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U.S. Department of State

China Country Report on Human Rights Practices for 1998

Released by the Bureau of Democracy, Human Rights, and Labor, February 26, 1999.

CHINA

The People's Republic of China (PRC) is an authoritarian state in which the Chinese Communist Party (CCP) is the paramount source of power. At the national and regional levels, party members hold almost all top government, police, and military positions. Ultimate authority rests with members of the Politburo. Leaders stress the need to maintain stability and social order and are committed to perpetuating the rule of the CCP and its hierarchy. Citizens lack both the freedom peacefully to express opposition to the party-led political system and the right to change their national leaders or form of government. Socialism continues to provide the theoretical underpinning of Chinese politics, but Marxist ideology has given way to economic pragmatism in recent years, and economic decentralization has increased the authority of regional officials. The party's authority rests primarily on the Government's ability to maintain social stability, appeals to nationalism and patriotism, party control of personnel and the security apparatus, and the continued improvement in the living standards of most of China's 1.2 billion citizens. The Constitution provides for an independent judiciary; however, in practice, the judicial system is subject to the "policy guidance" of the CCP and government influence, particularly in politically sensitive cases.

The security apparatus is made up of the Ministries of State Security and Public Security, the People's Armed Police, the People's Liberation Army, and the state judicial, procuratorial, and penal systems. Security policy and personnel were responsible for numerous human rights abuses.

China has a mixed economy that continues to expand, albeit at a slower rate than in recent years. The growth rate target was 8.0 percent for 1998. According to official government statistics gross domestic product reached a growth rate of 7.8 percent, but the actual figure was widely considered to be between 3 and 5 percent. The economy faces growing problems, including state enterprise reform, unemployment, underemployment, and regional economic disparities. Rural unemployment and underemployment is estimated to be over 30 percent. Tens of millions of peasants have left their homes in search of better jobs and living conditions. Demographers estimate that between 80 and 130 million persons make up this "floating population," with many major cities counting 1 million or more such persons. Urban areas also are coping with millions of state workers idled on partial wages or unemployed as a result of industrial reforms. Workers throughout the country increasingly organized public protests to press their demands. Nonetheless, economic reforms have raised living standards for many, providing greater

independence for entrepreneurs, diminishing state control over the economy and citizen's daily lives, and creating new economic opportunities. Despite serious economic difficulties in the state sector, individual economic opportunities expanded in nonstate sectors, resulting in increased freedom of employment and mobility. The total number of citizens living in absolute poverty continues to decline; estimates range from official figures of 42 million to World Bank estimates of 150 million. However, the income gap between coastal and internal regions is growing markedly. The ratio is now approximately 12 to 1.

The Government's human rights record deteriorated sharply beginning in the final months of the year with a crackdown against organized political dissent. The loosening of restrictions on political debate and activism by authorities for much of 1997 and 1998, including toward public calls for political reform and expressions of opposition to government policies, abruptly ended in the fall. The Government continued to commit widespread and well-documented human rights abuses, in violation of internationally accepted norms. These abuses stemmed from the authorities' very limited tolerance of public dissent aimed at the Government, fear of unrest, and the limited scope or inadequate implementation of laws protecting basic freedoms. The Constitution and laws provide for fundamental human rights, but these protections often are ignored in practice. Abuses included instances of extrajudicial killings, torture and mistreatment of prisoners, forced confessions, arbitrary arrest and detention, lengthy incommunicado detention, and denial of due process. Prison conditions at most facilities remained harsh. In many cases, particularly sensitive political cases, the judicial system denies criminal defendants basic legal safeguards and due process because authorities attach higher priority to maintaining public order and suppressing political opposition than to enforcing legal norms.

The Government infringed on citizens' privacy rights. The Government continued restrictions on freedom of speech and of the press, and tightened these toward the end of the year. The Government severely restricted freedom of assembly, and continued to restrict freedom of association, religion, and movement. Discrimination against women, minorities, and the disabled; violence against women, including coercive family planning practices--which sometimes include forced abortion and forced sterilization; prostitution, trafficking in women and children, and the abuse of children all are problems. The Government continued to restrict tightly worker rights, and forced labor remains a problem. Serious human rights abuses persisted in minority areas, including Tibet and Xinjiang, where restrictions on religion and other fundamental freedoms intensified.

Beginning in the fall, Communist Party leaders moved to "nip in the bud" organized challenges they believed threatened national stability or Communist Party authority. Dozens of political activists were arrested for attempts to register a political party and engage in other political activities. In November over 30 members and supporters of the China Democracy Party were detained, and, in December, three of its leaders were sentenced to lengthy jail terms, apparently as a warning to other activists.

Veteran dissidents Xu Wenli, Wang Youcai, and Qin Yongmin were tried under the law on state security for their attempts to organize and register the CDP as an opposition party and for allegedly colluding with foreign forces to "subvert state power." They were given harsh

sentences of 13, 11, and 12 years, respectively, in closed trials that flagrantly violated due process. Also in November and December, the authorities imposed new regulations on the Internet, the publishing industry, and social organizations; closed several newspapers and fired several outspoken editors; and banned a popular, but politically- sensitive, book and other publications. The China Development Union, an independent group in Beijing, which had organized discussions on a wide range of topical issues, including political reform, had its activities curtailed in November and was eventually shut down.

Unapproved religious groups, including Protestant and Catholic groups, continued to experience varying degrees of official interference and repression. The Government continued to enforce 1994 State Council regulations requiring all places of religious activity to register with the Government and come under the supervision of official, "patriotic" religious organizations. There were significant differences from region to region, and even locality to locality, in the attitudes of government officials toward religion. In some areas, authorities guided by national policy made strong efforts to control the activities of unapproved Catholic and Protestant churches; religious services were broken up and church leaders or adherents were detained and, at times, reportedly beaten. At year's end, some remained in prison because of their religious activities. In other regions, registered and unregistered churches were treated similarly by the authorities. Citizens worshipping in officially sanctioned churches, mosques, and temples reported little or no day-to-day interference by the Government.

The number of religious adherents in many churches, both registered and unregistered, continued to grow at a rapid pace. The Government engaged in discussions of religious freedom issues with the international community, welcoming several high-level foreign delegations.

Although the Government denies that it holds political or religious prisoners, and argues that all those in prison are legitimately serving sentences for crimes under the law, an unknown number of persons, estimated at several thousand, are detained in violation of international human rights instruments for peacefully expressing their political, religious, or social views. Persons detained at times during the year include political activists who tried to register an opposition party; leaders of a national house church movement; and organizers of political discussion groups that exceeded what the Government deemed the permissible level of dissent. Some minority groups, particularly Tibetan Buddhists and Muslim Uyghurs, came under increasing pressure as the Government clamped down on dissent and "separatist" activities. In Tibet the reeducation campaign aimed at monks and nuns was renewed, as was a rhetorical campaign against the Dalai Lama. In Xinjiang, authorities tightened restrictions on fundamental freedoms in an effort to control independence groups.

The Government took some actions to address international concerns in the area of human rights. In October it signed the United Nations Covenant on Civil and Political Rights (ICCPR), but gave no indication when the covenant would be ratified. In September the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights (UNHCHR) visited for the first time at the invitation of the Government. The Government also continued to expand its human rights dialogs and exchanges with other nations, and in October hosted for the first time an international human rights conference in Beijing.

The authorities released a few political prisoners before their terms were over. Tiananmen student leader Wang Dan was released on medical parole in April on the condition that he leave the country for medical treatment. Liu Nianchun was released under the same conditions in December. Both are now living abroad in exile. Catholic Bishop Zeng Jingmu and democracy activist Pan Mingdong were released on medical parole before the end of their terms and remained in China. Bishop Zeng was reportedly under house arrest at year's end. Zhang Xiaoxu was paroled 6 years early, after having served 9 years of his 15-year sentence for involvement in the 1989 student protests. However, at year's end several thousand others, including Li Hai, Han Chunsheng, Liu Jingsheng, Chen Lantao, Liu Xiaobo, Chen Longde, Pastor Xu Yongze, Bishop An Shuxin, Abbot Chadrel Rinpoche, Ngawang Sangdrol, Jigme Sangpo, and Ngawang Choephel remained in prison for the peaceful expression of their political, social, or religious views. Some of those who completed their sentences and were released from prison--such as Bao Tong, senior aide to former Communist Party leaders--were kept under surveillance and prevented from taking employment or otherwise resuming normal lives.

During the year, the Government launched new efforts to reform the legal system and widely disseminated information about new legislation. It also initiated a highly publicized campaign to "rectify" endemic problems such as corruption and abuse of power on the part of judges, prosecutors, and police. A number of laws passed in recent years, if enforced effectively, hold the potential to enhance citizens' rights--e.g., the Administrative Litigation Law, the Lawyers Law, the State Compensation Law, the Prison Law, the Criminal Law, and the Criminal Procedure Law. The revised Criminal Procedure Law, which came into effect in 1997, provided for the defendant's right to legal counsel, an active legal defense, and other rights of criminal defendants recognized in international human rights instruments. If fully implemented, this law would bring China's criminal laws closer toward compliance with international norms. However, enforcement of the new statute was uneven and incomplete and was violated in the cases of high-profile dissidents. In an effort to strengthen enforcement, the Government issued additional, more specific implementing guidelines.

The Government also expanded efforts to educate lawyers, judges, prosecutors, and especially the public on the provisions of new statutes. China expanded its efforts to increase bilateral and multilateral cooperation in the field of law.

In addition, some positive trends continued. The leadership continued governmental restructuring efforts and took steps to create a more accountable and less intrusive government (under the firm leadership of the Communist Party). The range of issues covered in the media--especially regarding corruption and abuse of power--continued to expand. New initiatives were undertaken to improve the transparency and accountability of China's judicial and legal systems; nongovernmental-level village committee elections were expanded, giving citizens choices about grassroots representatives, as well as introducing the principle of democratic elections; and at least one experiment with township elections was conducted successfully (albeit not approved in advance by the central Government).

Government efforts to separate the military and the Communist Party from commercial ventures proceeded, as did campaigns against government corruption and smuggling. Social groups with

economic resources at their disposal continued to play an increasing role in community life.

Despite the sharp crackdown on political dissent at the end of the year, society as a whole continued to be more open and diverse. Academics and government officials continued to debate formerly taboo subjects such as political reform and democratization in official channels. Satellite television broadcasts continued to be widely available, particularly in coastal provinces, despite the Government's efforts to regulate the sale and use of satellite dishes. Cable television also is available in many cities, including access to global news networks. As many as 6 million citizens had access to the Internet, although the Government increased its efforts to try to control the content of material available on the Internet. Overall, average citizens go about their daily lives with more personal freedom than ever before: Higher disposable income, looser economic controls, greater freedom of movement, increased access to outside sources of information, greater room for individual choice, and more diversity in cultural life. However, authorities did not hesitate to move quickly against those it perceived to be a threat to government power or national stability. Citizens who seek to express openly dissenting political and religious views continue to live in an environment filled with repression.

The Status of Women in Yemen Their Entry into the Political Arena

Yemeni women rank low on almost every significant index of human development, except for political rights. Women do not have acceptable access to basic health services, education, safe water, or adequate nutrition. They have unacceptably high birth and illiteracy rates.

The Constitution makes no difference between men and women, but tradition serves to isolate them and limit the exercise of their talents. But Yemeni women do have the right to vote and have exercised it—the only women in the Arabian Peninsula who can claim this distinction. In addition, numerous signs point to a better future. Small groups of Yemeni women, with varying degrees of government support, are determined to find a way out of the cycle of poverty and ignorance experienced by most women.

Government policy supports the development of women in all sectors, but implementation is slowed by resource constraints and ingrained attitudes among the men. All political parties have issued communiqués supporting female political participation, which has established an agreed baseline that cannot be reversed. But none of the parties include women in its senior governing council; only one party nominated female candidates in the 1997 parliamentary elections. Women do not occupy ministerial or sub-ministerial policy making positions, but do now hold about 10 percent of all office directorships. Less than three percent of judges are women, and all those are remnants of the former Marxist regime in the south.

The Social System Seeks to Protect, Not Empower Women

The population of Yemen is rural, poor, and socially conservative. Only 40 percent of girls between the ages of 6-15 attend school. Women represent of 24 percent and 13 percent respectively of secondary and university students. The law requires that a girl be 15 years old in order to marry, but 12-year old brides are not uncommon. Arranged marriages are the norm, although the woman may theoretically refuse a proposed husband. The law requires that a woman have her father's or husband's permission to travel abroad, although this is rarely enforced. The attitudes of a woman's male relatives are critical in determining the degree of social and economic freedom she enjoys, including how much education she receives. Violence against women exists, as it does everywhere, but is largely undocumented. The legal system does not effectively protect women from violence – that is the responsibility of her extended family.

Yemeni women and their families interpret the Quranic injunction to dress modestly in different ways. The majority of women fully cover themselves in black, including a face veil that reveals only their eyes. The rest cover their heads with the scarf ("hejab") and wear either a long black coat or modified western dress of a long skirt with long jacket. Dress does not unduly hinder women's activities. In Yemen, unlike Saudi Arabia, women can drive and move freely in public. They are evident in the streets and marketplaces of the city, as one journalist put it, "they walk without apology." University classes are coeducational, although from grades 6-12, boys and girls tend to study in separate classes or schools.

Official statistics state that women constitute about 21 percent of the workforce. This badly under-represents women's economic activity. Albeit unpaid, women do most of the manual work on family farms – and agriculture supports about 80 percent of the population.

Hope is in the Vote and Leadership Development

Yemen is the only country on the Arabian Peninsula with a functioning, multi-party Parliament elected by universal suffrage. In two separate parliamentary elections, in 1993 and 1997, Yemen's women have demonstrated that they take seriously the right to vote, to run as candidates, and to govern. Energetic and determined women staff NGOs devoted to empowering women.

Electoral Participation: They Need an "Emily's List"

More than 475,000 registered to vote in the first post-unity elections in 1993 (the total number of registered voters was 2.5 million), about 17 percent of all adult women. By 1997, the number of women registered had doubled to more than 825,000, 28 percent of all eligible adult women. Female voter registration to this extent was remarkable given that only about 26 percent of Yemeni women can read and write. The number of women who actually turned out to vote, however, was substantially lower than the registration figures would have predicted – no more than half actually cast a ballot in 1993 or 1997. Voter education was inadequate for all voters; particularly so for women. Also, political parties did not follow through with promises to recruit female candidates, which might have attracted more female voters.

