to be cancelled after a few hundred protesters tried to storm the presidential office last Saturday, fearing more unrest.

But the Nationalists warned of "endless protests" over the next four years if their demands are not met.



Supporters shake hands with Taiwan President Chen Shui-bian in the village of Kuantien in Tainan county on April 4. It was Chen's first visit to his birthplace since he was shot while campaigning the day before the presidential election, which he narrowly won. REUTERS

Spain's Moroccans fear enemy within, racist anger

LEGANES, Spain, April 6 (Reuters) - "These days when you go to the mosque, you don't invite people back to your house because there's such distrust. You look at your neighbour and you don't know who he is any more."

Mohammed Salah sadly describes how the atmosphere has changed among Madrid's Moroccan community in recent years, intensifying in the weeks since the March 11 bombings.

Just as the city was recovering from the trauma of that day, when several Moroccans were among the 191 dead, another bomb was found and deactivated on a high-speed train line on Friday.

Then on Saturday up to six Islamic militants blew themselves up in the southern Madrid suburb of Leganes, killing a policeman and shattering its sleepy village atmosphere.

At least two of the suicide bombers are believed to have been Moroccans, while most of the 16 being held in connection with the March 11 bombings are also from there.

Given Spain's relatively recent history of immigration, the news has added to the tension in an already marginalised community. Moroccans, whose legal residents number around 380,000 in Spain, are the biggest Muslim minority.

Jose Luis Martin, a 32-year-old gardener who works in front of the building blown up on Saturday, fears there may be a backlash, although he has seen no evidence of it so far.

"Round here there's a lot of cocky young lads who might well take advantage of the atmosphere to have a go at the Arabs. There are skinheads here too, but so far we haven't heard anything about reprisals," he said.

ATTACKS UNITE SOME NEIGHBOURS

Salah lives in Getafe, a few kilometres away from Leganes, a small working class town on the outskirts of Madrid where there is a community of 3,000 Moroccans, the most historic and stable pocket of the community in the capital, he says.

"Before we had to prove that we were good people, that we would work. Now we have to prove we're not killers," he said.

Salah is the spokesman for a Moroccan cultural group which aims to support new arrivals, promotes cultural activities and acts as a point of information for the community.

He knew "el Tunecino," (the Tunisian), one of the suicide bombers, who came into the tea shop that Salah runs — but he said it was impossible to notice anything different about him.

"He was as religious as I am," Salah said, smiling wryly.

Many of those interviewed in and around this part of Madrid are keen to point out that the racist backlash that many fear so far can be reduced to a handful of isolated incidents.

In general he says most Spaniards have reacted "very well" to what has happened, and are able to distinguish between militant extremists and the rest of the Arab community. But he says his people feel ashamed at being associated with the attacks, particularly those that are religious.

"These killers that did this, they can't speak in the name of Islam. At least speak in your own name or about your ideas, but don't speak in the name of Allah, don't stain his name. Now everyone who's a Muslim is a terrorist," he says, his voice rising with emotion.

"What benefit does Islam get from this? Since September 11, our community has been on its backside."

At a demonstration against terrorism



A Spanish soldier guards the Bolarque dam in the central Spanish village of Sayaton April 6, 2004. The Spanish government called for calm as troops and police patrolled potential targets after a series of bombings and a purported Al-Qaeda threat to create rivers of blood in Spain. **REUTERS**

in Leganes on Monday, Naima El Wachi, a 40-year-old Moroccan housewife, discussed the impact of the attacks with Spanish neighbour Soraya Sanchez, a 36-year-old mother of three.

"We're suffering as much as Spaniards are, or possibly even more, we don't know what's going to happen. I don't come out much...but today I felt I had to come," says Naima.

Both say people have united more after the attacks, rather than turning against the immigrants in the town.

"My sister-in-law is from Casablanca and she says people have been very nice to her in the past few days. But the people who have reacted angrily, it's not racism, it's fear, the fear that you don't know what's behind people's faces," says Soraya.

Blair insists June 30 Iraq handover should hold

LONDON, April 6 (Reuters) - British Prime Minister Tony Blair insisted on Tuesday a planned handover of sovereignty to an Iraqi government on June 30 should go ahead despite a recent increase in violence.

"Every time these people try to stop a proper handover in Iraq...should reinforce our desire to make that happen," Blair told reporters after talks in his Downing Street office with Iraqi Foreign Minister Hoshiyar Zebari.

Zebari said Iraq needs thousands more foreign troops.

"There were 130,000 before and now there are 105,000. That gap maybe should be filled again," he told reporters.

Militiamen loyal to radical Shi'ite cleric Moqtada al-Sadr fought gun battles with foreign troops in south Iraq on Tuesday, with their leaders vowing to resist the U.S.-led occupation.

Blair called Sadr "an extremist, a fanatic who doesn't want what the

majority of Shia want".

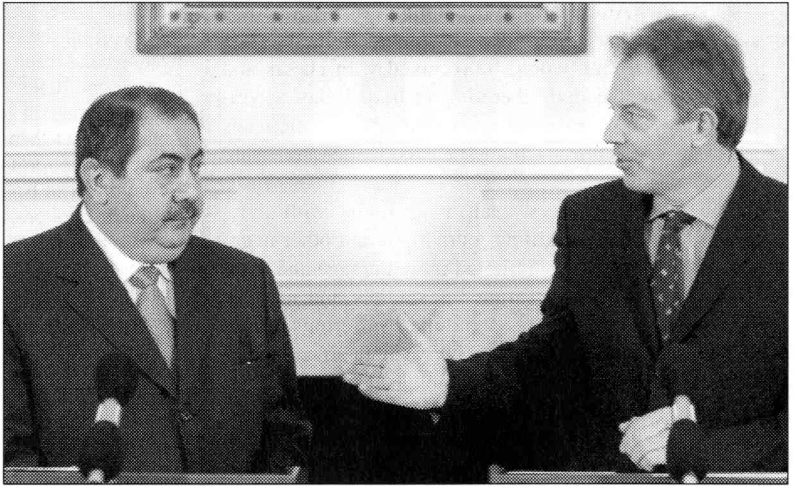
The United States has vowed to arrest Sadr, accused of leading a wave of bloody confrontations with U.S.-led forces. President George W. Bush said the campaign by Sadr's supporters would not derail Washington's plans for Iraq.

Zebari said he anticipated more violence and attacks as the June 30 deadline loomed nearer.

"We need to deal with these incidents firmly," he said, stressing that the country was not descending into civil war and that keeping the date for the power transfer was essential.

"It is very important to end the notion of occupation...it is very important to stick to that date."

The United States military said on Monday it believed it had enough troops in Iraq but it was looking at making more troops available if necessary.



Britain's Prime Minister Tony Blair (R) introduces Iraq's Foreign Minister, Hoshiyar Zebari, during a joint news conference at 10 Downing Street in London, April 6. Blair insisted on Tuesday a planned handover of sovereignty to an Iraqi government on June 30 should go ahead despite a recent increase in violence. **REUTERS**

Queen Elizabeth takes stroll through Paris



Cardinal of Paris Jean-Marie Lustiger loses his skullcap (seen upper left) in a gust of wind as he greets Queen Elizabeth II of Britain at the Saint Eustache church in central Paris, April 6. Queen Elizabeth is on a three-day state visit to mark the centenary of the Entente Cordiale, the colonial-era promise of cross-channel friendship between Britain and France. Looking on (C) is Paris Mayor Bertrand Delanoe. **REUTERS**

PARIS, April 6 (Reuters) - Queen Elizabeth took a stroll through a Paris market on Tuesday, the second day of a visit meant to break down barriers between the French and British.

To applause and a few chants of "Long live the queen!", she walked along the cobbled Rue Montorgueil in an old quarter at the heart of the French capital, shaking hands with onlookers.

The queen, in a light blue outfit and hat, received flowers from a local florist and a large chocolate Easter egg at the Stohrer cake and pastry-makers who once served French royalty.

The queen wanted to meet ordinary people as well as French leaders during her three-day trip marking the 100th anniversary of the Entente Cordiale treaty signed by Britain and France on April 8, 1904, to end their colonial rivalries.

She later had lunch with Prime Minister Jean-Pierre Raffarin, who hailed the alliance which has lasted despite the countries' love-hate relationship.

"I am convinced, as I know you are, that the best way of paying tribute to

the history of our nations is to work together to prepare for the future," Raffarin said.

The queen gave a speech in French at a banquet hosted by President Jacques Chirac on Monday evening, saying: "Vive la difference! Vive l'Entente Cordiale."

French Foreign Minister Michel Barnier hailed her speech, saying in English during parliamentary question time: "Let's celebrate the difference and long live the Entente Cordiale."

The Entente sealed an end to centuries of fighting that culminated in Napoleon's wars and heralded World War alliances between the two biggest European democracies against Germany.

Relations since have often been frosty and the two sides are still patching up differences over the U.S.-led war in Iraq in which British forces took part and France opposed loudly.

The queen was due to speak briefly in the Senate later on Tuesday and go to European plane-maker Airbus in the southwestern city of Toulouse on Wednesday. Britain and France cooperate in the Airbus project.

Lithuanian MPs sack president for Russian links

VILNIUS, April 6 (Reuters) - Lithuania's parliament sacked President Rolandas Paksas on Tuesday for his links to a Russian businessman who funded his election campaign, making Paksas the first European leader to be removed through impeachment.

The former Soviet stunt pilot was found guilty of granting citizenship to the Russian in return for funding, telling the Russian he was under surveillance by police, and on a separate count of influencing the outcome of a privatisation.

"Rolandas Paksas has been removed from his duties," said Vytautas Greicius, the chief justice presiding over the hearing in which two thirds of deputies returned a guilty verdict on all three counts in the grey concrete Soviet-era assembly.

The five-month-old scandal has embarrassed the country of 3.5 million people, which gained independence from the Soviets in 1991, just as it formalises its return to mainstream Europe. It joined NATO last week and enters the European Union on May 1.

"I appeal to you, the elected representatives, do my few mistakes merit my impeachment?" Paksas said in a defence speech laced with quotes from Emile Zola's 1902 "J'accuse" letter over the Dreyfus affair involving political persecution in France.

Extra police were drafted into Vilnius to keep an eye on the hundreds of Paksas supporters gathering noisily near parliament.

A EUROPEAN FIRST

Paksas' advisers were accused by security service and parliamentarians of links to Russian mobsters, raising fears that these would use Lithuania to gain access to the EU.

Those charges were dropped to avoid jeopardising security agents and the case centred on Russian Yuri Borisov who financed the campaign that brought Paksas to power a year ago and hired him a PR company allegedly linked to Russian intelligence.

In return Paksas granted him citizenship, warned him he was being investigated for alleged blackmail, and finally tried last month to appoint Borisov his adviser — even though Borisov does not even speak Lithuanian and faced criminal charges.

A third count accused Paksas of swaying a highway building company's privatisation in favour of his friends.

Calling his impeachment "an unprecedented phenomenon in European history", Paksas accused his enemies of "using secret services for political purposes".



Lithuanian President Rolandas Paksas listens during a session of parliament in Vilnius, April 6. Lithuania's parliament sacked Paksas on Tuesday for his links to a Russian businessman who funded his election campaign. **REUTERS**

6 Bosnian Croats plead not guilty to warcrimes



Six ethnic Croats, from left to right back row, Berislav Pusic, Valentin Coric, Milivoj Petkovic and Slobodan Praljak, and in front Bruno Sojic and Jadranko Prlic, sit in Yugoslav war crimes courtroom in The Hague April 6 2004. They are facing allegations they participated in the torture and massacre of Muslims in Bosnia in 1993. **REUTERS**

AMSTERDAM, April 6 (Reuters) - Six wartime Bosnian Croat officials pleaded not guilty at The Hague war crimes tribunal on Tuesday to charges of ethnic cleansing of Muslims in Bosnia in the 1990s.