In 1993, 41 of approximately 3,000 candidates for Parliament were women, most of whom ran as independents. Of the nearly 20 parties that competed, only two, President Saleh's GPC (General People's Congress) and the YSP (Yemeni socialist party – the governing party of the former South Yemen) nominated women. The GPC nominated two, and the YSP four. Two women won seats, both from the YSP. By 1997, the internal political context had changed, presenting new challenges for women. The YSP boycotted the election, which meant a loss of women candidates and an overall low voter turnout in the southern governorates, the YSP's traditional power-base. Islaah, the second major political party in the 1997 election, is an Islamist party that does not endorse female candidates, although it heavily recruited them to participate as registration and poll workers and has since allowed three to sit on one of its internal advisory councils. The GPC and a couple of small parties put forward a few women candidates, but most withdrew prior to election day. The two women who won seats were both from the GPC and from Aden, a city in which women have historically had more opportunities for education and political participation than elsewhere in Yemen.

The 1993 and 1997 elections proved that to be successful, women candidates must have the backing of a major party. With the exception of the GPC, no other party will "risk" a seat on a female candidate. The GPC is actively grooming more women for party leadership, has appointed one to sit on an eight-person executive council, but as noted above, none yet sits in the top council, and the GPC's commitment to nominate more women is as yet untested.

Women in Government: Beyond Tokenism, not Yet at Critical Mass

The most senior woman in government is Amat Al-Atim Al-Souswa, previously Under Secretary of Information and recently named Yemen's first female ambassador – as deputy permanent representative to Yemen's UN mission in Geneva. Al-Souswa headed Yemen's delegation to Beijing in 1995; in the years since, she has worked diligently to apply the principles of Beijing inside Yemen. The Prime Minister recently ordered each minister to have at least one woman office director, to promote women's affairs. There are already 95 female directors-general in the ministries, include the head of legal affairs in the Ministry of

Planning and the head of the Humanitarian Demining Program in the Ministry of Cabinet Affairs: The Foreign Ministry has perhaps the most high-ranking women, with 32 women diplomats. Not surprisingly, the number and seniority of women in various ministries reflects the social and political views of the ministers. The profile is best in those ministries headed by western-educated techno-reformers. There are no women in the military or security services. There are 32 women judges in Aden, but Islamists have successfully prevented the naming of female judges in northern Yemen. There are two female parliamentarians, one of whom, Dr. Oras Sultan Naji, along with Amat Al-Alim Al-Souswa invited the First Lady to visit Yemen.

The Pioneering Work of NGOs

★ Although few in number, NGOs dedicated to advance women's rights and participation in politics have had a positive impact. In early 1996, Sanaa University professor Raufa Hassan and three men activists formed the Arab Democratic Institute (ADI). In the run-up to the 1997 elections, ADI organized domestic election monitoring, voter-education, and women's education projects. Dr. Raufa has since broken with the ADI but has been instrumental in founding other NGOs, and her Center for Women's Studies has initiated work in train-the-trainer programs for women, focus group surveys, and other programs that would be considered advanced even in the West.

The Yemeni Institute for Democracy Development (YIDD) also participated in civic education prior to the 1997 elections and studied female voting patterns, which revealed that Yemeni women routinely voted for the same candidate as their husband or father. YIDD's work showed that in order to bring women further into the process, special materials and methods will have to be developed for them.

Other female-dominated NGOs focus on disseminating information on family planning as well as charitable activities, important contributions to building civil society.

At the instigation of Yemen's Beijing delegation, the government in 1996 created the National Women's Committee to assist in formulating policies to implement the Beijing recommendations. The Women's Committee has its own budget and reports directly to the Council of Ministers. Prominent Yemeni women from politics, business and government belong – most not only hold down full-time jobs, but also work full-time on the side at building the capacity of NGOs. Ambassador Amat Al-Alim Al-Souswa acts as chair. While not a true NGO, the NWC has broad-based representation and shows all the signs of a nascent NOW.

Education High Illiteracy, Not Enough Schools

Overall illiteracy in Yemen is estimated at 62% with 74% illiteracy for females. The gap between the literate and illiterate has remained relatively unchanged for the past ten years as school enrollment rates remain low and the population growth rate remains extremely high, at 3.5%. According to 1997 figures offered by Yemen's Central Statistical Organization, 73% of all elementary-aged school children were enrolled in primary school. By ages 16-18, the enrollment rate for secondary school children dropped to 26%.

These overall enrollment rates figures mask a bigger problem: enrollment of girls at all ages is dismally low. According to the September 1998 National Strategy for Girls' Education, only 37.4% of girls aged 6-15 nationally are enrolled in primary school. Boys' enrollment for the same age group is almost 71%. The gap between male and female enrollment in urban areas is only 9%, compared with a 40% difference in male-female enrollment in rural areas, where the vast majority of Yemenis reside. Low enrollment rates among girls are compounded by high drop-out rates among girls in primary schools.

 The National Strategy recognizes that it is insufficient to provide equal educational opportunity, which has existed in Yemen for years. The state must also provide the necessary conditions to allow female students to pursue schooling through the secondary level. Therefore, the National Strategy eliminated school fees and uniform requirements for all public school girls; provided families food and other subsidies to encourage them to keep their girls in school; encouraged more women to take up teaching posts, permitting more girls to study; raised qualitative standards for female teachers; revised curricula to meet the needs of rural girls; and strengthened political support for girls' education.

The ROYG is keenly aware of the need to boost educational expenditures to meet the needs of it youngest citizens and to fund the National Strategy for Girls' Education. Its provisional 1999 budget increased funding for education by more than 5 million Yemeni Rials (\$32,050 at the current exchange rate), which represents an increase of 8.5% over 1998. However, in real terms, because the value of the Rial has slipped by nearly 18% over the past year, the educational sector is actually almost 2% worse off than in 1998.

✗ Although secondary school enrollment jumped by 186% from 1990 to 1998, enrollment in technical and vocational education rose by only 36%, and was only 4% of secondary and tech/vocational added together. Technical/vocational graduates entering the labor force are only 13% women.

At the university level, matters are not much better. In the wake of the Gulf War and return of about 800,000 Yemeni expatriates from Saudi Arabia and Gulf states, the ROYG elected to funnel as many college-aged returnees as possible into the state university system. While they have long since graduated, Yemen's burgeoning population has kept enrollment beyond the system's capacity. Since the early 1990s, Sanaa University has had an enrollment exceeding 100,000 students, overwhelming its available faculty and considerably diminishing the quality of instruction. Mushrooming secondary graduates have kept the pressure on. At present its total enrollment is 120,000, but its faculty totals 1,080 -- everything from instructors to full professors.

Freedom of Religion An Islamic State: A Tradition of Tolerance

The Yemeni Constitution declares Islam the state religion and Islamic Shari'ah as the source of all legislation. Virtually all citizens are Muslims, either the Zaidi branch of Shi'a or the Shafa'i branch of Sunni, representing about 25% and 75% respectively of the total population. There are also a few thousand Ismailis in the north. Approximately 500 Jews, representing the remnants of one of the oldest Diaspora communities in the world, are scattered in a handful of villages between Sanaa and Sa'ada in northern Yemen. Almost all Christians are temporary foreign residents, except for a few Adeni families who trace their origins to India. There are also a few Hindus in Aden who also trace their roots to India.

The Constitution confirms Yemen's adherence to the International Declaration of Human Rights and guarantees that all citizens shall have equality of opportunity in political, economic and cultural fields. The Government generally respects this right in practice. Yemen is so overwhelmingly Muslim that societal discrimination is extremely limited. Yemen's tiny number of religious minorities live in reasonable harmony with their Muslim neighbors. They are free to worship according to their beliefs and to wear religiously distinctive ornaments or dress. Nor is there any evidence of violence or discrimination between the adherents of the two main Islamic sects. Religiously motivated violence is neither incited nor tolerated by Islamic clergy and leaders in Yemen.

Public schools do provide instruction in Islam, and not in other religions. However, almost all non-Muslims are expatriates who attend private schools. Jews are allowed to instruct their children in Judaism. Under Islam, the conversion of a Muslim to another religion is considered apostasy, a crime punishable by death. However, there are no known cases in which the crime has been charged or prosecuted by Government authorities. There are no reports of religious detainees or prisoners.

The Jewish Community – Here Since the Beginning

The Jews are the only indigenous religious minority. Descendants of one of the oldest Diaspora communities in the world, their numbers have diminished dramatically – from several tens of thousands to a few hundred – due to voluntary emigration over the last fifty years. Although the law makes no distinction and Jews are accorded full rights as citizens, they are traditionally restricted to living in one section of a city or village and are often confined to a limited choice of employment, usually farming or handicrafts (with 80% of the Yemeni population rural farmers, this is not a major distinction). Jews are allowed to and do own real property. They are respected for their craftsmanship and their silver work is highly prized. Traditionally, tribal leaders in regions in which the Jews reside are responsible for protection of the Jews in their area. A failure to properly provide this protection is considered a serious personal dishonor.

The Christian Community – Foreign and Transient

Almost all Christians are temporary foreign residents, except for a few Adeni families of Indian origin. Several churches and Hindu temples operate in Aden. No non-Muslim public places of worship exist in the former North Yemen, largely because the north does not have a history of a large, resident expatriate community as the former British Colony, Aden, does. However, Christian church services are regularly held without harassment in private homes or facilities such as schools, and these facilities appear adequate to accommodate the small numbers involved. Although the Government does not allow the building of new non-Muslim

public places of worship, last year Yemen established diplomatic relations with the Vatican and agreed to the construction and operation of a "Christian Center" in Sanaa.

Christian missionaries operate in Yemen and most are dedicated to the provision of medical services. Invited by the Government, the Sisters of Charity run homes for the poor and disabled in Sanaa, Taiz, Hodeidah and Aden. They have been invited to open additional homes. The Government issues residence visas to priests so they may provide for the community's religious needs. There is also a German Christian charitable mission in Hodeidah, and a Dutch Christian medical mission in Sa'ada. An American Baptist congregation has run a hospital in Jibla for over thirty years. The Anglican Church in Aden also runs a charitable clinic. The Seventh Day Adventists operate a medical NGO, with some USAID funds, in the rural areas of Hodeidah Governorate.

Occasionally individual elements of the security authorities, apparently acting without orders, have subjected clergy to observation, sometimes reading their mail, ostensibly prevent proselytizing. The Government took swift action to arrest the deranged individual who murdered three nuns from the Sister's of Charity in Hodeidah in 1998.

Embassy Activity

The Embassy enjoys an active dialogue on human rights issues with both the Government of Yemen and with NGOs and other individuals. No specific action in support of religious freedom has been indicated given the Government's and society's general tolerance of its religious minorities. Embassy officers, up to and including the Ambassador, meet from time to time with representatives of the Jewish and Christian communities in Yemen.

Civil Society Widening the Public Space

Yemeni citizens are working to expand their participation in the public sphere, be it the political or non-governmental area. As in so many other aspects of life in Yemen, financial constraints not only hinder the development of civic organizations, but also often produce counterproductive behaviors among leaders competing for limited resources. Government handling of NGOs can be arbitrary, although in general the Government supports activities that further the overall social and economic goals of the state. NGOs devoted to promoting awareness of human rights issues are relatively new and, not surprisingly, garner more scrutiny and interference from the Government than social service groups. Leadership and management training are critical for the development of voluntary organizations.

Brief History

The guidance of Islam and Yemen's rural traditions have long promoted local cooperation and self-help efforts devoted to building mosques, schools, or other public works. In the late 19th and early 20th centuries, formal voluntary organizations flourished under British rule in Aden, with the first groups devoted to charitable activities. Gradually cultural, literary and political groups emerged. A number of newspapers, including the first English-language daily in the Arabian Peninsula, published regularly. The Marxist people's Democratic Republic of Yemen essentially eradicated the civil society in Aden and in the south that had existed under the British.

In the north, rural cooperative development societies began in the early 1960s, channeling the private remittances from Yemeni expatriate workers into the building of the rural infrastructure. The cooperative movement reached its peak in the late 1970s. Its very success led to it being co-opted by the national government in the early 1980s, effectively eliminating private funding, which could not be adequately replaced by state monies.

The Constitution guarantees the rights of Yemenis to form NGOs. NGOs are governed by Law no. 11 enacted in 1963, which establishes basic rules for organization and registration and places NGOs under the monitoring authority of the Government, currently the Ministry of Labor and Social Affairs. The Ministry has the right to abolish a society or freeze its activities by administrative decision or through rejection of no-response to its application for renewal of its license, granted for a period of 6 months to three years. Many associations operate freely and effectively without licenses from the Government. Perhaps the largest problem faced by NGOs is the inconsistent application of existing law and a sense of arbitrary interference by Government. The Government recognizes the inadequacy of the current law governing NGOs, but a draft law before Parliament has failed to pass due to numerous concerns that it could be worse than the current law.

Three Phases of Civil Society Development

The civic landscape of Yemen can be divided into three main phases of development: ad hoc and localized, usually rural, self-help cooperatives (building mosques, roads, etc.); organized local, usually urban, welfare associations that address social problems (literacy and family planning advocates); and associations organized around national political issues (such as human rights and voter registration). The first category has existed since time immemorial and has set the social precedent for citizens taking responsibility for their own environments. A recent independent study indicates that rural farmers and villagers still depend on self-generated civic organizations headed by a trusted member of the community to undertake

Population & Family Planning: Overcoming Tradition; Providing Education

President Saleh has indicated his intention to declare the year 2000 as Yemen's year to focus on population issues. In a promising start, the Minister of Public Health already has won support for the concept of child-spacing from the head of Yemen's largest Islamic charitable society. The United Nations Fund for Population Activities (UNFPA) recently announced its commitment to Yemen of \$18 million over the next four years to support reproductive health and family planning activities. Dr. Nafis Sadik, head of UNFPA, visited Yemen in early May 1999 and strongly encouraged the government to create a parliamentary committee on women in development, urging parliamentarians to contact their counterparts in Egypt, Indonesia and Iran, all of which have led successful population control campaigns through Friday prayers at local mosques, TV programs and other media avenues.