Slobodan Praljak, Milivoj Petkovic, Jadranko Prlic, Bruno Stojic, Valentin Coric and Berislav Pusic pleaded not guilty to 26 counts of crimes against humanity, violations of the laws or customs of war and grave breaches of the Geneva Conventions.

The indictment against them includes charges of responsibility for murder, rape and deportation of Bosnian Muslims by Bosnian Croat forces during a 1992-93 conflict that formed part of the Balkan country's 1992-95 ethnic war.

"It should be recorded that all the accused have entered a plea of not guilty on all of the 26 counts brought

against them," Judge Alphons Orie said in a webcast of a hearing at the U.N. war crimes tribunal.

Praljak and Petkovic were chiefs of the Bosnian Croat HVO militia. Prlic was prime minister and Stojic defence minister in a self-styled state that Bosnian Croats proclaimed in 1993.

Coric was interior minister and Pusic was a commander in the military police and in charge of prisons.

The six surrendered to the court after flying to the Netherlands on Monday. Around 300 people saw them off at Zagreb airport, singing the national anthem before they boarded the plane.

It was the largest group of indicted to leave for the Hague from anywhere in the former Yugoslavia since 10 Bosnian Croats surrendered in October 1997 after Croatia's nationalist government came under heavy Western pressure to hand them over.

Words of Wisdom



Parents and family elders are not providing good role models, either. Many adults spend their time chewing qat and watching satellite TV programs that represent the lowest common denominator: the children's recreational needs are mostly neglected, leaving them to wander off into the streets and mix with bad company.

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

OUR
OPINIONWhat else did
Bush expect?

It is well-known that the Bush Administration was optimistic and hopeful in turning Iraq into a model state that could serve as an example to other Arab states in becoming a real democracy with peace and order. He imagined that the war he led in war Iraq would be received with cheers and gratitude for so called 'liberation' of Iraq. Today, as violence is mounting everywhere in Iraq, and as Americans are dying in the dozens, the issue is no longer a pleasure cruise.

The way US forces dealt with Iraqis with mass arrests, crackdowns, killing journalists, and other negative actions, have only inflicted more damage and insecurity for them. Many more US soldiers and marines have started telling stories about their sufferings in Iraq and about the widening gap between them and their leaders. Many of them have complained that their generals are simply not aware of the situation on the ground and the level of risk those soldiers are subject to.

The recent developments concerning the clashed between the Shiites and US forces has added more difficulties to an already troubled government that is now being questioned by large number of Americans about the real reasons for invading Iraq, as the so-called 'Weapons of Mass Destruction' were not found. It is interesting to see how defiant the Bush administration stands in defending its claims of the existence of such weapons, despite mounting evidence showing otherwise.

I also remember the time I wrote in this editorial section of the implications of the war on Iraq and the expected future. I said that Iraqis will sooner or later rebel against US forces and possibly result in a civil war that the US should be held responsible and accountable for.

Using force against Iraqi factions or groups is one of the gravest mistakes the US Administration has committed. The forces may regain parts of the country from the hands of the rebelling Shiites and could possibly enforce the law using the power of their military arsenal, but this will trigger a 180 degree change in the attitudes of Iraqi Shiites, who have been tolerating the occupation for sometime, thinking that it could perhaps be better than the former regime of Saddam Hussein.

Today, they realized they were wrong. Hence, it is only a matter of time for us to see where the country is heading and how power can be handed over within a few months according to an agenda that -like many other steps taken by the US administration- has not been researched and studied thoroughly. And who knows? Maybe such a rush into a war in Iraq could cost the US President his post. And I think Bush is not ruling out anything, including his own defeat.

The Editor



Independent Cultural, Economic & Political Weekly
First English Newspaper in Yemen, founded in 1991
by Dr. Abdulaziz Al-Saqqaf

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A word on European
and African Unions

MUHAMMAD SHAMSADDIN MEGALOMMATIS*
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I hope that for your readership's best information you are going to publish this mail of mine. I truly wonder how many years more need to pass and how many crushing defeats or humiliating events must happen, before Pan-Arabic literature ceases to exist and you finally realize that it was all wrong and misleading.

You state to examples: the European Union and the African Union. The only thing they have in common is one word ('union') that means different things under different circumstances.

European Union is a state-under-formation, a unique procedure in the history of mankind in which political willingness came after correct historical knowledge attained in leading universities. Not a single case of historical misunderstanding - let alone falsification of history - can be detected in today's European universities. This concerns either European or world history.

Furthermore, in these universities the history of all the other countries and civilizations has been investigated in a pioneering and definitely unmatched way, so that still today an Indian studies Asoka in London rather than in Calcutta, an Iranian studies Cuneiform Achaemenid texts in Berlin rather than in Ispahan, an Egyptian studies the Inscriptions of Ramses III in Torino rather than in Assiut, a Yemeni studies Qatabanic texts in Aix-la-Chapelle rather than in Mukalla, an Algerian studies Ibn Hazem in Paris rather than in Oran, and so on.

It is wrong to think that politicians, statesmen and administrators matter more than professors and researchers in Europe (and in America). The political willingness lies upon a colossal amount of work in education and culture, and research in history, art, philosophy and literature.

Only undeveloped and uncivilized people all over the world think that engineering and technology are a more important sector than the humanities. All the modern European and American political establishments are founded on humanities. This knowledge is missing in Africa, and in most of the rest of the world. And as long as it is missing, these parts of the world will never have the power (because this is all knowledge is about: power) to go ahead, even if at times the political willingness is there (as in the present case of the African Parliament).

No Union will ever come to Africa, before as many Egyptians learn Amharic as French speak German, before as many Haussa native speakers learn Swahili as Italians speak English and so on. Knowing your next in depth is the beginning; political willingness without that deep knowledge is just rubbish.

In Africa ignorance reigns everywhere.

Can you compare an average Greek's knowledge (obtained in education, through the mass media, and thanks to trips) of - let's say - France with the level of knowledge an average Tunisian has of Eritrea or Zimbabwe?

What is worse is that a centripetal force does not exist in Africa, as it does in Europe, if we do not want to refer to just relationship between neighbors; do you know for how long how many millions of Turks, Greeks, Yugoslavians and Italians have lived in Germany, Belgium and France?

One has reasons to believe that it would be more feasible for Algeria to unite with the European Union than for Morocco to become a partner with Ethiopia, under the auspices of a 'real' African Union, in the same way Italy is a partner with Finland....

On the contrary, one finds rather centrifugal forces in the African continent....

Now, if the situation is like this in Africa, it is even worse for what you call Arabic countries. And it will become even worse, because in the case of most of these dysfunctional, anachronistic and at times tyrannical regimes one does not only face a case of missing knowledge (as is the case in Africa) but also meets provocative and flagrant misinformation and disinformation. And I do not speak here at the level of politics at all!

The basic falsehood that is widely diffused among the member states of the Arabic League (do not call it 'Arab', please) is that there is an Arabic nation, or that the people in all the member states are ... Arabs.

The only historical truth in this respect is that there are no Arabs at all; there are Arabic speaking peoples with striking dissimilarities that testify to and assure only failures in any attempt at a union among these so different peoples. If this absolute and fundamental historical reality is not widely assessed and understood first, nothing good can come out of the Arab League!!!

In reality, the Lebanese are Phoenicians, who got hellenized and aramaized in Late Antiquity. Arabic speaking Syrians and Iraqis are Aramaeans. So are the Palestinians and the Kuwaitis, as well as the Emirates and the Qataris, who have certainly been intermixed with Persians. Egyptians are Copts, native Egyptians, descendants of the people of Ancient Egypt in their amalgamations with the numerous foreigners, who passed by the valley of the Nile: Aramaeans, Phoenicians, Yemenis, Greeks, Merotic Sudanese, Romans, and others. Sudanese are descendants of the ancient Meroites and the Nubians. Libyans and the people of the Maghreb are descendants of the Khammitic peoples of the great Atlas. Berbers, in their genuine fusion with Carthaginians and Romans. And Yemenis are Yemenis, descendants of the ancient states of Saba, Qataban, Himyar,

Hadramout and other; they are closer to Abyssinians (mistakenly called Ethiopians) than to the Arabs of Hedjaz.

All these peoples, by accepting Islam, sooner or later, started becoming arabized, but this happened at a linguistic, not at a racial, ethnic level. And we know only too well that the Arabs of the times of the Prophet were not numerous at all. One generation later, when let us say Islamic armies were reaching Carthage in today's Tunisia, Central Asia and the Indus valley, the Muslim fighters were speaking Arabic but among them Arabs were already a minority. Aramaeans from Damascus and Ctesiphon, Egyptians from Alexandria, Yemenis from Muza and Persians from Praaspa were already a majority among them! They learnt the language of Quran, but they did not and could not change their racial and ethnic origin.

And never forget that if one tries to speak of racial mixture, at the times of the Prophet all the Arabs were not exceeding in number the population of just one Aramaic, Egyptian or Persian city (namely Tadmor, Alexandria, or Istakhr).

The Copts (Christians) of Egypt and the 'Assyrians' and 'Chaldeans' of Iraq and Iran show very well what happened: those who remained Christians preserved initially their language (Coptic and Aramaic - Syriac) and lost it gradually in later dates. Among the people who accepted Islam in the early period, only Persians preserved their language. This is not strange, since the great cultural phenomenon of Ferdowsi gives us an insightful understanding of the subject. If Copts and Aranaeans had not been christianized and if they had kept a national traditional historical record of their glorious past, they would have resulted into a different perception of Islam, preserving their original languages and developing epics similar to Shahnameh.

Because this did not happen, we have the current situation, but this does not mean that these peoples are Arabs, or that a kind of union can be based on falsely perceived history and tons of misinformation and disinformation that was mostly due to colonial powers, mainly France and England, in their efforts against Islam and the Ottoman Empire.

It is from Western Europe that nationalism emanated. And as such, it caused serious problems to peoples of the East and the West, Christians, Muslims, Jews, Hindus and others. The confusion spread throughout the territories of the Ottoman Empire finds its equivalent in the disaster of the Irish, the Scots, the Corsicans and the Celts of Brittany. Actually, it leads to nowhere.

Earlier one understands this, sooner one escapes from the traps that led millions to wars and disaster.

* Prof. Muhammad Shamsaddin Megalommatis is a prominent Orientalist and Egyptologist

Letters to the Editor Letters to the Editor

Request from Yemeni
students in Liverpool

I am a Yemeni student studying here in Liverpool for the past three months and want to call upon the Yemeni authorities and readers to assist us. We, Yemeni students studying in Liverpool, UK, are suffering from lack of financial resources. We request the Yemeni government to supply us with the fees that are quite high and that cost around GBP 7000 a year. I hope our call would reach the concerned bodies through Yemen Times.

Abdulraqeb Al-Selwi
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Backward Muslims vs.
prosperous West!

Islamic Militants say that the Western way of life is decadent and they protest against it. They feel that it is wrong to drink alcohol, but they don't see anything wrong with bombing train stations, throwing Molotov cocktails into cars, killing hundreds of men, women and children whom they don't even know, and destroying property.

Tell me, why is a life of murder, mayhem and terror preferable to a Western way of life? Muslims are quick to condemn our way of life, but where is the condemnation for these acts of terror? Why do the militants feel that life as they live it is even desirable? The way Muslims live is backward. Why would anyone want to live like that? In your country, you can't even use your water after 6:00 at night. Your washing machines are 40 years behind ours and your health care and education systems are way behind.