During Dr. Sadik's press conference, she was impressed by the many questions about family planning and Islam. The Minister of Education commented that journalists knew the answers, but wanted to use Dr. Sadik's responses to develop stories on the views of a Muslim woman. The stories likely will be used in conjunction with an upcoming conference in Sanaa of religious leaders on Islam and family planning. Religious leaders from Al-Azhar University in Egypt and Iran have been invited to attend the conference and share their views with their Yemeni counterparts.

Yemen's 1998 estimated population is 17.5 million, which at an annual growth rate of 3.5% is expected to double by 2018. Half of that population is under 15 years of age. The mortality rate for Yemeni children under the age of five decreased from 378 per thousand in 1960 to 100 per thousand in 1998, but this level remains unacceptably high. High fertility rates (more than 6 children per mother, often spaced no more than one year apart) take a huge toll on the mother's health and on her ability to ensure adequate nutrition and care for all of her children, and places the average Yemeni family in severe economic distress as the cost of living continues to rise.

A USAID-funded Demographic Health Survey undertaken in 1997 and completed in 1998 shows that Yemen has made some progress with respect to population control: the population growth rate has declined since 1992 from 3.7% to 3.5% and the fertility rate has declined from 7 to 6.5. During the same period, Yemen's national contraceptive prevalence rate has doubled from 7% to 13%. These indicators illustrate a positive trend, but Yemen still has a long way to go.

Recent U.S. assistance on population issues has been focused on training 220 community midwives, on renovating and equipping 22 maternal and child health/family planning (MCH/FP) units in district health units in the governorates of Hajjah, Hodeidah and Hadhramaut, and in supplying a limited number of commodities, including contraceptives, to those centers. There has been a notable increase in contraceptive prevalence in those areas in which USAID has been involved. However, until Yemen's civil and religious leadership actively and vocally campaign to limit Yemen's family size by spacing children more than one year apart, real progress will be elusive.

Educating Women to Stem Population Growth

Yemen's firmly tradition-bound society holds a somewhat restricted perspective on the role of women in society, including female education. Continued active support by both multilateral and bilateral donors in the areas of female education and reproductive health will be required for the foreseeable future to have any kind of lasting impact on Yemeni society. Those women fortunate enough to have had educated fathers who understand and appreciate the value of educating their daughters have been able to pursue their interests across an extremely broad

academic spectrum, including medicine, law, agriculture and engineering. Their individual and collective impact on Yemeni society, although they are currently few in number, is considerable.

USAID currently is devoting a portion of available pipeline funds for teacher training, focusing on female teachers. Yemen's woefully low female primary school enrollment rate (34.7% nationally) is restricted to a great extent by a dearth of female teachers and adequate classroom (i.e., separate from boys) facilities. Were additional funding available to expand and extend USAID programs in Yemen, primary emphasis would be placed on offering continued support to MCH/FP facilities in rural areas, and to girls' education. Increasing female literacy rates and reducing fertility rates would ultimately improve women's health, economic options, level of meaningful political participation, and improve child health, thereby yielding benefits to the development of Yemen's struggling economy. The return of Peace Corps volunteers to Yemen also would have a marked impact on this Mission's ability to increase female access to education and health care by the provision of female teachers and health care workers in rural areas.

U.S.-Yemeni Bilateral Relations National Interests and National Values

US policy and programs in Yemen support the basic and complementary goals of democratization and Yemen's regional re-integration. After a serious chilling of relations following Yemen's opposition to Desert Shield/Desert Storm in 1990-91, our bilateral relationship has recently begun to improve at an accelerating speed. Corollary goals include cooperation on counterterrorism, population, health and literacy issues and economic assistance. While we have a number of bilateral programs to support these goals, Embassy Sanaa does not have an American staffed USAID presence or Peace Corps at this time.

Yemen sees both its fundamental interests and its fundamental values as compatible with ours. Yemen, as a government and a people, is staunchly nationalistic but also open to continued improved relations with the U.S. The Yemeni government (ROYG) and the people are justly proud of what they have achieved in political and economic reform, and painfully aware of their limitations and the challenges they face.

Democratization: A Core Value

A core value of US foreign policy has been the expansion and consolidation of democracy. Our visible, active and concrete engagement in Yemen's efforts makes manifest not only to the Yemeni people but also to others striving toward democracy the reality of our commitment. Yemen is the only country on the Arabian Peninsula with a functioning multiparty Parliament elected by universal suffrage. It already enjoys an active press, has initiated judicial reform and is crafting local administration legislation. The Government of Yemen has made a public commitment to and requested international donor technical assistance on improvement of its human rights performance, reform of its judiciary, and strengthening of its democratic institutions and civil society, including the empowerment of women.

Regional Integration: A Core Interest

Regionally, Yemen has become a more reliable partner on global and regional issues of importance to us. It continues to publicly support the Middle East Peace Process, to treat Iran with respect but wariness, and to take a more constructive public stance on Iraqi compliance with UN Security Council resolutions. It supports NATO's Five Points on Kosovo and has sent humanitarian assistance to the refugees. Yemen has recently restored full diplomatic relations with Kuwait, severed since the Gulf War. Although their lengthy border remains undemarcated, Yemen and Saudi Arabia maintain an open dialogue and normal relations. Yemen has played a constructive role in international fora, such as the Arab League.

Yemen has cooperation with the United States and others on combating terrorism by taking steps to deny safe haven to international terrorists and by continuing efforts, not wholly successful, to rid the country of foreign extremists. To underscore its commitment to counterterrorism, it has signed and sent to Parliament four international counterterrorism conventions with two more in process. The USG has an active Anti-terrorism Assistance Training program and otherwise seeks to assist and cooperate with the ROYG on terrorism issues.

The US-Yemeni military cooperation relationship has improved at a pace with the overall relationship. Yemen has a model humanitarian demining program financed mainly by the

USG; the US Navy has a bunkering contract at Aden port; we have signed a Defense Fuel Storage Agreement; and there are joint exercises and training opportunities.

The Stakes

Yemen is not a lead player on many of our key regional objectives. It is not one of Israel's neighbors, nor can it directly threaten Israel's security. It is neither a rogue state supporting terrorism nor is it procuring weapons of mass destruction nor is it threatened by a rogue state. And it lacks both critical petroleum reserves and significant market potential for US business. However, Yemen is in a position, to varying degrees to affect key US regional interests.

A politically unstable, ideologically hostile and increasingly impoverished Yemen would create an unacceptable destabilizing factor on the Arabian Peninsula and across the strategic Bab al-Mandeb to the Horn of Africa. A central government unable to expand its authority over the entire country would reopen Yemen as an attractive safe haven to terrorists and other elements inimical to regional stability and safety, and increase the vulnerability of Americans to terrorism and tribal kidnappings.

A stable, prosperous Yemen that perceives a stake for itself in both the bilateral relationship with the U.S. and in construction relations with US regional allies is more likely to support and cooperate on key regional objectives. Yemen's internal stability will depend upon the institutionalization of its democratic and economic reform programs. The U.S. alone cannot assure Yemen's stability; it is important the Yemen be regionally integrated as well.

The Challenges

The challenges Yemen faces, particularly population growth, widespread illiteracy and resource depletion, threaten its efforts toward democratization, economic development and political stability. Yemen is one of the poorest countries in the world. Its geographic size doubled in 1990 with unity; its infrastructure is primitive; its modern political history is less than a decade old; and, its population, overwhelmingly rural and is traditionally greater than that of its Arabian Peninsula neighbors combined.

Yemen's challenges are felt most strongly by its women. There is universal suffrage and the right to hold elected office. Yemen has just named its first woman ambassador and there are a number of impressive, talented women throughout the government and in the private sector. At the same time, female illiteracy is approximately 7.4%; the fertility rate is 6.5 and Yemen has one of the highest infant and maternal mortality rates in the world. The Government supports female education, health care, child-spacing and other central women's issues, but lacks the resources to fulfill its commitment. Most donor assistance, including the nominal US programs, is focused on these sectors.

Economic & Commercial Overview Glum Statistics and Grim Prospects

Eighty to ninety percent of Yemen's citizens live below the poverty line. According to 1998 UNDP human development indicators, Yemen ranks 151 out of 174 nations, largely as a result of its meager \$300 annual per capita income, high maternal and infant mortality rates (14 per 1,000 live births and 100 per 1,000 live births, respectively), and high level of illiteracy (62%). Unemployment ranges between 36-40%.

Despite these glum statistics, the Republic of Yemen government (ROYG) remains committed to the program of economic reform upon which it embarked in 1995 under the guidance of the IMF and the World Bank. Since 1995, Yemen has made remarkable progress in achieving macroeconomic stability. The currency was floated and stabilized, triple-digit inflation of the early 1990s was reduced to approximately 6% in 1997 and 10% in 1998, and government subsidies on basic market commodities such as wheat, wheat flour, gasoline, diesel fuel and electricity have either been eliminated (in the case of gasoline and wheat) or significantly reduced. However, Yemen has suffered in the past two years from the precipitous decline in world oil prices and shock waves emanating from the Asia meltdown. Over the past four months, Yemen's currency has dropped in value by 18%, largely as a result of meager rains and the loss of a planting season.

The international multilateral and bilateral donor community, while feeling the growing global pinch on development resources, has continued to support Yemen with over \$2 billion in economic assistance pledges over the next several years. Russia's accession to the Paris Club in September 1997 proved a coup for Yemen's total bilateral debt obligations. Eighty percent of Yemen's \$6.7 billion debt to Russia, primarily for arms purchases from the former Soviet Union, was forgiven outright. The remainder was rescheduled on Naples terms, reducing the debt by a further 67% and refinancing the remainder (approximately \$450 million) for 30 years.

The next phases of economic reform will prove much tougher to implement than the macroeconomic stabilization Yemen has achieved over the past four years. All remaining government subsidies (diesel fuel, electricity, water, sewage, and wheat flour) will be eliminated. The country's inefficient, overstaffed, and often corrupt bureaucracy will be streamlined, appropriately compensated and adequately trained. The ROYG must take action to stem a population that is growing 3.7% annually and that is consuming scarce renewable water supplies at 140-150% of recharge rate. It must create a transparent legal environment that can objectively and independently resolve disputes. Finally, the ROYG must also find a way to extend its authority appropriately throughout the entire country. Handling these issues will require a deft political touch. The tolerance level of Yemen's public for further economic hardship brought through the reform process is beginning to wear thin, leading to widespread demonstrations in June 1998 when diesel prices were last raised.

While Yemen has only meager petroleum and natural gas reserves of its own, from which it derives over 60% of its hard-currency revenues, Yemenis have a long tradition of trading. Most of Yemen's current economic activities focus on trading, rather than on value-added production.

In addition, Yemen's lack of adequate infrastructure sometimes impedes foreign investment. Although the government appears willing to allow private investors to expand Yemen's woefully inadequate electricity generation capacity, the first attempt at a build-own-operate power plant was not successful. Government revenues are insufficient to guarantee commercial power purchase contracts. Outside the electricity sector, the World Bank and other donors are financing road, water and sewage treatment projects.

Nevertheless, private sector investors can still find attractive opportunities in Yemen. U.S., French and Korean oil companies, along with the Ministry of Oil and Mineral Resources, formed a liquefied natural gas (LNG) joint venture to process Yemen's 17 trillion cubic feet of proven natural gas reserves for export. In the port of Aden, a new container terminal owned and managed by the Port of Singapore Authority opened for business on March 19, 1999. Development of the Aden Free Zone presents opportunities for manufacturing companies to process and ship to the Gulf, the Subcontinent, and East Africa. On Yemen's Red Sea coast, the U.S. Trade and Development Agency (TDA) partially funded a feasibility study for a private oil refinery at Ras Issa, north of the port of Hodeidah. The current worldwide refinery glut has postponed any immediate plans to develop the Ras Issa facility. TDA also has partially funded feasibility studies for a 200-bed private hospital in Sanaa, and a cement plant in Bajil, about one hour east of Hodeidah.

Yemen's unique culture, history and geography offer attractive prospects for tourism development. Plentiful stocks of fish and shellfish provide opportunities for packing and export. Stunning coral reefs and the unique flora of Socotra Island offer extensive opportunities for ecotourism. Steadily growing ship trade in Aden provides excellent prospects for skilled ship maintenance and repair facilities. Furthermore, a major component of economic reform is the planned or completed privatization of approximately 100 public sector enterprises.

Yemenis hold U.S. businesses and products in high regard; in 1997 and 1998, the U.S. ranked third among suppliers of imports, after Saudi Arabia and the United Arab Emirates. U.S. exports to Yemen rose by 16% in 1998, but still represents less than 10% of Yemen's total imports. Despite the higher shipping costs of U.S. versus European or Asian products, U.S. manufacturers and contractors should continue to benefit from opportunities emerging in Yemen.

Political Overview – Tribal Roots and Democratic Future

Democracy may be the only viable form of government for Yemen. Despite long stretches of authoritarian rule, either under the Imam and the Republicans in the North or the British and the Marxists in the South, Yemenis are fiercely independent and demand that their views be heard – either in a traditional tribal setting or within emerging democratic institutions.

Yemen is not by any means a nation of young Jeffersonians; many of the currently powerful are still unsure of participatory democracy and political rights. But, President Ali Abdullah Saleh and key advisors, most especially his U.S.-educated Prime Minister, Dr. Abdul Karim Al-Iryani, realize that democracy and economic reform offer the only hope for long-term political stability and for improving the quality of life for Yemenis. Perhaps more importantly, the Yemeni people are developing experience in civil society and the expectation of participatory politics. It would be difficult, although not impossible, to turn back the political clock.

Society, Geography and Tribes

Yemen's political and social development reflects its rugged, isolated terrain and its lack of marketable resources. Most Yemenis live in picturesque but inaccessible villages and depend upon animal husbandry and subsistence agriculture. Paved roads connect only the largest towns. While most of the country has electricity, there are few phones and little access to mass media, beyond government-controlled TV and radio. All central governments have been weak, lacking in resources with which to project power into scattered, remote villages. The situation is improving, but some areas remain beyond the reach of government authority.

Yemen's social organization varies from region to region but still reflects the traditional, decentralized tribal-clan structure. Somewhat weakened by external influences, tribal traditions and organization still inform political and social life. Tribal affiliations are particularly strong in the northern highlands of Yemen, where local shaykhs continue to mediate local disputes, often providing quicker, "better" justice than can governmental courts. It is less pronounced in the urban areas and virtually gone in the immediate Aden area, but still provides the overlay. Craftsmen and tradesmen, such as butchers and bakers, traditional judges (qadis) and descendants of the Prophet's family (sayyids) are outside the tribal structure but under the local tribe's "protection." In fact, many of the urban and educated look down on the rural tribal elements as little more than coarse country bumpkins and the shaykhs as a throw-back to another era.

The essence of tribal identity is personal honor – of the individual, and by extension his tribe. Honor requires that the powerful protect the weak, and that an assault on any member of the tribe be viewed as an assault on the whole. Although, or perhaps because, Yemen is one of the most heavily armed societies in the world, elaborate codes of behavior have developed to forestall violence and avoid blood feuds. The seclusion and covering of women stems largely from the fear that women are particularly vulnerable and thus by keeping them separate they are shielded from harm and the tribe avoids potential for violence.

Heavy armed tribes can still engage government security forces in pitched battles...and often are better equipped qualitatively as well as quantitatively. The kidnapping of foreigners has gone on intermittently for years as a way to force the government to respond to a tribe's demand for better public services, such as schools, roads and clinics. The foreigners are always treated as guests of the tribe and inevitably released unharmed.

Tribal structure increasingly overlaps modern political institutions. For example, the paramount shaykh of the Hashid Tribal Federation serves as speaker of the Parliament and head of the major opposition party, Islaah. Many prominent shaykhs or their relatives hold seats in the parliament. One phenomenon worth watching is the extent to which tribal hierarchy adapts and uses the structures of representative government, or resists and is ultimately overtaken by them. Right now the Islaah party, which largely represents conservative and tribal interests, is blocking passage of a local administration law which would devolve authority to the governorates and below. Rather than viewing this as an opportunity to legitimize their traditional authority with an elected title, they see it as a competitive structure.

The Decision on Democracy

Yemen's decision to pursue democracy began in 1990 when the leaders of the republican Yemen Arab Republic (North Yemen) and the Marxist-Leninist People's Democratic Republic of Yemen (South Yemen) agreed to unite on democratic principles. Although public rhetoric and quiet negotiations on unification had taken place over the past decade, the collapse of the Soviet Union, PDRY's patron, undermined the viability of the PDRY and created conditions for unification. Virtually unprecedented, the unification and launching of democratization was agreed to directly amongst the parties involved and without force. Yemen would be ruled by a President, there would be multiple political parties and an openly contested elected Parliament.

The pacific nature of this unification is more remarkable given South Yemen's. For 140 years Aden was a British Crown Colony and sultans in protectorate status ruled the eastern reaches. The YSP's roots lay in a violent, terrorist-style liberation war against the British; it looked to the Soviet Union and the East Germans for political, security and economic assistance; was one of the first states declared a state sponsor of terrorism; assassinated President Saleh's predecessor; supported an insurgency against him for nearly ten years; launched a major invasion at least once; experienced several internal coups with higher casualties than the 1994 Civil War; and, had one of the most dismal human rights records in the world. Further, the South had always and will continue to be at a disadvantage vs. the North in population – there are approximately 7 North Yemenis to every South Yemeni, and most of the southerners are in Aden.

The first free, multi-party parliamentary elections – which included universal suffrage – took place in 1993. It produced a coalition government dominated by President Saleh's General People's Congress (GPC; 40% of the seats) and the former PDRY ruling party, the Yemeni Socialist Party (YSP at 20%). The Islamic Grouping for Reform (Islaah), a legal Islamist opposition party, won about 20% of the seats, with other smaller parties, primarily Pan-Arabists, dividing up the remainder.

Southern Discontent - the 1994 Civil War

Although the YSP obtained cabinet seats out of proportion to their electoral results, southern leaders, who totally lacked a democratic tradition, began to feel that the democratic process of the unified country might lead to their eventual marginalization. Aided by Saudi Arabia, these former Marxists launched a civil war in the spring of 1994 to re-divide north from south. The U.S. staunchly supported the unity of Yemen, and President Saleh achieved a decisive victory over the secessionists in just seven weeks. A number of the YSP leadership chose self-imposed if prudent exile. The secessionists have reconstituted themselves as an externally financed, extra-constitutional opposition called the MOWJ.

The remnants of the YSP in Yemen have gone on to self-marginalize itself through a boycott of the 1997 parliamentary elections and an unwillingness to disavow its secessionist and Marxist past. Full integration of the south into a unified Yemen remains a major political challenge. "Carpetbagger" charges are levied regularly.

The Government, for its part, has appointed a disproportionate number of southerners, albeit GPC members, to cabinet and sub-ministerial positions, seeking to keep a "regional" balance in all key government posts. It has also structured the electoral mechanisms for the 2000 presidential elections to allow for a YSP role, despite their lack of any parliamentary seats.

An Immature Political Elite...

Democratization, political pluralism and the development of civil society in Yemen face numerous long-term challenges. These are: an immature political elite, including the political opposition that does not fully understand or appreciate the "ground rules" of the democratic process; high illiteracy rates; and impoverished central government that cannot meet the basic needs of its citizens.

The immaturity of the political elite is a nemesis to democratization. Yemen is a consensus driven society and winner-take-all competition is uncomfortable for most Yemenis. Opposition leaders are reluctant to put their party platforms – and their personal prestige – on the line in an open election. The YSP boycotted the 1997 elections rather than face defeat. The Islaah leadership would prefer to seek a deal with the GPC for cabinet seats than openly contest the presidential election. A supreme irony of the current process is the majority party's increasingly desperate attempts to convince the opposition parties to field a credible candidate against Ali Abdullah Saleh in the October elections. The President and his party understand that a 60% vs. 40% victory in a credible election will have more international legitimacy than a 90% referendum result.

...but A Vigorous Process

Despite these formidable obstacles, democracy seems to be taking root in Yemen. The 1997 Parliamentary elections were judged by international observers to be free and fair. The electoral campaign witnessed vigorous efforts by Yemeni NGOs to encourage registration, particularly among women, and to conduct domestic monitoring of the actual voting. The parliament is as yet no match for the power of the Presidency, but shows signs of developing greater independence. The GPC dominates, but party members on more than occasion have rejected important draft laws they found inadequate or unacceptable. The Parliament also regularly calls for cabinet members to defend legislation and budgets.

The Yemenis are intent upon developing a democratic system that meets international standards, but reflects their own unique history and culture. How they will address issues such as tribal authority and north-south rivalry and suspicions is not clear. Whatever comes out will, however, be uniquely Yemeni.

Qat: Not a Drug, But a Social Drag

It is difficult to get an accurate picture of Yemen without taking into consideration the widespread social allure and economic consequences of qat consumption. Qat (catha edulis forsskal) is a hedge-type shrub with shiny leaves cultivated largely in the highlands of Yemen and Ethiopia. Its tender young leaves, when chewed and stored in the cheek (resulting in the ubiquitous "baseball bulge"), provide a mildly stimulating, sometimes euphoric effect and a sense of well-being. Western qat chewers have equated the effect to drinking 10 or 15 cups of espresso. There is little evidence to indicate that qat is physically addictive, although some heavy chewers may find it temporarily psychologically addictive. Other side effects sometimes attributed to qat, including oral lesions and even cancer, are usually more directly attributable to applied pesticides that have not been properly washed from the leaves before chewing.

Qat chewing sessions (sometimes euphemistically called "social sessions") generally take place in the afternoons after lunch. Heavy qat chewers chew daily; others limit their qat chewing to Thursday and Friday afternoons (the Yemeni weekend). Large quantities of qat are consumed during celebratory occasions, including weddings and funerals, when the decedent's friends and family gather to reminisce and ponder the meaning of life. Businessmen discuss deals over qat; civil servants and parliamentarians iron out their differences; and students and journalists claim to do their best studying and writing while chewing qat.

Some businessmen and leading Cabinet officials in Yemen privately decry the many wasted productive hours consumed with qat chewing, but at the same time recognize qat's role as a great social equalizer. Qat sessions are one of the few places where drivers and servants often will chew with the head of household and honored guests, offering a valuable opportunity for both better to understand the lives and interests of the other. While some leading businessmen eschew qat in favor of longer, more productive work hours, even they acknowledge that some of their best business deals have been concluded during qat sessions, when all parties are relaxed and prone to philosophical discussion and free exchange of ideas.

Some speculate that the exponential increase in qat chewing over the past ten years is the direct result of Yemen's declining economy: if the average Yemeni had the incentive not to chew qat (read: a better-paying job), fewer productive hours would be spent in costly chews. There does appear to be a rough correlation between higher education and lower consumption of qat; most well-educated businessmen and government officials either don't chew qat at all, or restrict their chewing to weekend sessions. Certainly, for the less well-off, the economic impact of qat is staggering:

-- Yemenis spend about 400 billion rials (\$2.8 billion) each year on the qat trade, more than the annual state budget.

-- Qat accounts for about 33% of agricultural production, and represents almost 10% of GNP. Since the money generally is circulated domestically, it can provide enough income to keep farmers down on the farm, stemming urban migration. However, no foreign exchange or investment capital is generated, as would be if exportable crops were grown instead.

-- Agricultural acreage devoted to qat increases annually at about 14%, usually at the expense of exportable products such as coffee, cotton and vegetables. Land planted with qat is 5 times greater than that planted with grapes and dates; 10 times greater than that planted with bananas, and equals two-thirds of total land planted with coffee and tobacco combined.

-- Yemeni families, on average, spend more than 63% of their income on qat.

-- Depending on its quality, qat can cost anywhere between 300 Yemeni rials (\$2) per bundle to 70,000 YR (\$457) per bundle. This, in a country whose annual per capita GDP is less than \$300. The average Yemeni man consumes at least one bundle per qat chewing session; more for ceremonial occasions such as weddings and funerals. (Prompted largely by boredom, qat chewing is increasingly evident among middle- and upper-class women.)

-- Qat chewers, in each session, spend at least 4 hours in social chewing that otherwise might be used more productively.

There is a nascent trend in Yemen to eradicate qat both as an agricultural mainstay and as a part of everyman's daily budget. The Society for Combating Qat is targeting youth and teaching them the dangers and costs of qat consumption. While the Society's efforts are unlikely to yield measurable results in the short term, widespread media coverage its campaign has received lately, coupled with similar calls in the Yemeni Cabinet and Parliament, are giving Yemenis something to think about, or at least to chew over.

Health: The Impact of One Visionary Minister

The Republic of Yemen ~~currently is blessed with a vigorous and visionary health care reform pioneer in its Minister of Public Health, Dr. Abdullah Abdul Wali Nasher.~~ Since becoming Minister in May 1997, Dr. Nasher has decentralized the Ministry's budget, introduced openly advertised, merit-based hiring practices, ~~turned around a miserable public hospital by putting the right manager in place, and outlined his priorities to improve and expand Yemen's minimal health care system.~~ In September 1998, Dr. Nasher officially launched a comprehensive health care reform program in Yemen. As Dr. Jacques Baudouy, World Bank Director of Human Development for the Middle East and North Africa said, it was the first time he had ever seen a reform strategy developed without World Bank participation.

The Ministry's program was driven by Yemen's woeful health care statistics, including the worsening of some health indicators, such as malnutrition, during this decade, and a government per capita health care budget of about \$3.00. Yemen's budget problems exacerbate the lack of essential drugs and services, an immunization rate of less than 28%, and poor geographic access. Because of its extensive high mountainous regions, only 30% of Yemen's rural population has access to health care; only 50% of Yemen's total population has access overall.

Maternal and child health indicators are particularly dire, and compare poorly against those of other countries in the Middle East and North Africa. Some statistics:

Maternal mortality rate:	1,000-1,400 per 100,000 births
Fertility rate:	6.5
Prenatal care:	26%
Postnatal care:	5%
Contraceptive Prevalence Rate:	13%

Comparative Statistics (from UNICEF's State of the World's Children 1999)

	Yemen	Egypt	Jordan
Under 5 Mortality Rate 1997 (per 1,000 live births):	100	73	24
Percentage of low birth weight newborns (1990-97)	19%	10%	7%
Percentage of births attended by trained personnel 1990-97	43%	56%	97%
	Yemen	Egypt	Jordan
Percentage of women immunized for tetanus (1990-97)	17%	61%	40%

The fundamental aims of Yemen's health care reform program are:

- Make health care less expensive by providing good quality health services closer to where people live and decreasing the cost of drugs. Drugs and transportation are the two highest health care costs to patients, making up between 64 and 82% of out-of-pocket health care expenditures.

- Emphasize preventive health services, which offer a much higher cost savings than curative care. Many cases of infant and child mortality could have been prevented through timely immunizations and treatment.
- Make more efficient use of limited government resources through improved budgetary and management systems, including decentralization of funding and authority to the district level -- closer to where the people who need those services live.
- Limit the government's service delivery role to what is financially and technically feasible. Encourage private sector health providers and NGO health providers to work in partnership with the Ministry of Public Health in meeting national health goals.
- Increase resources flowing into the government health care sector by allocating more funds from the national budget, and by introducing cost-sharing and community financing schemes.
- Develop health policies and implementation strategies that target adequately the needs of women. Yemen's low female-to-male health provider ratio makes it culturally difficult for Yemeni women to access health care. Staff hiring and incentive policies, monitoring indicators and all aspects of the Ministry's work need to become gender-sensitive.

Dr. Nasher's accessibility and vision have led to a dramatic increase in both bilateral and multilateral activity in the health sector over the past several years. For example, USAID's Options for Family Care project trained and graduated 220 community midwives in the governorates of Hajjah, Hodeidah and Hadhramaut, and have renovated and equipped 22 maternal and child health units in district health centers. Continuing assistance in the health sector is vital to Yemen's goal of reducing its population growth rate.