Why would women want to have to wear long, black hot clothing and suffer in the heat and be afraid to go out in public with a few strands of hair showing? Why would anyone prefer a life of hardship, terror, fear and lack of even the most basic things such as indoor toilets that flush, water, telephones and freedom!

Do these psychotic Muslim extremists really feel that by blowing people up and terrorizing the world they will make their way of life so attractive that we, the rest of the world, would give up our life style to adopt theirs? They are insane! What do they think they can accomplish by murder?

Muslims blame every problem in the world on America and American allies, but your own country has its hand out for millions of dollars in aid from USA, every year. By committing acts of terror, all the Muslims are accomplishing is making all the non-Muslims of the world think that all Muslims are insane, psychotic, brutal terrorists, who are to be feared and not trusted, and they will cause us all to hate them. Then they wonder why people feel that way. And the rest of the Muslim world, including the leaders of your countries, and the reporters in your countries, who fail to condemn these acts, show by the failure to condemn them, that they support them and feel the same way.

In every issue of your own newspaper, your reporters sound off about the big evil Satan, America. And your political cartoon is always about America or Israel. But never a word of condemnation against terrorists. And when their own country is hit by acts of terror or even acts of nature, such as the earthquakes in Iran, which country do they go to for aid? And if the Muslim way of life is so wonderful, then why is the Muslim world so poor?

Give me the safe, sane, free, advanced, prosperous Western way of life over the fear ridden, poverty stricken, restrictive way of life any day!

B D Higgs
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About the Madrid bombings

I believe that the views presented in Yemen Times of the events in Spain are quite valid, but I'd like to suggest a slightly different interpretation which might have a bearing on the way those events

might be reflected in countries like my own, Australia, where the government ignored the clearly-expressed views of over 70% of Australians, who wanted our country to stay out of the illegal invasion of Iraq.

I would suggest to you that the Spanish have ousted their previous government not because it supported the US, but because their government lied to them, ignored their wishes and acted against the best interest of the people.

In true democracies (and there are very few of those) all of the people have the right to express their views without fear. The one exception to this is that no-one may try to incite hatred of another person or group (or religion).

All people have the right to religious freedom as well, which means that no-one has the right to tell anyone else what they should believe, or how they should worship.

When governments have been proven to have lied to the people, the people of democracies will generally vote to oust them at the next election. This does not always happen, for instance when the guilty government manages to convince enough people that they should be fearful.

Democracy, loosely described as government of the people by the people, can only work when the people being governed are educated; in other words, that they understand what they are voting for. This will be just as true in Yemen (which is not yet a true democracy) as it is in Australia (which thinks it is a true democracy, but has a population which too easily believes what it is told).

When the world has learned to stop this madness, I trust that both Yemen and Australia will be able to advance towards true democracy; to achieve this, both countries need to try much, much harder to educate our people to think for themselves.

Michel Dignand
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COMMON
SENSE

By Hassan Al-Haifi

And the tougher
it gets in Iraq

One is not sure whether all this chaos that is obvious to the observer of the Iraqi theater was indeed not perceived by the Americans before entering into the Iraqi adventure, for reasons which have yet to become officially made clear.

One is certain, however, that for all intents and purposes the situation maybe considered worse than it was under Saddam Hussein, before the American invasion or in more ways than one just as bad.

This, mind you, is the overall opinion of the Iraqi people; including those who are even promoting American products (see the Guardian Unlimited article by Naomi Klein, posted on April 3, 2004 from Baghdad). Last week the situation in Iraq lent greater weight to the claims that the erratic and senseless invasion and continuing occupation of Iraq is really getting the Iraqis nowhere near the better life the invaders said they were bringing with their tanks and Apache helicopters.

Death seems to be lurking everywhere: in the Sunni Triangle that has shown the most persistent inclination to resist the occupation and now even in the very relatively quiet Shiite areas of Iraq, which once put up the fiercest resistance against Saddam Hussein, a resistance that cost them dearly. What is really going on in Iraq? The problem is that really no one fully can come up with a picture that indicates that Iraq is anywhere near approaching a settled and stable environment, where the vast oil resources of the land would produce the high standard of living and vast opportunities for the Iraqis to have a stake in the natural bounty the Lord has bestowed the land of the Fertile Crescent with. Even agriculture is becoming a difficult venture, because the occupying forces refuse to let the Iraqis spray pesticide to protect their produce. The infrastructure of Iraq has hardly seen any substantial improvement, especially the medical and health care centers, where in some cases the situation is reportedly worse than it was under Saddam Hussein.

Yet the American White House Administration continues to blare out everything is fine and dandy in Iraq and that whatever incongruities are apparent, they were actually expected and represent exceptional sidetracking to the forward gear that Iraq has been put on by, let us not forget, the illegitimate occupation that Iraq has been subjected to, for no justifiable reason to speak of. Why did they not say so before they went to Iraq, if they were truly expected, and if so, why did not they plan for them accordingly?

The worst kind of planners are those who undertake a task without really being prepared for all the outcomes, yet the White House never had a full fledged knowledge of what they were going into and who is to really gain from it all. It seems that the only people gaining are the business tycoons, who are riding along with the occupation, getting substantial profits from contracts that are awarded in shady deals and political entrepreneurs like Ahmed Chalabi, who still gets \$350,000 a month for "gathering intelligence". Yes, like the intelligence he gathered on Weapons of Mass Destruction, which supposedly brought on this chaotic venue in Iraq, and may threaten to bring the whole region aflame.

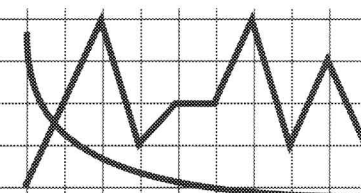
Now enters the Moktada Al-Sadr rebellion! Out of the blues comes this Shiite leader (one is not sure about his scholastic acumen, from a spiritual sense, for we do not hear him called Ayatollah or any of the adjectives accorded to Islamic scholars, and who suddenly takes on the banner of Shiite resistance to the occupation and throws the observers off-guard for a while. One is not ready to state that the Shiites are happy with the occupation, but the general impression is that the Shiites would not want to fall into the trap of becoming a justification for the American invasion and the eventual showdown with Iran the Neo-cons are craving for.

So, why is Sadr making all this noise and causing so much disarray among the Coalition forces? There are some who suggest that Sadr may have actually been energized by encouragement from the coalition, or intimidated to come to a confrontation with them, just so the Shiites of Iraq can become a nuisance "prodded by Iran". After all, this is what the Zionists would like to see, because they are the ones who believe Israel was severely hurt by the Shiites of Lebanon and because the Shiites of Iran are dogmatically at odds with the chauvinistic agenda of the international Zionist establishment. Washington these days would never consider having second thoughts about Zionist intelligence that would suggest such a scenario, just like the scenario they came up with on the WMD, as pointed out in some of the American press media, not too long ago!

Did not Washington oblige the Israelis with all their wishes ever since the Bush Administration took on the helms of power in the United States? Look at Iraq now, there are some 70 Israeli "firms" already operating in Iraq, not to mention the military and intelligence cooperation with the "Coalition Forces".

Yes, we insist that Israel is indeed behind much of the maneuverings of the United States in the region and this is bound to lead to unpredictable ends, for the simple reason that American interests, in general (not the narrow interests that are having a field day now in Iraq) have really nothing to gain from such a lopsided and confusing intervention in the affairs of what was once a sovereign state. Now, can anyone really tell us how Iraq will be sovereign in June with over 100,000 American troops hanging out there and a far messier urban and rural scene with an overhanging aura of violence, as well as a continued daily count of fatalities and wounded due to violent confrontations?

YT Business



19 companies compete for investment in oil and gas

BY MAHYOUB AL-KAMALI
YEMEN TIMES STAFF

Nineteen companies have been qualified for entering in competition of investment in oil and gas, as mentioned in the tender made by the Yemeni government recently. These companies are among 28 companies offered to be qualified for the tender. The 23 of next May has been fixed as a date for receiving final offers from the companies and the results would be announced on 20 of next June.

According to oil sources, the French company Total, the Austrian OMV, the Russian Luk Oil, the British Dove Energy Yemen and the Global Petroleum of the UAE.

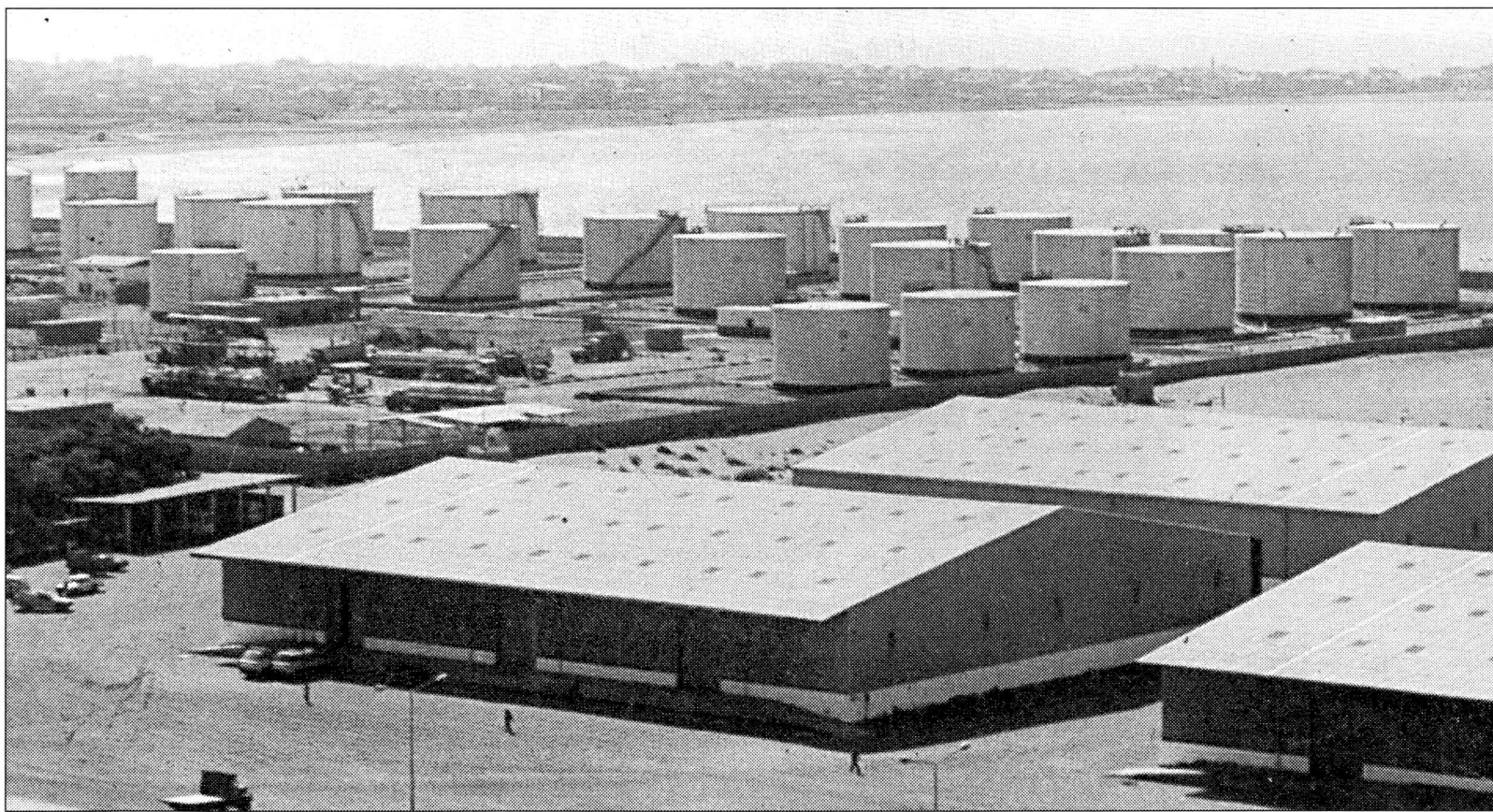
The ministry of oil and the Petroleum Exploration and Production Authority I Yemen would in the second half of this year implement the second phase of the oil promotion campaign for the region south of the Empty Quarter and the central region according to tangible and studied scientific vision. It is expected that during the present year there would be an announcement on

a new commercial oil discovery in the oil sector no.19 that is operated by the Cagily company that has begun experimenting al-Ruaidhat 1 well and the results proved the existence of oil at a rate of 614 barrels per day.