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P5 Release would disclose confidential advice between the President and his advisors, or between such advisors [(a)(5) of the PRA]
P6 Release would constitute a clearly unwarranted invasion of personal privacy [(a)(6) of the PRA]

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Freedom of Information Act - [5 U.S.C. 552(b)]

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Clinton Presidential Records
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OA/Box Number: 17203

FOLDER TITLE:

Yemen/Background

2013-0936-S
rc1358

RESTRICTION CODES

Presidential Records Act - [44 U.S.C. 2204(a)]

- P1 National Security Classified Information [(a)(1) of the PRA]
- P2 Relating to the appointment to Federal office [(a)(2) of the PRA]
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- P4 Release would disclose trade secrets or confidential commercial or financial information [(a)(4) of the PRA]
- P5 Release would disclose confidential advice between the President and his advisors, or between such advisors [(a)(5) of the PRA]
- P6 Release would constitute a clearly unwarranted invasion of personal privacy [(a)(6) of the PRA]

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- b(9) Release would disclose geological or geophysical information concerning wells [(b)(9) of the FOIA]

**Children's Issues:
Not Exploitation, but Economics**

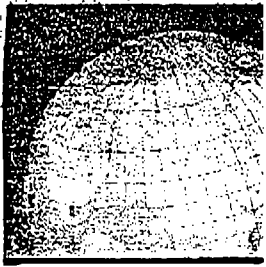
The Republic of Yemen Government (ROYG) is aware of the problem of young children in the workplace, but is at odds on how to effect changes in its child labor situation in the short run. Yemen in 1991 signed the International Convention on the Rights of the Child, and is also a signatory to Arab conventions on children's rights. Since late 1997, the ROYG has been working proactively with UNICEF, WHO and the ILO to draft a national strategy on child labor. The strategy and its associated law have not yet been finalized. Yemen has been stymied in its efforts to achieve substantial progress on this issue by other overarching priorities, such as its stagnant economy.

Yemen's child labor problem is largely the result of a distressed national economy that cannot provide schools for all children or jobs for all adults who need work. Most of Yemen's employed children are working in family-run subsistence agriculture. Girls take on substantial household duties within the home as young as eight years old. To augment meager family incomes, a few children work for non-family enterprises such as small urban shops or restaurants. According to 1994 census data (the latest available), approximately 6.5% of Yemen's workforce is comprised of children, most of whom belong to Yemeni immigrant families returning from the Horn of Africa.

★ According to existing Yemeni labor laws, children under 15 are generally prohibited from working. However, Yemen's current economic distress makes enforcement of the law difficult. If the authorities prohibit many 8-15 year-olds from working, their families, often headed by only one parent, will have no other source of income. Due to a lack of educational opportunities, these children would not go to school, but could end up on the streets, unsupervised and uncontrolled.

There is no evidence in Yemen of forced or bonded child labor, nor of any commercial sex industry in this conservative Islamic county. With half of its 17.5 million population under the age of 15, and an unemployment rate approaching 40%, Yemenis out of necessity accept an "all able hands in any employment opportunity" approach.

↖ When no
economic
security --
pressures create
child labor



EMERGING DEMOCRACIES FORUM

FAX COVER SHEET

THE NATIONAL
DEMOCRATIC INSTITUTE FOR
INTERNATIONAL AFFAIRS

AND

THE REPUBLIC OF YEMEN

In Partnership with:

UNITED NATIONS
DEVELOPMENT PROGRAMME

NATIONAL ENDOWMENT
FOR DEMOCRACY

WESTMINSTER
FOUNDATION FOR
DEMOCRACY

And the Governments of:

CANADA

JAPAN

THE NETHERLANDS

THE UNITED KINGDOM

THE UNITED STATES

TO: Noa Meyer

FAX #: 456-2581

FROM: ~~Natalie C. Sun~~ (natalies@ndi.org) Rebecca Haessig
Emerging Democracies Forum #797-4784

DATE: June 22 1999

PAGES: 3

The National Democratic Institute, 06/21/99

Women in Yemen - Statistics

Population

Total	Women
16,387,963	8,025,158

Life Expectancy

	Yemen	World	Arab States
women	61	65	72.
men	57	62	69

Population Growth

Yemen	World	Arab States
3.3%	1.2%	3.2%

Literacy - age 15 and over who can read

	Yemen	World	Arab States
women	39%	71.5%	63.7%
men	53%	83.7%	78.7%

Women in Parliament (there are currently two women in the Yemeni parliament)

	Yemen	World	Arab States
Both Houses	0.7%	12.8%	3.4%
Lower house	0.7%	13.3%	3.6%
Upper house	0.0%	10.6%	2.5%

Women's Rights

- The Constitution of Yemen guarantees women equal opportunity in political, economy, social and cultural fields. Women's rights, in terms of marriage, divorce, remarriage, inheritance and household requirements, are dictated by the Islamic tenets and Islamic religious law, or Shari'ah.

Women in Yemen's Ancient History

- No good - actually*
- Women played a prominent role in Yemen's ancient history. The Queen of Sheba, ruler of the kingdom of Southern Arabia in the 10th century BC, remains one of Yemen's best known rulers and is infamous for her meeting with King Solomon during biblical times. Told of Solomon's infinite wisdom, she undertook a long and difficult journey to Jerusalem to test his wisdom and bear witness to his acts. Fascinated by Solomon, the Queen of Sheba bestowed, "a hundred and twenty talents of gold, and of spices very great store, and precious stones," upon him and returned to South Yemen, singing his praises throughout the land.

Specific of this story

- Queen Arwa ruled Yemen for forty years and is considered the most distinctive of Yemeni women after the Queen of Sheba. While her husband, the crown prince, lay paralyzed in bed, Arwa took over the responsibilities of the crown. As ruler of Yemen, Queen Arwa raised the economic growth of the state and standard of living of the people by taking great care in agriculture and social issues, such as education. She appointed state ministers and province governors to maintain this stability. Queen Arwa is also remembered for the many monuments, schools and mosques she built in Yemen. When she died, she was buried in the mosque she had built during her reign.

Increased Role of Women in Elections

- ★ ★ ★*
- In 1993, the first parliamentary elections in newly unified Yemen enfranchised women, the first in the Arabian peninsula to do so. But difficulties and confusion regarding voter registration meant that fewer than 20 percent of the women who were eligible registered to vote and fewer still voted on election day. In preparation for parliamentary elections in 1997, Raufa Hassan, Yemen's leading feminist and founder of the first Women's studies program in the region (also an unsuccessful candidate in the 1993 parliamentary elections), worked to organize women to be knowledgeable voters. The organization she helped found, the Arab Democratic Institute, a non partisan independent civic organization that hired 11 women as regional organizers who then hired 74 consistency coordinators. Targeting 63 constituencies where fewer than 500 women had registered for the 1993 elections, these women fanned out throughout Yemen to educate women about the elections. Gathering village women where they lived in someone's home or during village weddings, these women discussed voting procedures, women's rights and the importance of casting an informed ballot. The program was popular and reached out to thousands of women, providing them with the information and skills necessary to participate in politics. In part as a result of the efforts of the women Hassan organized, 825,984 women were added to the voter lists prior to the 1997 elections (there had been 478,566 women registered in 1993). Women voted in proportions similar to men on election day.

The Yemeni Civil War—1994

The Process of Unification

Although the Yemeni people have long shared a common ethnic and cultural identity, for most of its recorded history, Yemen constituted a single political entity for only brief periods. Prior to 1990, the Ottoman Turks ruled all of Yemen for a short period in the late seventeenth century.

The modern political history of Yemen began in 1962 when northern republicans, aided by Egypt, overthrew the Imam, a quasi-feudal/quasi-religious despot. In 1967, revolutionary forces in the south threw the British out of Aden, ending about 130 years of British colonization. North Yemen became the Yemen Arab Republic; it began with an effort to establish democratic and republican institutions, but autocratic traditions were stronger than fledgling efforts to democratize. Although never a true democracy, the leaders of North Yemen governed more often than not within a broad social and political consensus of tribal and urban elements. South Yemen became the People's Democratic Republic of Yemen and quickly adopted a classic Marxist-Leninist ideology. The PDY was a repressive dictatorship and state-sponsor of terrorism that survived economically due to the financial support of the Soviet Union. The collapse of the Soviet Union in the late 1980s paved the way for unification.

During the 1970s and 80s relations between the two Yemens swung widely between armed conflict and occasional agreements to unify. Two major border wars erupted in 1972 and again in 1979, both of which ended in political agreements to take steps toward formal unification. In the mid-1980s leaders of both the North and South adopted a series of practical measures that increased social and economic cooperation between the two countries. Despite numerous setbacks, cooperation continued and culminated in an agreement in late 1989 to unify the two countries within one year. The new unified Republic of Yemen was announced in May 1990 along with a thirty-month period of transition to allow for the complete merger of state institutions and the reorganization of political life.

The infant new state was almost immediately undermined when Iraq invaded Kuwait. Attentions were diverted to the crisis, and as a result of its failure to support the U.S.-led coalition, Yemen suffered grievous economic losses. Nearly 2 million workers were expelled from Saudi Arabia; all economic assistance from the Gulf and Saudi Arabia dried up; and the United States drastically cut back on its foreign assistance to Yemen.

The Civil War

The new Republic of Yemen decided upon a democratic model, based on open, multiparty elections. Successful parliamentary elections took place in 1993 and produced a coalition government among the General People's Congress, the party of President Salch, the Yemeni Socialist Party (YSP), the party of south Yemen, and Islaah, the

Islamic Grouping for Reform. The YSP's position in government was proportionally greater than its electoral results--the YSP won only 20 percent of the seats in the Parliament. Despite the success of the elections, the unity itself was threatened by on-going competition between the leaders of the former north and south Yemen. The vice-president, who was the former president of South Yemen, began to boycott the government. In fact, the institutions of government, particularly the two armed forces, never actually merged into single, unified institutions. Former southern leaders also realized that a democracy would not work to their advantage, since the population of the south was roughly only about 25 percent of the total population of Yemen. The President refused to entertain the southern proposal of an elected Senate based on equal representation of all the governorates (as in the United States). The former southern leaders retreated to their former capital, Aden, and began speaking openly of a need for a "federation," which was widely interpreted as a withdrawal of support for unity. Efforts at mediation and reconciliation failed. In late April 1994, a battle between northern and southern army units erupted. After about a month of fighting, the former president of South Yemen announced secession and the creation of a separate Democratic Republic of Yemen. Saudi Arabia provided funds to the secessionists. The United States offered its strong political support for a unified Yemen. Within seven weeks, northern forces prevailed, the former southern leadership fled the country, and unity survived.

The Aftermath of the Civil War

Popular support for a unified Yemen remains widespread. Although the followers of the exiled former secessionists continue to mount relatively meaningless efforts to destabilize the country, there is almost no political support for redividing the country. Nevertheless, as a result of the northern military victory, the government of President Saleh placed northerners in most sensitive security positions in the southern governorates, creating a Yemeni version of "carpetbaggers." Many of these northern officials have also used their powers to acquire valuable property in the south and in Aden. (Granted, most of this property was confiscated from its original owners by the communists in the late 1960s and early 1970s, but it nonetheless rankles that it is now in the hands of outsiders.) Thus there is lingering ill will in the south based on the perception that the southern governorates do not enjoy their rightful share of resources and power.

The Yemeni Socialist Party remains a legal, functioning political party. But the party is internally divided between unreconstructed Marxists and a reform wing that realizes it must become a social democratic-style party in order to survive in a democratic Yemen. So far, the old guard prevails, and the party boycotted the 1997 parliamentary elections, contributing to lower voter turnout than in 1993 and exacerbating southern feelings of marginalization. Unless the party turns itself around soon, it will become meaningless as a political player.

'Sayings'

1. A frequently cited reference, particularly in terms of women's role in Yemen, is to Queen Arwa who ruled Yemen for 50 years during the early 12th century AD. She was considered a gifted ruler, patron of writers and architects, and builder of public works.
2. A tradition ("hadith") of the Prophet Mohammad is: "Faith is Yemeni, and wisdom is Yemeni."
3. The following is a quote from a poem by Gazal Madgashia, the first female Yemeni poet (19th century) and considered a pioneer in women's liberation. The line has also been memorialized in a Yemeni song:

"Equal, equal oh slaves of God, equal
No one is born free and another is born slave"
4. The First Lady, in her remarks during the event with USAID and Fulbright scholarship alumni could mention the recent death of Dr. Abdul Aziz Al-Saqqaf an activist in the field of press freedom, human rights, and civil society in Yemen. He had a Fulbright Fellowship himself and was the prime mover in organizing the Fulbright Alumni Association in Yemen. Only in his mid-40s, his tragic death in a freak accident on May 31 has shaken reform-minded Yemenis badly.
5. A very Yemeni greeting, that could nicely be used in Arabic for a greeting would be: "Assalam Tahiya."
6. A verse from the Holy Quran attributed to God: "...and those affairs are a matter of counsel." (This is widely interpreted as divine support for democracy.)
7. Another verse from the Holy Quran attributed to Queen Bilquis (the historic Queen of Sheba) was: "Oh chieftains, pronounce for me in my case, I decide no case until you are present with me." (This is another traditional support for the concept of the consent of the governed.)
8. "Yemen is a land of wealth and welfare. It is the land of incense. Its people love freedom and they enjoy it greatly. (Aristotenes, Greek historian, 194 BC)
9. A traditional saying: "Sana'a should be visited no matter how far the journey."

NOTE: These sayings were gathered from a number of sources and I cannot personally verify all the attributions. For example, I never heard of Aristotenes (No. 8). I'm no scholar of ancient Greece, so he could have been real. And I did that that quote.

like

To: Laura Schiller

From: Katy Button

- Vital Voices list (not final)
- Vital Voices talking points

As of: 06/16/99 7:45 PM

Eight Participants (all English speaking)

- **Haiti**

Nadine Perrault

Nadine is one of the leading women in Haiti in the area of civic education and rule of law. She is a Vital Voices of the Americas alum. Nadine was involved in setting up the Vital Voices follow-up conference for Haiti last May and is working with women throughout the region to plan for the Vital Voices of the Caribbean in September '99.

Subject: Vital Voices Haiti conference – May '99 and planning for the Vital Voices of the Caribbean – September '99.

- **Iceland**

Sigridur Duna (Sigrida)

Sigridur is a former Member of Parliament and a university professor. She was selected by the Prime Minister of Iceland to serve as the Executive Chair of the Women in Democracy/Vital Voices of the Baltics and Russia Conference to be held in Iceland in October 1999. As one of the leading women in Iceland, she has been an active and effective partner with the USG Vital Voices team.

Subject: Women in Democracy/Vital Voices of the Baltics and Russia

- **Italy**

Maria Grazia Giammarinaro (Maria Grazia)

Maria, a native of Palermo, is the Director of the Office of Legislation of the Italian Ministry of Equal Opportunity. She is a judge and an expert on trafficking legislation in Italy. She was instrumental in initiating the very successful US – Italy Working Group to Combat Trafficking. In July, Maria will accompany the Italian delegation to the U.S. and continue to work with the President's Interagency Council on Women to integrate anti-trafficking projects into Vital Voices.

Subject: Vital Voices Trafficking Project

- **Kuwait**

Participant not yet confirmed

The Emir of Kuwait has recently moved to enfranchise women. After the next voter registration period in February 2000, women in Kuwait will be able to vote and run for elected office for the first time. We are in contact with our embassy in Kuwait to select a roundtable participant who could play a significant role in linking Kuwait women to Vital Voices partners and democracy projects in other parts of the world. Our embassy is already working with the President's Interagency Council on Women on Vital Voices political and leadership exchanges for the fall.

Subject: Upcoming Vital Voices exchanges for Kuwaiti women

- **Mongolia**

Leramghere! Rinchin (pronunciation to follow)

This participant is a Mongolian Member of Parliament who has a strong reputation for civic leadership.

Subject: Future Vital Voices Democracy projects in Asia

As of: 06/16/99 7:44 PM

- **Northern Ireland**

Pearl Sagar

Pearl is a founding member of the Northern Ireland Women's Coalition and coordinates Vital Voices follow-up activities in Northern Ireland. Her involvement with and practical approach to follow up has allowed women in Northern Ireland to take ownership of Vital Voices. Last year, the British government honored her with an OBE for her work in peace building, community development and political leadership.

Subject: Vital Voices of Northern Ireland follow-up projects

- **Somalia**

Nasri Adam (Naz ree Adam)

Nasri is a 29-year-old Somali woman born and raised in Kenya. When Nasri was 22, war broke out in Somali. She left her safe job as a bank teller in Kenya to work for peace and demobilization in Somalia. She joined a women's development organization, which provided women with education, mediation training and healthcare. Nasri founded the organization's Peace Center. Through the Peace Center, she recruited 150 militiamen and persuaded them to trade in their weapons for classes in literacy, technical skills and English in hopes of finding work other than as mercenary soldiers. All 150 militiamen stayed in the program. Many have carried out community work after graduating. She is currently working on projects with Vital Voices partners.

Subject: Vital Voices Africa / Women in Peacekeeping and Armed Conflict

- **Argentina**

Maria Rosa De Martini or

Monique Thiteux Altschul

These two women are both Vital Voices of the Americas alumnae. One will be selected to join the roundtable. Both are leaders in their country for their work in civic education and rule of law.

Subject: Vital Voices Latin America Follow-up

As of: 06/16/99 7:44 PM

Vital Voices Roundtable Alternates

AFRICA

- **Tanzania**

Margaret Sitta

Works with a legal rights NGO in Tanzania.

Subject: Vital Voices Africa

- **Kenya**

Grace Githu

Subject: Vital Voices Africa

- **South Africa**

Ilona Tip

Subject: Vital Voices Africa

EASTERN EUROPE AND EUROPE

- **Moldova**

Corina Mihaela Leca

Works with a legal education and human rights NGO in Moldova.

Subject: Vital Voices Vienna follow-up activities

- **Iceland**

Magnca P. Hjalmarisdottir

Executive Director of Conference on Women and Democracy/Vital Voices of the Baltics and Russia.

THE AMERICAS

- **Bolivia**

Nardi Suxo

Works on conflict resolution in Bolivia

Subject: Vital Voices of the Americas follow-up activities

- **Brazil**

Ina Quang

Works a various democracy projects in Brazil

Subject: Vital Voices of the Americas follow-up activities

- **Colombia**

Clara Fonnegra

Works on justice, corruption, and legal issues in Colombia

Subject: Vital Voices of the Americas follow-up activities

As of: 06/16/99 7:44 PM

**HRC Closing Talking Points
for
Global Vital Voices Roundtable**

- I am delighted to see some of my good friends from the Vital Voices global network – and to meet those of you who are committed to launching new Vital Voices partnerships in your countries.
- I have been inspired to hear about how you are sharing ideas and concrete projects to strengthen women, like yourselves, who are **making democracies work**.
- I hope you will continue to work with my Vital Voices team in the U.S. government. Our Secretary of State Madeleine Albright has said that supporting women as the builders of democracies is not just the right thing to do but the smart thing to do and this has become an important U.S. foreign policy goal.
- The movement towards democracy that has been unleashed by all your work is so powerful and effective. It is truly changing the way economies and governments (including my own) operate.
- We know that we cannot get from where we are to where we want to be in the coming years without women taking the tools of opportunity into their own hands.
- I am fully committed to making sure that Vital Voices continues to be an effective means to make women's voices heard all over the globe.
Thank you for all your efforts.

2ND STORY of Level 1 printed in FULL format.

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Agence France Presse

July 04, 1995 19:41 Eastern Time

SECTION: International news

LENGTH: 1414 words

HEADLINE: Reconciliation proves elusive a year after Yemen's civil war

BYLINE: Hamoud Mounassar

DATELINE: SANAA, July 5

BODY:

Yemen has started to emerge from its economic and diplomatic isolation but left national reconciliation for later, a year after holding on to its unity in the fire of battle.

President Ali Abdallah Saleh has consolidated his power, begun talks with international financial institutions and embarked on normalization with Saudi Arabia which he had infuriated with his support for Iraq in 1990-1991.

But south Yemen has been deprived of its own leadership since Saleh's northern-based forces captured Aden on July 7 after defeating socialist-led forces in a two-month civil war.

The Yemen Socialist Party (YSP), which had governed Aden since the former south Yemen gained independence from Britain in 1967, was ousted from the coalition government in Sanaa last October.

It was the price it paid for trying to secede from the 1990 union it had entered into with north Yemen.

The YSP, discredited by the defeat and its leaders' flight into exile, is only a shadow of its former self, diplomats said. Its 50 MPs in the 301-seat parliament have failed to shine or unite with other opposition groups.

"In my opinion, there is now nobody to represent the interests of the south," Sheikh Tariq Abdullah, a lawyer, said in Aden. "The YSP party members who stayed in Yemen lack initiative and courage."

Not only have opposition calls for reconciliation fallen on deaf ears, but the authorities are still using the socialists as scapegoats, blaming the country's economic and other ills on them.

YSP members were detained following protests in March against price hikes for gasoline and services.

"In the last three months, people have been arrested for writing graffiti and distributing pamphlets," according to Ahmad Hussein Bilal, chairman of the official human rights organization in Aden.

Agence France Presse, July 04, 1995

Yemen faces many dilemmas in trying to revive its economy.

After parliament last October re-appointed him president for five years, Saleh raised prices and simplified exchange rates to meet calls for reform outlined by the World Bank and International Monetary Fund.

But the measures -- which were to have been for five years and instead cut back to three years -- were considered token gestures by a government fearful of political unrest, according to economists and bankers.

Saleh must also overcome objections from his coalition partner, the Islamic fundamentalist Al-Islah, to cut subsidies on basic goods and deflate a bloated bureaucracy.

If he wants to attack the endemic corruption denounced by Al-Islah, the president would have to alienate powerful businessmen, UN experts said.

And Yemen has little room for maneuver with a foreign debt of eight billion dollars and an inflation rate estimated at 65 percent officially -- at 150 percent by UN experts.

Despite its June reconciliation with Saudi Arabia, Yemen does not expect Riyadh and Kuwait City to renew aid or allow the same number of Yemenis to find jobs as in the past.

Only some of the 800,000 Yemenis expelled from Saudi Arabia in 1990 can expect to return to their jobs there.

These economic links were worth hundreds of millions of dollars annually for Sanaa.

Although it produces 380,000 barrels of oil per day, it is not enough to meet the needs of 15.8 million people.

Its only hope is the privatization of southern companies and the creation of a free trade zone in Aden, but the zone is still only on the drawing board and the privatization plan could be exploited by northerners.

"Privatization will cause the north to buy up the south," a UN official warned.

mou/lc/hc

AFP

The "Prosperity Store," shutters pulled down and graffiti scrawled over it, mirrors some of the larger problems besetting Aden a year after the end of civil war.

The appliance store was shut down in 1993 as the family fought over who was the rightful heir, foreshadowing the fraternal strife that ripped Yemen apart for two months until July 7 last year.

A year after Yemeni President Ali Abdallah Saleh's northern forces captured Aden by defeating southern socialists led by Ali Salem al-Baid, the store

Agence France Presse, July 04, 1995

remains shut and rest of the city appears squalid and rundown.

The authorities blamed south Yemen's troubles on the socialists, who ruled since south Yemen gained independence from Britain in 1967 until July 1994, four years after it merged with north Yemen.

"The corruption of the courts and security forces was inherited. We can't change things in one day," according to Aden province's deputy governor, Wahid Rashid.

Diplomats and foreign aid agency experts said that corruption was widespread throughout Yemen, not just in the south.

But Sheikh Tariq Abdullah, a business lawyer, said the Yemen Socialist Party (YSP) was so steeped in corruption that it "boasted it was better at it than the northerners."

The YSP was discredited by its defeat and the flight of its leaders and some party members have since joined Saleh's General People's Congress or the Islamic fundamentalist party Al-Islah.

Both parties re-established order and calmed some of the extremists who had pillaged a church, cemeteries and the city's only brewery after the city fell last year.

If alcohol is no longer found except in Aden's one major hotel, the fundamentalists control only the Qaluwa neighborhood.

"If there is a danger, it's in the economic area, and unemployment could fan discontent," the deputy governor said.

Three people died when riots broke out here in March after the authorities doubled prices for gasoline and services, independent sources said.

In a sign that the problems are not just economic, a dozen people were injured in fighting two weeks ago between supporters of soccer teams from Aden and the northern capital Sanaa.

In spite of its ruined infrastructure, weak management and endemic corruption, Aden is beginning to attract some investors.

Saudi investors, with Yemeni agents and Western experts, are interested in trade and construction, while Japanese businessmen are studying prospects in the south and southeast, bankers and officials said.

Investors are also attracted by plans for a free trade zone, although more has to be done.

After three years of discussions the zone's regulations remain vague and its future uncertain. The problem, a banker said, is "the absence of services and too much red tape."

pmr/lc/hc

. . Agence France Presse, July 04, 1995

AFP

LANGUAGE: ENGLISH

LOAD-DATE: July 04, 1995

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Jane's Intelligence Review - Year Book

December 31, 1994

SECTION: MIDDLE EAST; Pg. 85

LENGTH: 3705 words

HEADLINE: Civil War in Yemen

BYLINE: Dr Andrew Rathmell

BODY:

Yemen is probably the least known, and certainly the poorest, part of the Arabian Peninsula. Yet in the late spring of 1994, it attracted international attention as rival leaders plunged the country into a civil war in which up to 7000 died and which caused anything up to US\$4 billion worth of damage to the southern port city of Aden alone. With the rout of the southern secessionist forces in July, international interest again dissipated. The conflict, however, had major regional repercussions since it highlighted the divided and unstable state of politics in the Gulf. Differing reactions to the war led to splits in the Gulf Co-operation Council (GCC) as well as reinforcing divisions between 'Desert Storm'-era enemies.

The civil war, was between leaders of the General People's Congress (GPC) and Yemen Socialist Party (YSP), the majority parties in the north and south respectively, which had been uneasy partners in a unified state since May 1990. Escalating tensions during late 1993 and early 1994 culminated in a northern military offensive aimed at destroying the southern armed forces and leadership. Southern leaders declared their secession from the union but were unable to win foreign recognition and their forces were gradually ground down by the north's superior numbers.

The collapse of the south has enabled the northern leadership to exclude their YSP rivals from power and to extend their control over the whole of the country. The victorious leadership has, however, faced problems as it now has to share power with its Islamist allies who helped it win the war, as well as facing the prospect of continued YSP resistance on a diplomatic level, if not in the form of guerrilla action. At the same time, the war has added an extra burden to the country's already frail economy. It had been hoped that Yemen's newly discovered oil reserves would enable it to overcome its economic backwardness but oil companies are now shying away from this unstable corner of the Arabian Peninsula.

Background

In the recent past, the two Yemens existed as quite separate entities, despite a strong emotional commitment to unity among the people. Imams of the Zaidi sect forced out the Ottoman occupiers in

the mid-seventeenth century but an Egyptian army, acting on behalf of the Turks, regained control in the early 19th century. Great Britain occupied the small port of Aden in 1839 and by the 1870s had gained the loyalty of tribes in the Hadramawt, so consolidating a de-facto division of the country between Britain's sphere of influence in the south and an Ottoman administration based in Sana'a. The Turks were effectively ousted in 1911 after an uprising led by Imam Yahya bin Muhammad. Between the wars, Yahya grudgingly accepted the UK-imposed border with the south despite clashes between the two sides.

Yahya was assassinated in 1948 but his son Ahmad succeeded him and kept the north stable, if isolated, from the outside world and run on traditional lines. In the south, the UK sought to ensure the stability of what had become a major military base by uniting the south's tiny sheikhdoms into the South Arabia Federation. Three years after this, in 1962, Imam Ahmad died and Sana'a was taken over by nationalist officers who declared the formation of the Yemen Arab Republic (YAR). The officers immediately called on Egypt for assistance and there followed a long-drawn out civil war between the Egyptian-backed republicans and the royalists who were backed by Saudi Arabia. In 1970, after the royalists had failed to capture Sana'a, the two sides agreed on the establishment of a compromise government.

The south, meanwhile, gained its independence as the People's Democratic Republic of Yemen (PDRY) in 1967 after a four year guerrilla war which pitted UK forces against the National Liberation Front (NLF) and the Front for the Liberation of South Yemen (FLOSY). The NLF subsequently defeated FLOSY in the post-independence struggle for power. The new rulers imposed rigid central control, Marxist economic policies and became reliant on assistance from the Soviet bloc as a series of purges pushed the country ever further to the left.

In 1974, the YAR's president fell to a southern assassin and Colonel Ali Abdullah Saleh emerged to unite an increasingly factionalized country. After elections for a 150-member Consultative Council in 1988, he was re-elected to a second five-year term, which coincided with the beginning of oil production in the YAR.