The German company that works in sector S 2 in Shabwa would begin a developing and appraising working program after testing a well with a capacity of 450 barrels a day and another well with a capacity of 500 barrels a day.

In the sector 49, information indicates to the existence of oil in three

secondary layers in rocks of al-Kaeda, Kuhlman and Shaqra and there would be a determination of productive capacity of those layers. There are also significant oil indicators in sector 43 in Masila while the oil company is cooperating with a world company for promotion on the internet for four open sectors on land and others submerged. The purpose of that promotion is to open a new oil window for Yemen on the world and the conveyance of the biggest possible amount of oil information to world markets as soon as possible as well as easily and actively.



Oil tanks

Program for meeting basic needs for the poor in Hodeidah

BY YEMEN TIMES STAFF

The program of meeting the basic needs plays an essential role in effecting development and serving poor communities in the governorates of Yemen. He program aims at developing the society and improving the quality of life among the individuals through creating job opportunities for them and to depend on the local professions, resources and human capabilities.

Since 1999 the program was able in the governorate of Hodeidah to achieve tangible results in the organizing poor communities, qualifying them by depending on themselves and own capacities in addition to help them found means of communication with government and donor parties for funding individual and collective projects that produce income. The general goal of the program is the improvement of the type of life by financing the poor families with small loans to be recovered without interest and redistributing them on others of the poor at the same community of the village where the program is practicing its activities. The village of Mandhar in Hodeidah governorate has been chosen as a sample for realizing the program objectives. The poor have been granted small loans to implement income-producing projects then it has been extended to Marwia district as a multi-example. At the beginning of 203 the program activities was extended to Lahya district for carrying out the program's activities as an example of a city at the center of the district.

Among the mechanisms of the program is the beneficiary participation with part of the net profit he has gained

in favour of a fund moving in the village in the name of the local council while the asset in the fund is dispensed via the local council for serving development in the selected village.

The fund finances school activities, health and water projects, building mosques, extending assistance to the patient and following up the village's services. In the governorate of Hodeidah the program has fulfilled many works, most important of which the creation of social formations for administrating the society and qualification of individuals for running their own affairs through training and qualification.

The program has also carried a out various social activities among them in the district of Lahya, such as preparing statistical surveys for the community and its economic, health, social, educational and environmental requirements. The program has started training courses in illiteracy eradication among women and held trainings in environment health and health guidance and education as well as first aid and emergencies. It has also worked under the supervision of the health office at the governorate for creating media of communication with government authorities and donor sides for offering essential services in the areas where the program implements its activities.

This program is considered among the programs aimed at fighting poverty and development of local community. For carrying out its activities the program depends on local resources and meets needs of the poor communities in accordance with its requirements and it also works for introducing development according to the need.

A plan for attracting Gulf and Asian investments

BY YEMEN TIMES STAFF

The Yemeni government is seeking to activate the current stagnation in the sector of investments by implementing a new strategic plan aimed at attracting capitals from investors from the GCC states and Asian countries in order to build projects in various areas.

The new plan depends on creating a qualitative transfer in the infrastructure, services and requirements by investors for the construction of vital and economic projects through organizing data and updating them via the internet and programs of computer.

The plan finalized by the state authority for investment aims at launching a

direct promotional campaign for attracting local institutions and coordination and communication with the Yemeni diplomatic missions abroad for promoting for available investment opportunities, especially in the free zone in Aden.

Through the sector of promotion, the state authority of investment would focus on attracting businessmen from the GCC countries and East Asia, including China, India, Singapore, and Iran, and Turkey in Europe.

The plan included mechanisms for the success of promotion process by holding promotional symposiums in the targeted countries to encourage investment in Yemen. It also plans to conduct special interviews and meetings with representatives of regional and international organizations for the search for programs of supporting the Authority in order to develop the self capabilities and institutional building. The promotional campaign also includes participation in activities of joint ministerial committees and symposiums and courses by the Authority inside and abroad in addition to activating projects of investment agreements concluded with other countries.

The state authority for investment would also adopt the way of negotiating with parties related to investment in some Arab and foreign countries for attaining at final formulas of draft agreements with the concerned parties and setting up a mechanism for their implementation.

The investment opportunities that would be promoted for are in the sectors of energy and gas and oil, fish projects, tourism, production of computers and those opportunities available in the free zone of Aden.

Women deteriorated level of contribution to economic activity

BY YEMEN TIMES STAFF

Recent field survey reported that income insufficiency has pushed a proportion of 93.5% of working women in Yemen to look for job opportunities to cover family expenses. 16.9% of them been forced to work, 82% of working women have had their own desire behind the decision to work and 1.1% have been forced to work.

Results of a survey published by the National Committee of Women mentioned that 24% of Yemeni women non-joining work is caused by rarity of job opportunities while 37% attributed that to the low level of education among women and the family rejection. 13.3% said preoccupation with marriage is one of the reasons that hinder the woman work.

The survey results also mentioned that 51% of women refuse to go to work while 19.9 prefers household work and therefore the Yemeni woman has not taken her position conveniently in the economic activity and her participation in the workforce is still low because she faces discrimination by men.

Official statistics mention that the females constitute 4.4 millions of the population at the age of work in economic activity but the percentage of their work in this activity does exceed 23%.

The housewives group represents the larger proportion of females that are economically active, followed by working housewives by 14.7% and students devoted to study by 14.5%.

Woman's work is concentrated in agriculture and hunting by 85.8% out



Yemeni womens are sharing work with men at a Yemeni Banks

of the total working females, then the converting industry by 3.7%, education by 3.5% and general administration and retail trade by less than 1%.

Education in urban areas is considered the first place sphere of work for the woman by 28.6% and general administration by 16.9% and convertible industries by 16.7%, according to the new survey the number of women working without receiving wages is at a rate of 74% and those working in

return for wages at a rate of 9.8% and women working for their own amount to 14.6%.

Statistics also mention that the economically active women are distributed by 91.8% in the local private sector and 5.8% in the state administration machinery. Figures indicate that there is a relationship between the level of female education and the nature of jobs they perform. The proportion of illiterate workers is estimated at 71% and

those who can read and write at 20%, 3.1% of females have completed the stage of basic education and 3.2% reached the secondary stage education and only 1% of them at university education.

The proportion of the woman contribution to family economy is estimated at about 405 billion riyals, according to statistics conducted five years ago but challenges are still impeding the woman development in all fields.

Exchange Rate for the Yemeni Rial

Currency	Buying	Selling
US Dollar	184.4300	184.6700
Sterling Pound	337.1800	337.6200
Euro	223.6400	223.9300
Saudi Rial	49.1800	49.2500
Kuwaiti Dinar	625.6300	626.4500
UAE Dirhem	50.2100	50.2800
Egyptian Pound	29.8000	29.8300
Bahraini Dinar	489.1300	489.7600
Qatari Rial	50.6600	50.7300
Jordanian Dinar	260.1300	260.4700
Omani Rial	479.0800	479.7000
Swiss Franc	142.8300	143.0100
Swedish Crown	24.2100	24.2500
Japanese Yen	1.7627	1.7650

Source: Central Bank of Yemen

Numbers of tourists not yet reached anticipated levels:

Agony for Yemen's tourism sector continues



BY YASSER AL-MAYASI
YEMEN TIMES STAFF

Tourism in Yemen constitutes 1% total world tourism to the Middle East. National Yemeni revenue from tourism is 1% of the gross revenue of the Middle East from tourism. Annual average growth for period (1992-2001) equals 11%. Internal tourism achieved a growth rate average of 7%. Total tourism revenues as a proportion of total exports including oil is 3.15%. Tourism projects constitute 13% of permitted projects. 25,000 workers are employed in 2327 tourist establishments, of which 14% are travel agencies, 40% are restaurants and 46% parks and housing places. These numbers are modest, which reflects the situation of tourism in Yemen, despite great potential in Yemen.

The deterioration of tourism is reflected on all economic sides. Many seminars and conferences have been held to discuss the situation of tourism, but the agony of tourism in Yemen continues, as was clearly shown during the deliberations of the Al-Shoura Council last month.

Answers to many lingering questions were found during the seminar organized by the Tourism and Environment Committee of the Al-Shoura Council. The committee's report was based on field visits to Aden, Abyan, Lahuj, Taiz, Ibb and Al-Mahweet, potential tourism regions, and confirmed the reduced flow of tourists to Aden as a result of economic stagnation, due to which the operational capacity of hotel and tourism corporations is at a minimum level. Some investors in tourism complain of the accumulation debts and interest on funds obtained for development in the form of bank loans, both



Even though there is a significant improvement in the tourism industry in Yemen, yet the country never returned to its flourishing years.

locally and from abroad. The report urged an increase in the capacity of Aden Airport, which still encounters technical and administrative restrictions and has not yet established the air cargo village. The report noticed negligence and apathy towards historic sites and castle. Consequently it is necessary to impose a plan to be laid down by Aden Tourism Office to take these cultural and historic sites into consideration in the promotion of tourism in the city in particular and Yemen in general.

The Committee found out that in spite of historic and tourist sites and

beautiful shores in Abyan Governorate, there are no hotels or easy roads. In Lahj Governorate, the tourism committee cited good efforts and visions for future tourism mindful of the artistic and cultural inheritance of the region, but the committee revealed of the water resources and other problems facing the governorate.

In Taiz, the committee blamed the difficulties to re-asphalt roads, to complete the installation of roads' lights and to rehabilitate Taiz International Airport for hindering efforts to attract tourist to the city. The committee confirmed the

importance to continue the renovation of Al-Qahera Castle, which would definitely attract tourists upon completion.

In Ibb governorate, in spite of the efforts to promote tourism through holding regular tourists carnivals at historic Hab Castle in Ba'dan and in Jebelah and Dhufar and other interesting places, Ibb city like many other Yemeni cities does not have primary services, including sanitation services.

Finally in Al-Mahweet governorate, regardless of being one of the most beautiful cities, with lavish and mountain terrace landscapes, there are hardly

any hotels or tourism related services in the city.

The Al-Shoura Council also examined the "Tourism; present and future" report, which confirmed that five-star hotels in Yemen are generally rare. There are only six throughout the Republic, two each in Sana'a, and Aden, one in Taiz and the sixth at Al-Mukalla, Hadramout, with total capacity of 1000 beds. There are 14 four-star hotels, half of which are in Sana'a and the other half in Aden, and 55 three-star hotels distributed throughout the country.

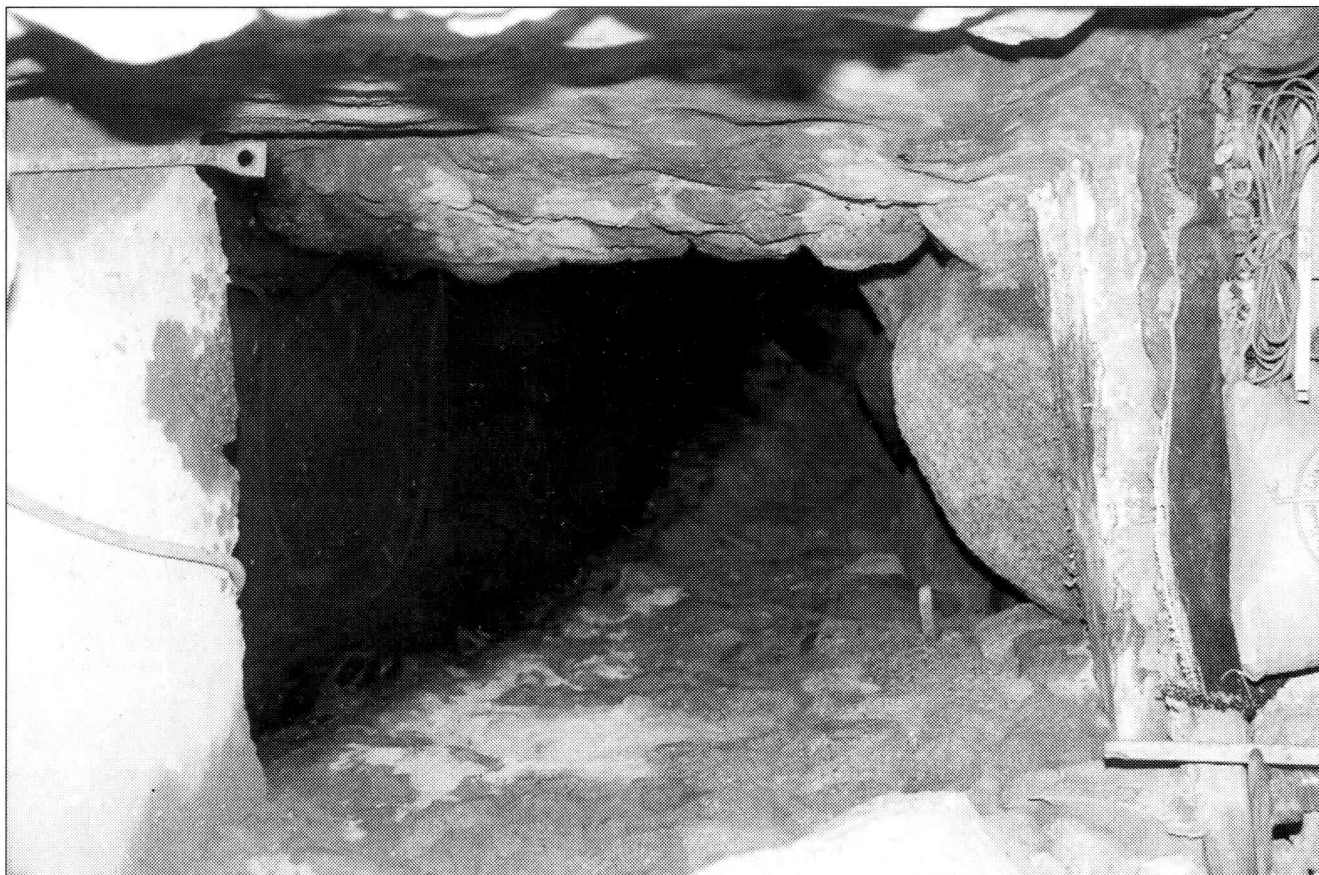
Therapeutic Tourism in Yemen

BY YEMEN TIMES STAFF

The Republic of Yemen, in addition to great civilization, charming natural scenes and historic sites, the elements for entertainment and sight-seeing tourism, possesses the essential components for therapeutic tourism. Recent field surveys indicate that there are about 50 natural spas and many hot springs scattered throughout the regions of Yemen, formed as results of geological and volcanic activities long time ago.

The city of Damet, situated between Sana'a and Aden, 210 km south of Sana'a, with nearly seventeen thousands inhabitants, is one of the places most regularly visited by Yemenis and foreigners (tourists), especially the elderly, seeking natural therapy using the many spas and hot springs there.

The sulfuric and mineral ingredients in spas and hot springs, can be beneficial if



Hot springs water used as natural therapy

bathed in or drunk, in the treatment of many chronic skin diseases, joint rheumatism, circulatory problems and mycosis. They also revitalize energy and enhance beauty. Spas and hot springs are sought also, as commonly known, for periods of rest and recuperation at natural resorts, which could encourage Arab and foreign investors to establish investment projects near them.

Many of these regions, however, lack basic water and electricity projects, paved roads, hotels and restaurants.

Finally, a lot of people are not familiar with the health benefits of spas and natural springs. In spite of having many spas and hot springs in Yemen, the lack of awareness and negligence in promoting the importance of therapeutic tourism by officials and citizens alike make this sort of tourism almost non-existent. Today, many countries have resorted to promoting this 'king of tourism' as an alternative to the noise and annoyance of city life.

CHANGE She Wrote Introducing a new YT column

BY SADAF SHAH
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FOR THE YEMEN TIMES

Hear ye! Hear ye! This is the beginning of a new column in Yemen Times called eChange She Wrote! for the purpose of giving our readers in Yemen a woman's perspective on all issues. I am here to present a view of the world around us, as events unfold and history is made. I offer only my passionate perspective on everything from politics, to economics, to social issues. Sometimes I may even write about religious issues for I am a Muslim and I can never forget that.

As the title of this column indicates, I long for change in all aspects of life. Change in the human psyche, in the apparent arrogance and hypocrisy of man. Hence, this column may become a catalyst for me to release my inner anguish, and that means my very own personal feelings. Most often though, I do not intend to bore our readers with imushy! topics. However, sometimes such issues can be expected. It all depends on whatever is happening in the world around us.

Feedback from Readers

As our learning experiences help us expand our knowledge and understanding, I believe we are in constant need of refreshing our opinions and beliefs. There are some beliefs that are irrefutable, like universal truths that transcend time and space, for example the existence of God.

There are other beliefs that change over a period of time because of lack of scientific support or verification for example, the belief held hundreds of years ago about the earth being the center of the universe. In the same way, this column may also echange in some respects over a period of time. I believe change is good for us; it's healthy and enlightening. This is the point where I welcome readers' comments/criticism. As the reader, you also have a responsibility to react to a piece of writing. I take criticism well, so please do not hesitate to write to me and tell me how you felt about a certain article I've written or suggestions for topics you would like for me to investigate and inform about. In the meantime, enjoy the readings!

Underneath the veil

In my five years of life in Yemen, I have come across and personally experienced prejudice on account of the veil. We often fear that which we do not understand or have knowledge of. In time, that fear translates into hatred and manifests itself in prejudice and discrimination. In Yemen, the veil has become very common. One cannot miss women dressed all in black from head to toe as they are present basically in all spheres of life in Yemen. They are to be found in hospitals, banks, public offices and even the courts. Underneath the veil, one will find doctors, educators, lawyers, and even social workers. Most of all, one will find simple, ordinary women just following a custom/tradition. Yes Islam prescribes the veil, however there are certain guidelines to be followed and it would be too lengthy to dwell in the details here. We will leave that to be discussed for another time. The important issue here is prejudice based on a woman's choice to wear the veil. Please do not think women who wear the veil are suppressed, oppressed, backward and uneducated. One may never know that there was a Canadian writer or a Russian engineer underneath that black veil. And if one still continues to practice blatant forms of discrimination against such women, then one does not have the right to call oneself civilized.

Far more Pregnant Women Getting Antenatal Care Study Finds 20% jump; opportunity to reach women with key health Services

Geneva / New York, 30 March 2004 - the number of pregnant women in developing countries receiving antenatal care during pregnancy has increased significantly since 1990, signaling that an untapped opportunity exists to reach poor women with a whole package of life-saving health services, according to a joint report issued today by UNICEF and the World Health Organization. The number of women receiving antenatal care has increased 20 percent since 1990, with the greatest progress in Asia (31 percent) and the least improvement in sub-Saharan Africa (4 percent).

"The advantages of receiving regular antenatal care cannot be stressed enough," said Carol Bellamy, Executive Director of UNICEF. "If a woman comes for antenatal care early in her pregnancy, there is time for early diagnosis and treatment of infections in the mother, and an opportunity to prevent low birth weight and other conditions into the newborn. These findings have enormous significance for maternal health and child survival."

The study highlights nations that have begun to see antenatal care visits as a unique opportunity to provide the pregnant woman with a vaccination to prevent tetanus, an insecticide-treated bed-net to prevent malaria, screenings for anemia, enrollment in Prevention of Mother to Child Transmission of HIV services, and with counseling for a safe delivery - all factors that help ensure that the mother remains healthy through childbirth and gives her child the best start in life.

Antenatal care also increases the likelihood of a skilled attendant being

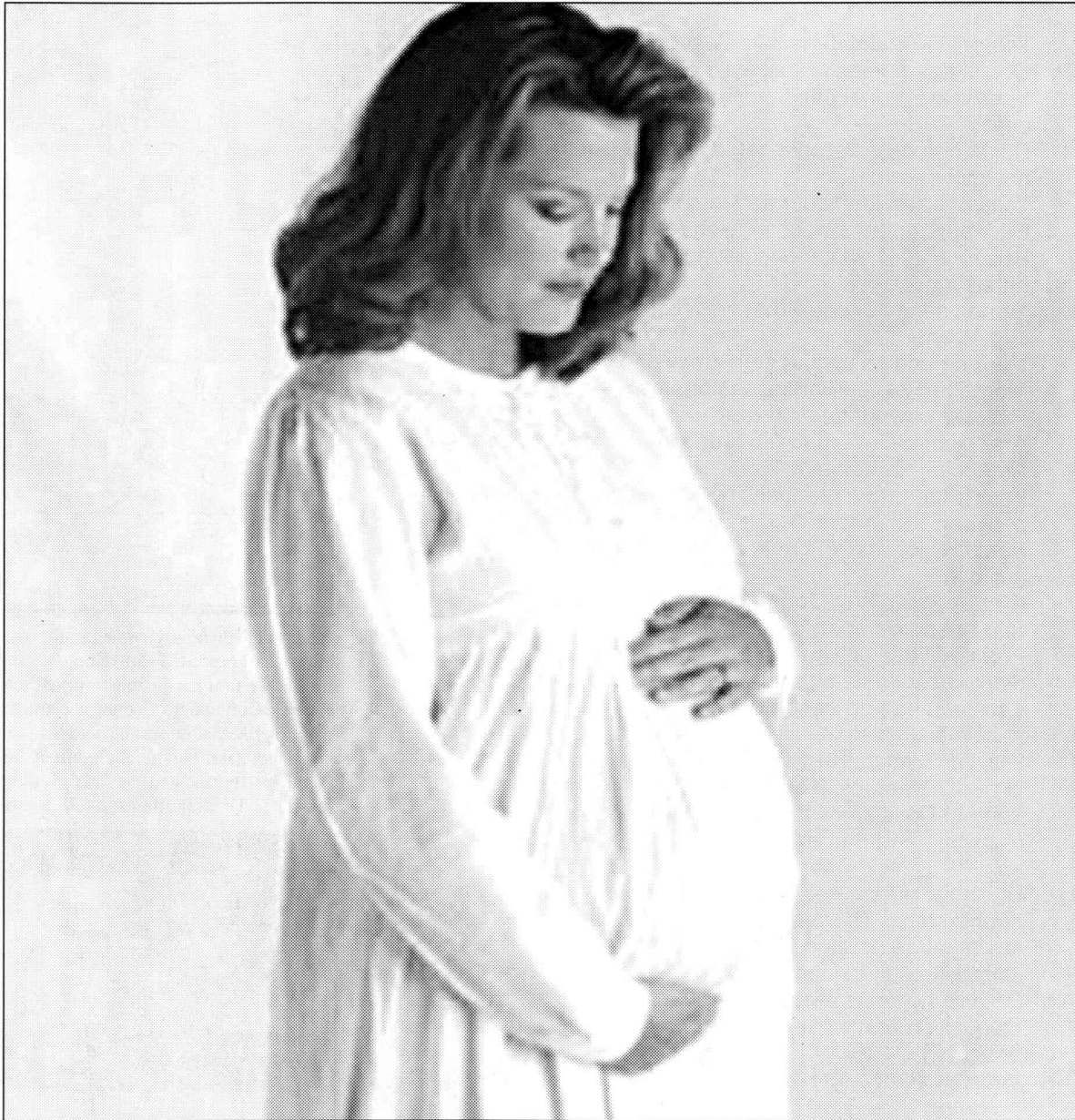
present at the birth. A skilled attendant is a doctor, midwife, nurse, or other health care provider with equivalent skills, who can detect and manage complications at birth. This can often mean the difference between life and death for both mother and baby.