The south did not enjoy such firm rule and the NLF, transformed into the YSP, was riven by chronic internal divisions. In 1978, Soviet and Cuban troops took part in inter-factional fighting and the PDRY launched a full-scale assault on the YAR in 1979. After the failure of this attack, Ali Nasser Muhammad returned to the presidency of the south and worked with Saleh to ease relations. Resumed conflicts in the south in 1985 and 1986 killed 2000 people and disrupted relations but with the appointment of Haidar Abu Bakr al Attas as president of the PDRY the situation stabilized.

Starting in 1986, Attas and Saleh laid the groundwork for unity. With the loss of Soviet support the south's economic fortunes plunged and the north realized that only unity would allow the new oilfields, concentrated in the border region, to be fully exploited. The unity declared in May 1990 was a top-down attempt to merge two very

different political and economic systems and the new republic went through a severe shock during the 1990-91 Gulf War with the expulsion of some 800000 Yemeni workers from Saudi Arabia. Nonetheless, the united government, with Saleh as president and Ali Salim al Bidh, a long-standing YSP official, as vice-president initially functioned passably well.

Build-up to the Break

For the south, unity soon soured. Economic expectations had been raised but instead the population experienced rapid inflation and declining living standards. The discovery of oil in the Hadramawt, on stream since September 1993, encouraged southerners to think that they would be better off independent of the inefficient and grasping northern government.

The YSP also had its particular grievances. From unity until the April 1993 elections, it shared power equally with the GPC but in the elections the GPC won over half of the 302 seats contested. The northern dominated tribalist/Islamist Islah (Islamic Reform Grouping) was in second place with the YSP relegated to a powerless third place. The YSP saw its influence in the post-election government reduced proportionally and further threatened by Saleh's proposals to curtail the powers of the vice-president. The YSP leadership additionally felt itself threatened by a wave of assassinations which were attributed to Islah-linked elements tolerated by Saleh.

In September 1993, Bidh removed himself to Aden and refused to co-operate further until his demands for constitutional reform were met. On 20 February 1994, the rival leaders met in Amman to sign the so-called 'Pledge and Accord' document which envisaged far reaching changes including the disarmament of the tribes, the separation of powers and the decentralization of government. Saleh, however, clearly had no intention of abiding by this compromise agreement and within days his troops were moving to oust Bidh by force.

The War

Tension had existed between northern and southern forces since late 1993 but in late February 1994 northern forces put into operation what must have been previously formulated plans to neutralize southern units in the north, prevent the movement of southern forces in northern-controlled zones and to exert control over the areas around their units based in the south. These moves were a prelude to what Sana'a hoped would be a rapid move on Aden where the southern leaders could be arrested.

The confused nature of the fighting and the lack of clear front lines early in the conflict was a result of the exchange of units between north and south. On unity the armed forces of the YAR and PDRY were not merged, instead brigades were stationed in the territory of the other region. Bidh had attempted to withdraw his units from the north but Saleh, the nominal supreme commander, had resisted this.

The major northern garrison in the south was the 8000-strong Amaliqa

Brigade headquartered at Zinjibar on the coast. Initial clashes resulted from attempts by troops of this brigade to prevent the movement of southern forces through their checkpoints. The north's main initial thrust was directed at neutralizing the south's units in the north in order to clear the route to Aden and to protect Sana'a's rear area. Three southern brigades had been stationed in the north after union. An infantry brigade was based at Harf Sufyan, in the far north of the country; the Third Armoured Brigade was encamped at Amran, north of Sana'a; and the Basuhib Artillery Brigade was at Dhamar, on the Sana'a-Aden road. Starting on 26 February, the infantry brigade was surrounded and eliminated by northern artillery and armour. The Third Brigade was dealt with next in heavy fighting during April that disabled some 85 of the 200 tanks engaged. The Artillery Brigade was attacked by the north's Republican Guards and defeated on 4 May, opening the road southwards.

By the middle of May, the south was under assault from all sides. The five northern brigades stationed on the border were advancing on Aden from the north and northwest. The Amaliqa Brigade had been reinforced and was moving along the coast from the east. Southern reinforcements from the Hadramawt, however, helped to take the pressure off Aden's defenders and the south's internal lines of communication as well as superior artillery and airpower stalled the northern onslaught. The southern air force and 'Scud' surface-to-surface missiles (SSMs) were used to hit government installations in Sana'a, Hodeida and Taizz as well as targeting population centres in the capital.

Southern airpower was of limited use in the mountains of the central front and the north's weight of numbers told in the decisive battle for the al-Anad military complex which lasted from 13-24 May. The loss of this sprawling Russian-built base was a blow to the southern air force and put the north in a position to hit Aden with SS-21 'Scarab' SSMs.

On 21 May, the YSP leadership declared their secession and the formation of the Democratic Republic of Yemen (DRY). Bidh and his colleagues clearly hoped that foreign recognition would be forthcoming and that their covert backers, notably Saudi Arabia, would come openly to their aid. The US Government, however, cautioned its allies against taking sides in the war and GCC member Qatar showed itself openly sympathetic to the north. Facing these divided counsels, Riyadh took a cautious line and failed to act decisively. Its main overt assistance came on 27 May when it lobbied the UN Security Council (UNSC) to impose a cease-fire.

UNSC Resolution 924, passed on 1 June, called for a cease-fire and despatched the veteran Algerian diplomat Lakhdar Brahimi on a fact finding mission. Saleh at first railed against this interference but subsequently went along with the charade of offering cease-fires and negotiations at the same time as intensifying military operations. By mid-June, Aden was under bombardment. The oil refinery had been put out of action and municipal water and electricity supplies disrupted. The town was packed with refugees and aid agencies issued dire warnings regarding the likely spread of disease. A new front had also been opened in the east where northern forces had sealed off the

coastline leading to Bidh's new headquarters in Mukalla.

During June and early July, the two sides frantically lobbied outside powers. Iraq, Libya, Sudan and, to a lesser extent Iran, expressed their backing for the north which had been sympathetic to Iraq during the 1990-91 crisis. They also supplied limited material assistance to Saleh's forces. Saudi Arabia made moves to protect the south, partly as it regarded a divided Yemen as in its interests and partly out of anger with Saleh for supporting Saddam Hussein. Nonetheless, although the kingdom covertly supplied arms to the YSP, it refrained from taking direct military action which could have tipped the balance.

The crisis was settled on the battlefield rather than by diplomacy. On 7 July, Aden fell and the YSP leadership fled ignominiously into exile. For several days tribesmen in the employ of the north pillaged Aden before the army could restore order. This was done by mid-August and the victorious Saleh could begin the process of rebuilding a unified state.

Settling Scores

In prosecuting his campaign against the YSP, Saleh had relied on assistance from a variety of groups which expected political compensation after the war. GPC leaders were keen to assert their control over the country and immediate steps were taken to unify the two armies to prevent a recurrence of separatist tendencies. There was however ambivalence over the future role of the YSP. As early as the end of July, reconciliation talks were held between Sana'a's Planning Minister Abdel Karim al Iryani and Abu Bakr Attas. Sources in the GPC indicated that they were keen for the YSP to play a role in future governments in order to counterbalance the growing influence of the Islamist Islah. Saleh went as far as to extend an amnesty to most of the officials of the YSP who had been involved in the secessionist movement.

Despite these initial gestures, Saleh's attitude to the YSP has remained generally unforgiving. When a new government was finally formed in early October it contained no formal YSP representation and was instead dominated by the GPC and Islah. Saleh has consistently denounced the exiled leaders of the short-lived DRY as traitors and demanded that they return to stand trial. His uncompromising attitude is particularly noteworthy since officers loyal to Ali Muhammad, who fled to Sana'a after the 1986 civil war, were instrumental in guiding northern forces in their advances in the south. Despite early hopes that Saleh may seek to achieve stability through reconciliation with this wing of the YSP, there has been no sign that Ali Muhammad will return from his Damascus exile.

The mainstream of the YSP collapsed in disarray after the defeat and has put up little credible opposition since. Bidh fled to Oman where the government, anxious to restore good relations with Yemen, promptly gagged him. Other prominent leaders such as Abd al Rahman al Jifri, who supervised the defence of Aden, have been given sanctuary by Saudi Arabia. In the weeks after the collapse of the DRY they threatened Sana'a with protracted guerrilla war but in practice seem

to have done little. Aden has suffered from terrorism and small-scale insurgency in recent months but this appears to be linked to Islamist militants rather than the YSP. In late September, the exiled leadership, prodded into action by Riyadh, launched a National Opposition Front but this has so far not attracted widespread support.

Inside the country, the YSP has been engaged in bitter recriminations. It elected a new leader, Ali Obeid Muqbel, to replace Bidh and distanced itself from the secessionist leadership. GPC leaders have however insisted that the new YSP leaders cannot be considered as responsible partners until the exiled leadership are turned over.

Islah has meanwhile been cashing in the debt owed to it by Saleh for its support in the conflict. Its leader, Sheikh Abdullah Al Ahmar, has insisted that the party respects multi-party democracy and rejects violence. Nonetheless doubts remain, as with Islamist parties across the region, as to whether the party will adhere to this promise once in power. For now the party is concentrating on cultural and social issues, imposing its strict form of Islam on the country. Soon after the war, Islah militiamen flogged several Adenis caught drinking alcohol and the party won a potentially significant constitutional amendment which makes the Sharia the basis of law, rather than merely a basis, as it was before.

Economic Failure

The conflict was a disaster for the Yemeni economy, frail at the best of times. GDP growth had actually been a respectable 3.4 per cent in 1993, after years of decline, but the impact of the war reversed these gains. The economy is likely to contract by around 10 per cent over the next two years. Inflation, already high at around 55 per cent, is set to rocket to around 150 per cent in 1995. The value of the riyal, which averaged between 75 and 80 to the dollar before the fighting plummeted to a low of 112 to the dollar in June and 1994's current account deficit is set to widen from 1993's already painful US\$626 million.

The big hope of both northern and southern leaders in recent years was that oil would reinvigorate the impoverished country. Yemen has traditionally relied on unproductive agriculture for the majority of its employment. This has been supplemented by a small manufacturing base and a domestically-orientated service sector. In 1987, commercial exploitation of the Marib block in the north began and, in late 1993, the Masilah block in the eastern Hadramawt went on stream. Exploration is now concentrated in the Shabwah area that straddles the old north-south border.

Optimistic officials have in the past predicted a possible output of 500000 barrels per day (pre-war output was 350000) and in 1991 government receipts from oil exports had already reached over US\$450 million. The recent instability has however made the international oil companies look again at their exposure in Yemen. In the latter stages of the war, oil installations in Aden, Marib and at the Red

Sea terminal of Ras Issa suffered damage. Since the war, some of the companies have faced problems in renegotiating their concessions with Sana'a and exiled YSP leaders have threatened them with sabotage if they strike deals with Saleh's officials. Combined with the inhospitable Yemeni terrain and widespread tribal banditry, these factors may well serve as deterrents to further significant investment.

The Regional Impact

Aside from its disastrous impact on the domestic situation in Yemen, the war exacerbated divisions in the Gulf and the Middle East in general. Iraq, which has long had military ties with the north, and which before the imposition of UN sanctions in 1990 supplied oil to the country, came out openly for Saleh. Despite southern claims, there is little evidence that Baghdad supplied weapons or personnel in any significant quantity. Similarly, Libya and Sudan stood firmly behind the north, partly out of sympathy for its anti-Saudi stance, partly due to the prominence of Islamists in the north's camp.

Saudi Arabia swung behind the south, despite its detestation of the YSP's socialism. Kuwait was also a more or less open supporter of the secessionists and both countries supplied some materiel covertly. More than anything else, the two governments were concerned at the prospect of having to face a populous pro-Iraqi power to their south. Qatar, largely because of its own bilateral border disputes with Riyadh, took the dramatic step of breaking GCC ranks and supporting Yemeni unity.

Since the end of the conflict, only Saudi Arabia has continued to openly back the defeated party. Oman has moved rapidly to develop a working relationship with the new regime. Muscat has handed back all of the weapons that southern personnel who fled to Oman brought with them and has exchanged official visits. Riyadh, in contrast, has cosseted the YSP exiles and given them platforms from which to speak. In doing so it is carrying on a long tradition of backing Yemeni rebels as a way of applying pressure. Saleh has responded with vociferous complaints at Saudi intervention and has threatened to take action over the disputed border between the two countries. He may have given support for a small group which appeared in the late summer calling for the 'liberation' of the Saudi provinces of Najran and Assir, two areas long claimed by Yemen.

Outlook

By late October, Saleh and the GPC appeared to be in firm control of the country. The new government, formed in early October, had Abd al-Aziz Abd al-Ghani as Prime Minister and Abd al-Karim Ali al-Iryani as Foreign Minister. The cabinet was dominated by the GPC but Islah had members in proportion to their 65 parliamentary seats (the GPC has 140 seats). Excluded from power, YSP leaders inside the country took a conciliatory line but warned of renewed instability in the south if the grievances which had provoked the rebellion were not met. Saleh was however not interested in compromise. He moved ahead with plans to consolidate his control by merging the country's armed

forces and banning officers from holding party membership. Once these plans were completed no future YSP leadership would have the military tools with which to counter the GPC.

Sana'a's uncompromising approach is likely to store up trouble for the future. With the economic situation worsening there is little prospect of Saleh being able to buy the loyalty of southerners. Islah's growing influence will alienate the more liberal Adenis. Without determined external backing, however, there is little that south Yemenis can do to maintain their autonomy.

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GRAPHIC: Photograph 1, A southern Yemeni T-55 MBT, part of a force which encircled the major northern garrison in southern Yemen at Zinjibar in early May. At the time of unification, the YAR army comprised one armoured, three mechanized and nine infantry brigades while the PDRY army was organized into one armoured and three mechanized brigades and nine infantry regiments. Little effort was made to integrate the armed forces following unification.; (Photograph 2, AFP/PA News); Photograph 3, A southern Yemeni 130 mm M-46 field gun shells northern forces on 22 May. The south's superior artillery and air force was able to delay but not defeat northern forces.; (Photograph 4, AFP/PA News); Photograph 5, Southern Yemeni troops using 122 mm BM-21 multiple rocket launchers in the defence of Aden on 26 June. On 7 July, the city fell to northern forces and YSP leaders fled into exile.; (Photograph 6, AFP/PA News)

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BODY:

The recent internecine battles that raged in Yemen were depicted as scenes from a civil war between the northern and southern sides of Yemen. But if we look at what happened from a broader perspective, a different picture emerges, one with ramifications extending beyond the borders of Yemen. In fact, the war was a chapter in a continuing struggle over the future of the Arabian Peninsula. Involving powerful forces representing global and regional interests, the struggle is rendered still more complex by nationalistic, sectarian and tribal factors. It did not begin with the outbreak of fighting in Yemen; rather, the fighting was a sign that the struggle had reached a critical point.