"The most dangerous time for a pregnant woman is the critical period around labor and delivery, which is when most women die", and Joy Phumaphi, Assistant Director-General for family and Community Health at WHO. "Giving care and information during pregnancy can help reduce the number of women who die giving birth."

More than half of women in the developing world are getting at least four antenatal visits during their pregnancy, which is in line with the WHO recommendation that antenatal care for normal pregnancies should be a minimum of four visits. Notable exceptions, however, include Bangladesh, Ethiopia, Morocco, Nepal and Yemen, all of which have relatively high percentages of women who have only one antenatal care visit. In Nepal, for example, 38 percent of women reported at least one visit but only 9 percent reported four or more visits. South Asia, overall, had the lowest levels of antenatal care with only 50 percent of women getting even one visit.

Wealth and Education Tell

The study finds that antenatal care is heavily influenced by such factors as wealth and education. In poor households women are far less likely to use antenatal care than women in well-off households. For example, in Pakistan,



7 percent of women in the wealthiest household. And the report notes that women with secondary schooling are two three times more likely to have antenatal care than women with no education. "This demonstrates, yet again, the undeniably powerful link between education and improving the lives of women and their children," Bellamy said.

Opportunity to save lives Antenatal health care visits can be a critical opportunity for women to get access to other health care services, and the report concludes that this opportunity is not being maximized in most instances.

"Improving antenatal care is vital to achieving several of the Millennium Development Goals", says WHO's Phumaphi. "Reducing child mortality, malaria and TB prevalence and mortality, and reducing HIV transmission, depend to a large extent on reaching women during pregnancy with interventions we know work," the authors of the report point out that greater efforts need to be directed toward:

- improving women's nutritional status and preventing and treating infections (e.g. malaria, sexually transmitted infections, and tetanus).
- providing information and services for HIV prevention and care in particular for the prevention of HIV transmission from mother to child.
- supplying information on birth spacing, important to improve infant health and survival.
- informing women and families about danger signs and symptoms and potential risks of labor and delivery.

Chocolate during pregnancy has good impact on baby

LONDON (Reuters) - Pregnant women rejoice. Eating chocolate is good for the baby, say Finnish researchers.

Scientists at the University of Helsinki, who asked 300 pregnant women to record their chocolate consumption and stress levels, found that daily treats had a positive impact on the baby's behavior.

Six months after the infants were born the mothers who had eaten chocolate reported more reactions such as smiling and laughter in their offspring.

"And the babies of stressed women

who had regularly consumed chocolate showed less fear of new situations than babies of stressed women who had abstained," New Scientist magazine said on Tuesday.

Katri Raikonen and her colleagues who conducted the research admitted they can't be certain that chocolate consumption and the babies' behavior are not linked with other factors.

"But they speculate that the effects they observed could result from chemicals in chocolate associated with positive mood being passed on to the baby in the womb," the magazine added.

Mexican woman performs own caesarean to save baby

LONDON, April 6 (Reuters) - A pregnant woman in Mexico gave birth to a healthy baby boy after performing a caesarean section on herself with a kitchen knife, doctors said on Tuesday.

It is thought to be the first known case of a self-inflicted caesarean in which both the mother and baby survived.

The unidentified 40-year-old, who lived in a rural area without electricity, running water or sanitation

that was an eight-hour drive from the nearest hospital, performed the operation when she could not deliver the baby naturally.

She had lost a previous baby due to labour complications.

"She took three small glasses of hard liquor and, using a kitchen knife, sliced her abdomen in three attempts...and delivered a male infant that breathed immediately and cried," said Dr R.F. Valle, of

the Dr Manuel Velasco Suarez Hospital in San Pablo, Mexico.

Valle recounted the event in a report in the International Journal of Gynecology and Obstetrics.

Before losing consciousness the woman told one of her children to call a local nurse for help. After the nurse stitched the wound with a sewing needle and cotton thread, the mother and baby were transferred and treated by Valle and his colleagues at the nearest hospital.

"This case represents an unusual and extraordinary decision by a woman in labour who, unable to deliver herself spontaneously, and with no medical help or resources, decided to perform a caesarean section upon herself," Valle said.

He added that a mother's instinct to save her child can move a woman to perform extraordinary acts but said it would not have been necessary if adequate medical care had been available.

Toddler TV habits tied to attention deficit: Study

CHICAGO, April 4 (Reuters) - The more television children watch between the ages of 1 and 3, the greater their risk of having attention problems at age 7, U.S. researchers reported on Monday.

They found that each hour of television that preschoolers watched per day increased the risk of attention problems such as attention deficit-hyperactivity disorder, by almost 10 percent later on.

The study, published in the April issue of Pediatrics, the journal of the American Academy of Pediatrics, adds inattention to the list of harmful effects of excessive television viewing that also includes obesity and violent behavior.

Frederick Zimmerman of the University of Washington in Seattle, one of the authors, said it was impossible to say what a "safe" level of TV viewing would be for children between the ages of 1 and 3.

"Each hour has an additional risk,"

he said in an interview. "You might say there's no safe level since there's a small but increased risk" with each hour.

"Things are a trade-off. Some parents might want to take that risk. We didn't find a safe level in that sense."

The data from 2,500 children covered by the study found that they watched an average of 2.2 hours per day at age 1 and 3.6 hours per day at age 3. But some watched 12 hours or more.

The ages are significant because brain development continues through those years, the study said.

"This study suggests that there is a significant and important association between early exposure to television and subsequent attentional problems," said Dimitri Christakis, a physician at Children's Hospital and Regional Medical Center in Seattle who headed the study.

"We know from national estimates that children watch an average of two

to three hours of television a day in the 1- to 3-year-old age group, and that as many as 30 percent of all children have a television in their bedroom," he said.

"There is a tremendous and growing reliance on television for a variety of reasons. However parents should be advised to limit their young child's television viewing," Christakis said.

In the United States between 3 percent and 5 percent of children are diagnosed with attention deficit disorder, which is marked by reduced ability to concentrate, difficulty in organizing and impulsive behavior. The symptoms do not typically show up until children are older, around age 7.

STUDY LIMITED

The authors said the study had some limitations.

The television viewing data came from the parents and may not be com-

pletely accurate. Also, there is no way to know whether the children already had attention problems early on that attracted them to TV viewing, though symptoms don't appear that early, it said.

It was also possible the parents who allowed excessive TV viewing were themselves distracted and neglectful, creating a household that fostered attention problems in the children. Attention deficit-hyperactivity disorder has a high heritability level, the study said.

And the study did not look at what kinds of programs the children watched.

"Despite these limitations our results have some important implications if replicated in future studies," it said. "First we (have) added inattention to the previously studied deleterious consequences of excessive television viewing ... (and) our findings suggested that preventive action can be taken."



Local Press

Prepared by Mohammed Khidhr



Wahj al-Haqeeqa weekly,
3 Apr 2004.

Main headlines

- Himyarite capital comes under robbing and tampering
- Hidden hands hamper Hadramout local council experiment
- 136 crimes registered last year, continued drugs trafficking across borders
- Rahma association accommodates mentally retarded children
- Desperate attempts to hinder development in Dhalie governorate

Columnist Saleh Dahman says in his article that between Tunisia's announcement of postponing the Arab summit indefinitely and the announcement of some Arab leaders on its convening within a few weeks at the Arab League headquarters, a media fuss has been aroused, a development unfamiliar in attitudes similar to that, and that has aroused more than one question mark.

Only the media have death with the postponement of the summit and its convention from various perspectives. And between the blame for the postponement and the praise for holding it again the media found what they wanted in interpreting their dreams and goals. While the media exaggerated in reporting causes of the postponement, they in the same manner praised the consultations that led to the agreement on prospects of holding it.

Between the delay and the convening the Arab street maintained its heedlessness about them though it realizes that the two results are the same as the only difference is that of the venue and time. The result is known beforehand and the results of the summit would not liberate Palestine or end the Americans and their allies occupation of Iraq. The essential reason is that the Arab regimes did not get their legitimacy from their peoples and therefore they remain short of sovereignty and they for this reason are incapable of defending their countries' sovereignty.



Al-Mithaq weekly,
organ of the General
People's Congress 5 Apr
2004.

Main Headlines

- During his meeting with an official in the Sudanese National Conference branch, Al-Asbahi: Yemen keen on activation of security and stability in the Horn of Africa
- Hamoud Abbadi: Endowments ministry prepares for holding national conference for guidance
- National strategy on wages and salaries
- Aden local council studies 255 investors files before withdrawing pieces of land given to them and have not been used for the last ten years
- Ministry of education honors 731 teachers

Columnist Dr Abdulaziz al-Maqaleh says everything at the unconvened summit conference was prepared beforehand just for absorbing the resentment haunting the Arab street especially after the assassination of sheikh Ahmed Yassin, the spiritual leader of the Palestinian resistance movement Hamas. As for the other topics on the summit's agenda they have not taken the summit far from Palestine and Iraq, the two bleeding wounds in the body of the Arab nation and if the Arabs would not take quick measures to heal stop the raging fire, it would extend to other Arab countries.

The coming days are to prove to the hidden force behind helping or rather ordered the postponement or canceling the summit that they were mistaken. The measure of cancellation has helped increase the state of anger and congestion in the Arab street and it would entail an explosion of reactions and an end to stability in all Arab countries. The question is whether the era of summit conferences has come to an end and the Arabs' differences have reached a stage where they are seen unable to meet.



Al-Haq weekly, 4 Apr
2004.

Main headlines

- Arab summits did not realize the expectations of their peoples and flood the region with false slogans
- Citizens express wonder for carelessness attitude the political parties adopt towards their living woes
- Immoral acts practiced in some Aden

Main headlines

- Yemeni-Russian summit in Moscow
- Occupation forces in Iraq kill 170 Iraqis
- Sheikh al-Zindani office demands a definition of terror concept
- Described as a terrorist act, dynamite explosion in Sana'a downtown
- Tens of killed and wounded in confrontations between al-Sadr supporters and occupying forces in Iraq
- Hull runs intelligence operation rooms at excellent tourist hotels inn Sana'a
- Yemen sends to court those accused of Cole and Limburg explosions
- Merging and canceling some ministries
- More than \$47 million losses of electricity caused by Huzaiaz power station fire
- Arab summit failure, a frank call for accepting defeat and American hegemony
- Four killed and a number of wounded in renewed fighting between Dahm and Waela tribes
- A relative of Sheikh Omer Ahmed Saif killed in a traffic accident
- Arab regimes have to reject American and European reform and democratization projects
- Former White House Security advisor accuses Bush of not dealing seriously with terror danger
- Escalating deterioration of services infrastructure in Aden hospitals
- Russian circles: President Ali Abdullah Saleh to Moscow to enhance strategic dialogue base
- Yemeni-Russian summit discusses developments in Palestine and Iraq and consolidation of economic partnership
- Dr Abdulkareem Al-Eryani: Vacuums in the Arab region tempt others, There is no need for national conference talking about foreign initiatives
- Joint follow-up committee of Yemeni-Saudi Coordination Council holds its meeting in Riyadh
- Opposition parties flirt with neo-colonialists on a political project
- Iraqi resistance forms government, declares its political program

hotels

Lawyer Jassar Farouq Makkawi writes saying that there are successive convening of symposiums and training courses organised by a number of centers and organisations active in the area of human rights in a number of major cities and governorates, especially regarding woman affair.

But before talking about rights and defending them we have in the first place to enhance the role of the law that organizes these rights and freedoms related to her and should not concentrate on only a certain form that would gradually lose its component with the passage of time. One of the difficulties and problems facing many societies and regimes is the intermingling of authorities in them and this should be strongly warned about because such a thing would negatively affect the society's life and helps destabilise it and marred its progress.



Al-Shumou weekly, 3
Apr 2004.

Main headlines

- Following embezzlements in millions, social affairs and labour ministry refers hundreds of societies to court
- An example of corruption, ministry agriculture builds a small fence costing 40 million riyals
- Central apparatus demands issuing a law on loans and foreign aid

The newspaper's political editor says in his article that what happened in Tunis was not a postponement but rather a quake hit the bases and joints of the Arab order that for the first time in his history and that of Arab summits fails in hiding the real causes of a postponement in an indicator denoting that the Arab order has become more than incapable of control and preclude the leaking of secrets of closed door meetings to the Arab masses. These masses have now become the decision-maker and responsible for delivering the nation from this impasse. Nevertheless what happened in Tunis was not expected to happen not from leaders of a nation but from school children in many world countries.

Some information confirms that the causes of the delay was against the backdrop of a:

- 1-Message distributed on the Arab foreign ministers inside the meeting demanding the summit to stress in its statement the commitment to the road

map and welcome the law of state administration in Iraq and supporting the Iraqi governing council.

- 2- A Jordanian document demanded the summit to condemn the martyrdom operations and that the final statement should include an Arab confirmation on the Arabs commitment to offer full support to the Zionist entity and providing security to Israel and postponing the right to return.
- 3-Libya's insistence on including the statement a praise of Libya's hand over of its nuclear program and consider it as an example the region's countries should follow suit.
- 4-Libya's demand from Saudi Arabia to offer its apology for the stand of Prince Abdulla from Gaddafi when he accused him of being an agent last year.
- 5-Gaddafi insistence on allowing the entry of 40 armoured cars to guard him during his stay in Tunis
- 6-Tunisia's insistence on entering amendments on a working paper previously agreed on and signed by the Arab permanent delegations at the Arab League.
- 8-Bahrain's king refusal to attend the summit if Prince Abdulla would not attend it an the Tunisian president refused to receive the letter of Bahrain's king from his foreign minister.
- 9-The foreign ministers difference on holding the Arab Book Fair scheduled to be held in one of the Arab capitals.



Al-Isbou weekly, 1 Apr
2004.

Main headlines

- Alert at Yemeni airports following a terrorist plan threatening airplanes
- Tons of fish extinct on Aden beaches
- Zindani proposes on America to remove it fears regarding him and his university
- Organised by the French DIA in Taiz, School headmasters 2nd course concluded
- Aden establishment, from tourism to culture

On the Arab joint action the newspaper published an article saying the Arab joint action is always mentioned and it is as an illusion or that the history of Arabs makes it like that. The sudden postponement of the Arab summit in Tunis has reflected a real reality and a natural accumulation of discord among the Arab



leaders and their governments, the real failure has preceded convening of the summit when it has been confirmed that leaders of a number of countries, among them Egypt, Saudi Arabia and Algeria would not take part in the summit but would be represented by their foreign ministers. Holding the summit at the

Arab League headquarters in Cairo is not a genuine resolution and Tunisia that has surprised the Arabs by postponing it, announces its clinging to holding it on its territories. The big gap would be difficult to bridge during the preparation for the alternative summit and if it would be accomplished it is expected that Tunisia

would boycott it. At the time when the Arab street discusses the possibility of continuation of the Arab League along with the Middle East project proposed by America some of the people confirm that the League would not continue but it survival would be in the same position as a nominal form of an entity.



By Yahya Al-Olfi
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Reflections

Yemeni fading bizarre traditions

It is known that Yemen was in the past a cradle of an ancient civilization whose impact was of international. Of course, the boundaries of ancient "Yemen" were not as seen today but at times comprised of all the Arabian Peninsula and extended to eastern Africa, where some tribes are still speaking Semitic dialects such as the Amara, Tigray and Afar tribes in today's Ethiopia as well as the ancient Yemenite Characters which are still being used with slight differences. The main change was the addition by the Ethiopians of the vowel system, according to which the letters change, (Legal official Amharic terminology is sometimes understood by an Arab better than a native Ethiopian). South Arabian dialects used to be written in Musnad Characters without the employment of vowels, just like today's Arabic and Hebrew. Indeed, Yemeni historical literature speaks about an ancient Yemenite invasion of northern Africa led by a commander named Afrighi, from whom the name Africa was coined. If you hear a Berber man speaking in today's Algeria you would think he was an incarnated Himyarite.

Few European historians trace back Phoenician characters to those used by the Mainites. They believe that the Mainites left Southern Arabia and settled in Lebanon where they were later called Phoenicians. Yemenis in the past did embrace many different religions (they were Christian, Jewish and now Muslims, and before their embrace of the three said monotheistic religions they adored the moon and called it "Almaqah", the Sun etc.). Of course, through time many traditions were discarded, but some persisted until this day. In this article I shall try to touch upon some traditions which are pre-Islamic and due to isolation in the past did not vanish quickly, whilst on the other hand some of them vanished due to religious preaching or at times the compulsory application of penalties against those who refused to comply.

It is known that the region of Asir (now under Saudi Rule) formed part of the Turkish *Yemen Vilayet* and thus people of Asir at the time of British presence in Aden used to travel south

in order to purchase goods because Aden was at that time the most prosperous in the whole Arabian peninsula (i.e. prior to oil discoveries in the Arabian Gulf). They carried goods on camel-back. As one of the routes passed by one of my relatives' farmland, my relative got acquainted with tribesmen from Asir who after some years vowed that he should be their guest. My relative accepted the invitation and traveled with them to their area. Upon arrival they were well received by the locals, who were curious about the goods of those days. By the way, my relative lived for 130 years and passed away in 1977. He told me that the people in Asir and some areas of Yemen gave women certain rights which were strange to other regions of Yemen. For example he knew that the woman in Asir had the right to choose her man by saying *Animaidak* (i.e. I am yours), or in case of refusal she would say *Anilaismaid*. I told my relative that this is O.K., women should have the right to choose and that this is quite natural. But I could not believe him, when he told me that while he was asleep at the house of his hosts in Asir, an eighteen year old girl entered the room and told him to let her sleep next to him in order to warm him up. Presumably a pre-Islamic welcome gesture! I think although such a custom was practiced the guest was not supposed to transgress his limits. Not knowing that this was an exaggerated tradition to welcome their guests he told her to go and bring him some water because he felt thirsty. So when the girl went out he jumped out of the window, which was not barred and was not that far from the ground, and ran through night until he felt he was far away. He then took rest and returned after some days of strenuous travel to his area.

This incident, which happened to my relative, was mentioned by many historians including Sir Harry St. John Philby in his book *Arabian Highlands* and by other British adventurers. Whilst in Tihama girls are still circumcised as in Egypt and some African countries, men there go through a very strange circumcision where their foreskins are rolled back with knives up to their navels and some did die in the process because of terrible pain and

much suffering. In fact King Abdul-Aziz Al-Saud, the founder of today's Saudi Arabia, issued a decision to cut the hand and the opposite leg of the circumcised and the circumciser and thus people under Saudi rule out of fear ceased the practice. But on the Yemeni side of the border I do not know if the custom is still being practiced.

Another circumcision rite used to be carried out prior to marriage and was utilized to check the forbearance of the prospective bridegroom and as an evidence of manhood. So ceremonies and banquets used to be held, particularly when circumcision involved many individuals. This type of circumcision used to be conducted by making the would-be circumcised stand behind wooden plates where there were holes through which organs were inserted for circumcisers to cut the foreskins, whilst onlookers watched the circumcised who was supposed to repeat loudly his lineage (by saying I am so and so the son of...to the seventh eighth or tenth forefather). If the circumcised twitched from pain or showed pain he would then be disqualified from being a man fit for marriage and family responsibility and no women were supposed to marry him ever.

A tribe in Shabwa province permitted its men to kidnap their cousins for the purpose of marriage. Yemeni Bedouins divorced their wives immediately if they were asked to do so or else they were considered of a lesser grade than normal men. Some tribes of Yemen shake hands and touch each other with their noses when they say hello to each other. While the tribesmen in a region in Saada province still adorn themselves and take better care of their hair than women.

In the past the wealthy Yemenis used to have castrated servants and used to call them "*Tawashi*" (They castrated them prior to adolescence and thus they looked later soft and hairless). Such castrated servants were permitted to mix with the house harem, obviously because they were harmless.

On the whole with the development of means of transport and the availability of TV, pre-Islamic customs and habits are rarely heard of and are only practiced in limited areas such as Socotra Island.

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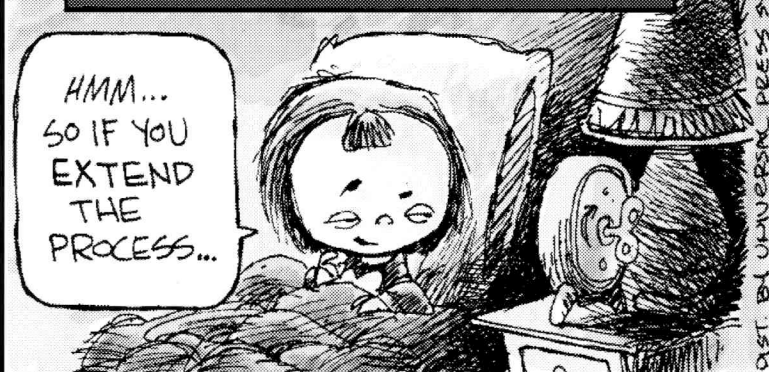
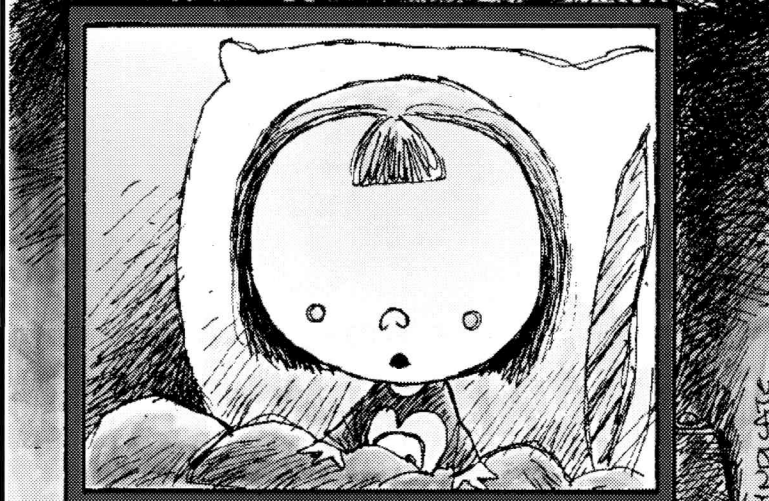
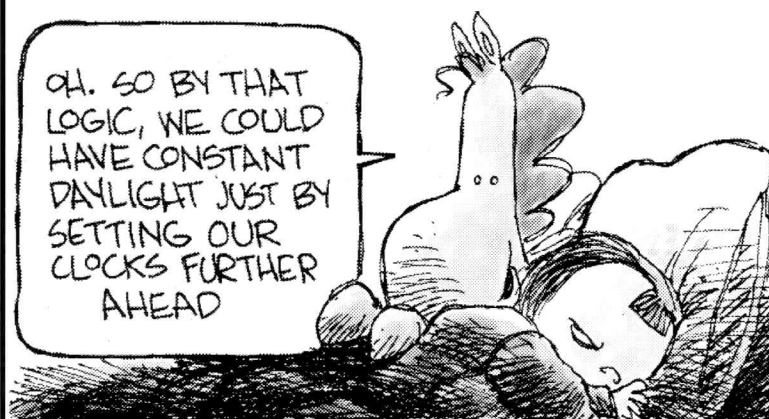
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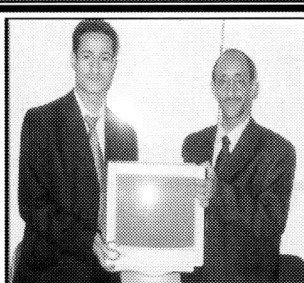
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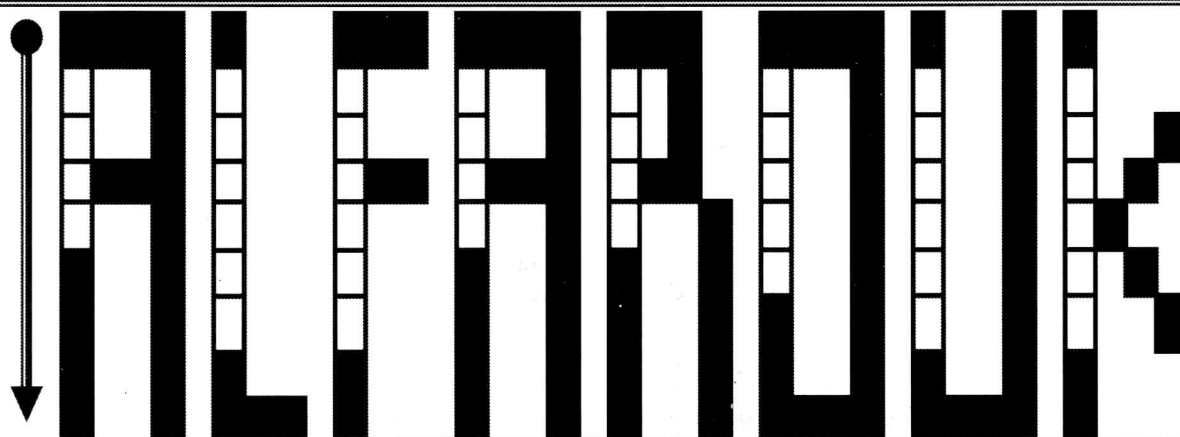
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1. As well as
2. Bandit
3. Hostage
4. Shines at night
5. Very brave man
6. Diagrams
7. Mother's husband
8. Do again



Ans. Cont.7

1. roads
2. murder
3. dough
4. edge
5. test
6. blade
7. events
8. magnet

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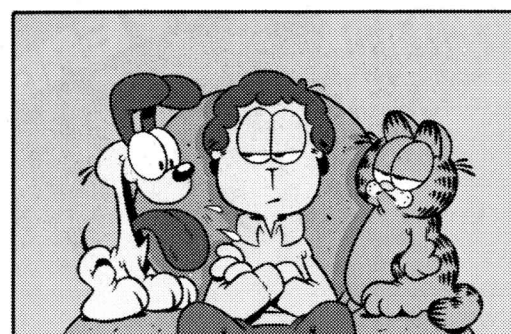
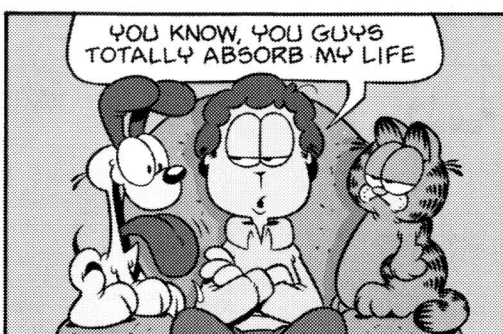
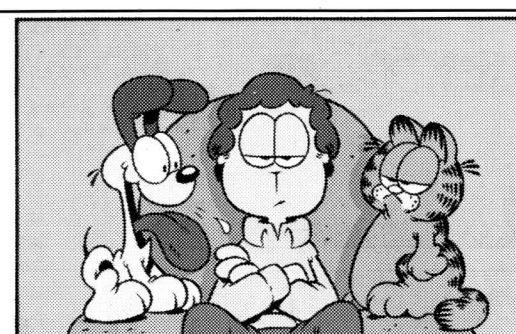
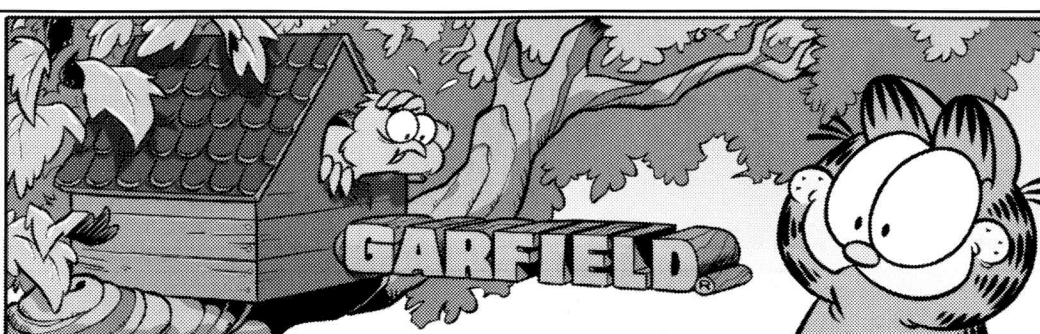
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Lo	9	9	8	8	8	9	9	Lo	23	24	24	24	23	22	22



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Aries
(Mar 21 - Apr 19)
Physical activities or competitive games will enable you to show everyone how incredibly in tune you are today. Love will be high on your list and easy for you to obtain.



Taurus
(Apr 20 - May 20)
Don't be fooled by someone offering high returns on a risky financial venture. Do not overspend or take on too many responsibilities. The goal is to eliminate stress, not add to it.



Gemini
(May 21 - Jun 20)
Don't let your emotions take over today. Consider if you may have been the one in the wrong and, if so, revisit your motives.



Cancer
(Jun 21 - Jul 22)
The more you do to get ahead at work today, the better. Work is on the way and lots of it. Doubting yourself and your ability is the only thing that stands in the way.



Leo
(Jul 23 - Aug 22)
You will be charming and quick to respond to everyone around you today. Your popularity is mounting, but that doesn't mean that you should ignore the one who has always stood by your side. Appreciate the people close to your heart.



Virgo
(Aug 23 - Sep 22)
You may be flustered today if you feel that you are overworked and other people are slacking. Don't make a scene — just do your job and refuse to let anyone upset you.



Libra
(Sep 23 - Oct 22)
You should be thinking about travel, having fun and interacting with friends today. Short jaunts to visit old stomping grounds will lead to some exciting encounters with your past.



Scorpio
(Oct 23 - Nov 21)
You may be confused about what you are doing and what you should be doing, especially if it pertains to your job. Don't give up something that doesn't satisfy you until you have fully developed your own ideas.



Sagittarius
(Nov 22 - Dec 21)
You may find yourself somewhat confused about your personal life and even some of your beliefs and traditions. Try to spend time with someone who can clarify your roots.



Capricorn
(Dec 22 - Jan 19)
Play your cards close to your chest today and show how shrewd you can be when necessary. Protect your money from swindlers and con artists.



Aquarius
(Jan 20 - Feb 18)
Get involved in a good cause and lend a helping hand to people who have lost their way. Your knowledge and experience will help others from taking the same wrong turns.



Pisces
(Feb 19-Mar 20)
You may feel threatened by someone who professes to know more than you. Step back and look at the big picture. Walk the walk and you'll make gains.

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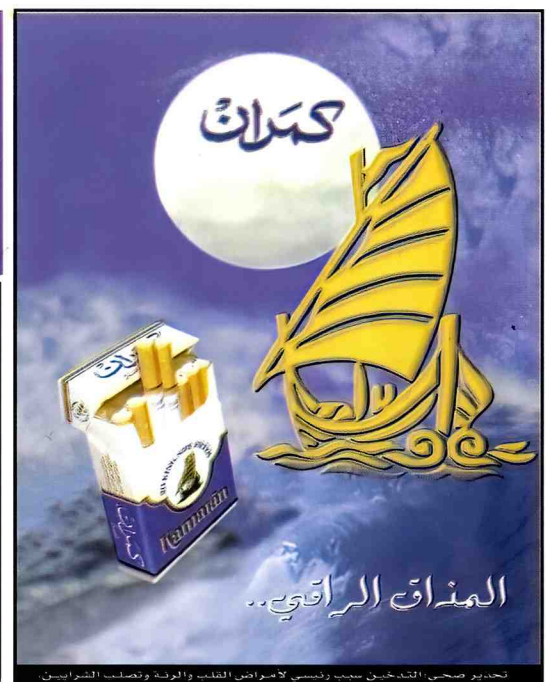
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“Al-Saltah” the Yemeni National Dish

By HASSAN AL-ZAIDI
YEMEN TIMES STAFF

The history of “Al-Saltah” in Yemen dates back one hundred years. The Turkish-origin hot meal was introduced to Yemen one hundred years ago. Yemenis were acquainted with its ingredients by the Turks occupying Yemen at that time.

However, the Yemenis have added some flavor and spices that have made “Al-Saltah” or “Al-Hulbah” (Fenugreek), a popular and distinguished meal all over Yemen.

Ingredients and preparation:

Due to the connection of this meal with the lunch of mass majority of Yemenis, many specialized restaurants have been established scattered throughout the country. The meal is prepared or cooked inside a stone bowl, called “Al-Mader” or “Al-Magla”. These special locally made bowls can tolerate and sustain high temperatures for a relatively long period of time.

Al-Hulbah consists of but not limited to cooked vegetables (tomatoes, potatoes, beans) stirred together with a stew. the stew is added to the mix of vegetables for about five minutes and finally Al-Hulbah (fenugreek) is added with a spoon of blended vetch with hot jalapeno and black pepper and salt (according to taste) and ready to



Saltah dishes

serve.

The average price for a bowl for one person ranges from 200-300 Rials.

Al-Hulbah abroad:

Many Yemeni investors abroad in the field of restaurants include this popular meal of Turkish origin for Yemenis living abroad, and sometimes some foreigners who acquire its taste.

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