To understand the issues at stake, it is necessary to look at a map of the Arabian Peninsula, for the best explanation of political motives and dynamics can usually be provided by geography. The map shows it to be a large land mass forming the underbelly of the Gulf, important both in terms of its strategic location and its considerable oil resources. Politically, the peninsula is made up of a group of states which, despite their enormous wealth, are fragile and vulnerable to external threats. This is due to two factors, one related to demography, the other to legitimacy. All are sparsely populated; all governed by regimes whose legitimacy is still at the early stages of development, being either dynastic or, at best, tribal. This is true of all six Gulf states in the peninsula: Saudi Arabia, Kuwait, Bahrain, Qatar, the United Arab Emirates and Oman.

But the Arabian Peninsula is also home to another state, Yemen, which was, until the 1960s, a marginal, not to say absent, player. At that time, the British occupied the south, whose hospitable terrain made it easy to control, and left the mountainous and rugged north under the rule of one of the cruelest and most despotic dynasties in the annals of history. Founded by Hamid el-Din, it came to an end in 1962 with the death of Imam Ahmed, who had ruled his people with a mixture of sorcery, poison and imprisonment in dank highland caves. After his death, a revolution broke out, whose leaders embarked on a drive to modernize the country. This proved to be no easy task, especially as the process of modernization was accompanied by calls for the reunification of the two Yemens and an end to British rule in the south.

The revolution in Yemen provoked deep unease among the rulers of the other Arabian Peninsula states, who feared that it set a dangerous precedent for their own subjects. But even more worrying than the risk of contamination from new ideas and sociopolitical structures inspired by different ideological models, however, was the fact that, at approximately 14 million, Yemen's population stands at roughly double the combined populations of all the other countries

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in the peninsula. Moreover, its strategic location at the mouth of the Red Sea, with a southern coastline abutting onto the Indian Ocean, gives it a strong geopolitical advantage.

Ironically, Yemen's high population density worried not only the rulers of neighboring countries, but also its own prerevolution rulers, albeit for different reasons. The last Imam adamantly refused to conduct a census on the grounds that he did not want to invite the envy of other countries and provoke the evil eye! On the other hand, the late King Faisal of Saudi Arabia did permit a census to be taken in his kingdom, but found the population count to be so low that he locked the results up in his desk for fear they would detract from his aura of majesty. The census, taken in 1965, showed the population of Saudi Arabia to be 5 million, of whom 1 million were Yemeni migrant workers. But the Saudi king's decision not to go public with the results was prompted not only by considerations of prestige and image; he must have realized that disclosing results which showed the population of his kingdom, together with those of all the other Gulf states, to be just half the population of Yemen was tantamount to inviting Yemen to live up to its potential as a leading player in the Arabian Peninsula.

That is probably why Saudi Arabia has always been opposed to the unification of North and South Yemen. One of King Fahd's brothers once told me that when their father, the legendary King Ibn Saud, who founded the kingdom and gave it his name, was on his deathbed, he summoned his children (he had 102, of whom 64 were sons) and enjoyed them to "beware of a united Yemen, for it will be a menace for you and for the kingdom you are inheriting." But for a long time after this warning, Ibn Saud's sons and heirs had no reason to worry that Yemen represented any real threat; after all, it was not only divided, but very poor. Their father's advice acquired new relevance, however, following the unification of Yemen in 1990 and the discovery of oil in both the north and the south.

The political temperature in the underbelly of the peninsula was driven still higher by what was happening along its spine, where Iran and Iraq, each with claims toward the peninsula, were pursuing their own regional agendas. The revolution which erupted in Iran in 1979 gave it a new weapon with which to extend its influence far beyond its borders, namely, Islam. Iraq, for its part, sought to consolidate its position with the counter-weapon of pan-Arabism. Thus the spine of the Arabian Peninsula exerted growing pressure on its soft underbelly. To realize how heavy the pressure was, it is necessary only to remember that the population of Iraq is 20 million and of Iran 60 million. Moreover, both countries are rich oil producers with solid industrial and agricultural bases and strong armies equipped with the latest in military technology, Soviet in the case of Iraq, American in the case of Iran, especially in the days of the shah.

As though all this were not enough, powerful global interests have vital stakes in the peninsula, notably, of course, the United States, whose influence is predominant in this complex region today. However, the United States is not averse to allowing Britain, the former colonial power, to play a role, especially in arms sales. And, after the U.S. eagle has had its fill, and the old British lion has fed on the remains, there might even be some scraps left over for France. Finally, there are neighboring regional powers, the most important being Turkey, Egypt and Syria, who would also like to see any morsel, however small, fall their way.

The rulers of the states occupying the soft underbelly of the Arabian Peninsula, in collaboration with other powers, subtly played on the contradictions between the two regional powers on the peninsula's spine, and succeeded in deepening the rift between them. This led to the first Gulf war, which bled the two countries dry. The Gulf states sided with Iraq in the war because they saw pan-Arabism as a lesser evil than the siren song of militant Shiite Islamism coming out of Iran, which they feared could galvanize the hundreds of thousands of ethnic Iranian Shiites in their countries--a particularly alarming prospect for Saudi Arabia, whose oil producing Eastern Province is predominantly Shiite.

When the war ended eight years later in victory for Iraq, Baghdad invoked pan-Arabism to claim what it saw as its rightful due for saving its Gulf allies from the scourge of an Islamic Shiite revolution. But the price it exacted was exorbitant: no less than an entire Gulf state, Kuwait. It was not only the countries in the peninsula's soft underbelly who refused to pay the price; they were joined by all those who had a stake, real or potential, in the region, from the powerful eagle and the old lion to the hopefuls, European and Middle Eastern alike, hovering on the sidelines for tidbits to fall their way. And so the second Gulf war broke out under the command of former U.S. President George Bush, who used the plains of the Tigris and Euphrates to demonstrate the power of new weapons designed initially for use against the Warsaw Pact.

But that was not the end of the story, for great wars are not limited to the movements of armies, whether victorious or vanquished, and it is a truism that war is the midwife of revolution. A struggle in which so many interests, factors and factions were intermeshed has opened the door to questions, ideas and aspirations, many of them legitimate, like, What is the role of the people under the suzerainty of sheikhs, families and tribes? Where are human rights and the rule of law in these societies? What happened to the fabulous oil riches these rulers amassed? What is the use of the arms pouring into the region--in the period 1980-1990, arms sales to the region reached a staggering \$1 trillion--and who is the enemy they will be used against?

Thus no sooner had the cannons of the Gulf wars fallen silent than voices began to be raised, first softly then more and more stridently, in the soft underbelly of the Arabian Peninsula. At a time the countries on the spine, Iran and Iraq, seemed subdued following the devastation visited on them by war, the southernmost tip of the peninsula, Yemen, began to exert a growing influence on its environment, largely because unification was accompanied by freer elections than had ever before been seen in the region. Although this in itself was a healthy phenomenon, the problem is that in politics, health, like disease, can be contagious, especially when it is linked to the call for freedom.

But the realities on the ground were far more complex than a liberal moment which saw the voluntary unification of one people separated into two political entities in the 19th century, who had entered the 20th century totally unprepared and whose aspirations as they stood on the threshold of the 21st century were beyond their ability to fulfill them. The gap between the two is dangerous one, because dreams can collide with realities on the ground at any moment, especially if forces opposed to those dreams actively play on the contradiction between dreams and realities.

And so the dream of unity which the people of Yemen had nurtured for so long collided with reality practically at the moment of its realization. All too

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soon, the problems which were to plunge Yemen into a dangerous crisis began to emerge, some due to internal, others to external, factors.

On the internal front, the leadership of North Yemen imagined that democracy in the new state of Yemen meant counting votes and allocating parliamentary seats accordingly. However, as South Yemen's population was only 2 million versus 12 million in the North, this understanding of democracy created a feeling in the South that the merger between the two was closer to annexation than it was to unification.

At the same time, the former Marxist leaders of South Yemen were severely shaken by the fall of the Berlin Wall and the disappearance of the Soviet Union, and believed their salvation lay in speeding up the process of unification. They hurriedly embarked on negotiations with the North, in the hope that unification would serve as a bulwark against the upheavals convulsing many other parts of the world following the collapse of socialism.

In a way, the unification of Yemen was like a shotgun wedding that was never properly consummated, not only because external parties were actively working against it, but also because of internal personal, tribal and financial factors. These manifested themselves in patterns of behavior that can only be explained in terms of nomadic desert communities constantly on the move in search of green pastures or water holes in a vast sea of sand. Some examples worth mentioning:

The vice president of Yemen, who was the president of South Yemen before unification, left the capital, San'a, in a huff and returned to his old headquarters in Aden, where he was joined by the prime minister, also from the South. Meanwhile, their fellow southerner, the foreign minister of Yemen, remained in San'a to defend the constitutional legitimacy of the unified country.

Some of the leaders of the former Marxist ruling regime in the South, who had carried out bloody purges in which hundreds of thousands perished, and who were more often than not motivated by tribal, rather than ideological, considerations, began to employ the same tactics in the northern capital, San'a, which was now the capital of Yemen, sometimes killing off their own people in the ruling regime.

The petroleum minister, who also hailed from the South, granted an oil concession to a company with Saudi connections, stipulating in the agreement that royalties were to be transferred to the place he designated by ministerial decree. When the time came for him to issue the decrees, the leadership of Yemen was already divided among itself, so he simply ordered the company to transfer tens of millions of dollars to the southern capital, Aden. But as there was no government in Aden after unification, the transfer was made to the Yemeni Socialist Party, headed by the former president of South Yemen, the vice president of Yemen, who was then sulking in Aden.

Some of the Arab leaders who tried to mediate in the crisis, including Sultan Qabus of Oman, President Mubarak of Egypt and King Hussein of Jordan, soon realized that the warring parties were driven by old vendettas and resentments and discontinued their efforts, which were, at any rate, often at cross-purposes.

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Some of the Gulf states intervened in the crisis for reasons of their own: Saudi Arabia because it saw the unification of Yemen as a threat, Kuwait because it wanted to punish Yemen for its pro-Iraqi stand in the second Gulf war.

--Indeed, there are signs that the civil war was meant to end with the division of Yemen not only into two parts again, but into three: North, South and the central province of Hadramut, where most of the oil reserves are located and which overlooks the Indian Ocean.

In one of the more bizarre episodes of this strange war, the U.S. Fleet in the Red Sea intercepted two Egyptian ships carrying Saudi arms to the secessionists in Aden. Washington appealed to all Arab governments to refrain from intervening in the Yemen crisis, warning that the entire Arabian Peninsula was poised on the brink of a dangerous abyss.

Like the North in the American civil war, North Yemen managed to preserve unity by force of arms. But while unity could be sustained in the first case because the Atlantic served as a buffer against outside intervention. Yemen's newly restored unity does not enjoy that kind of geographical protection. Surrounded as it is by hostile forces, Yemen is probably aware that its victory on the battlefield marks only the end of one chapter in what promises to be a long saga. For Saudi Arabia will not tolerate a strong, unified Yemen on its doorstep. Moreover, Riyadh is worried that victory might tempt San'a to reopen the files on its historical claims to Jizan and Najran, which Saudi Arabia annexed by war in the '30s. As far as Saudi Arabia and other Gulf sheikhdoms are concerned, the military victory scored by Northern forces in Yemen has opened a Pandora's box of troubles that must be slammed shut as quickly as possible.

As matters now stand, the entire Arabian Peninsula is caught in a limbo between a past that refuses to go away and a future that remains tantalizingly out of reach. Between the two is a present fraught with historical rivalries, inherited suspicions and seething resentments, a present that is trying to cling to an anachronistic status quo even as change, already long overdue, is knocking on the door.

(Mohamed H. Heikal, Egyptian journalist and writer, was editor in chief of Al-Ahram newspaper for 18 years.)

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The Washington Times

January 6, 1999, Wednesday, Final Edition

SECTION: PART A; WORLD; BRIEFING/MIDDLE EAST; NEWS ANALYSIS; Pg. A14

LENGTH: 691 words

HEADLINE: Tribal Yemenis hold power;
National government is relatively ineffective

BYLINE: Brian Whitaker; LONDON GUARDIAN

DATELINE: LONDON

BODY:

LONDON - The hostage tragedy in Yemen highlights the often tenuous control of the government over its people.

Yemeni President Ali Abdullah Saleh might give the appearance of a strongman, having been in power since 1978, but he has stayed there less by the iron fist than by tactical alliances with the country's quarrelsome factions.

Among them are the tribes, especially influential in the north, which have their own traditional laws and recognize government authority only when it suits them. Often, they have their own militias, too.

For several months tribal fighters in Marib oil province have been confronting the security forces with some success. Since June they have blown at least 19 holes in the pipeline on which Yemen depends for 40 percent of its oil revenue.

A complicating factor during the early 1990s was that Yemen also became a haven for "Arab Afghans" - Muslim volunteers from various countries who had fought against the Soviet Union in Afghanistan.

In Yemen, under the name "Jihad," the Arab Afghans formed a loose alliance with various southern Yemenis who harbored grievances against the Marxists. The Marxists ruled southern Yemen until 1990 and later formed a power-sharing government with Mr. Saleh's supporters in the north.

Much of the more remote part of Yemen is lawless in the sense that it conducts its affairs beyond the purview of the state and its legislation.

That doesn't mean, however, that behavior in these areas is unregulated; citizens are expected to meet the standards set by convention, tribal law and Islam. The state has learned from painful experience that intervention brings risks, and it tends to keep interference to a minimum.

Individual Yemenis, too, tend not to look to the state for protection; by custom, personal security is a matter for the individual and his household.



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The tradition of self-defense, at the more decorative end of the scale, is represented by the "jambiyya," a broad, curved knife worn as a token of manhood and held in place by a broad, brightly colored belt. According to one Yemeni doctor, the most common knife injuries are stomach wounds inflicted by wives seizing their husbands' jambiyyas during an argument.

Further up the scale is the pistol or Kalashnikov rifle carried by those involved in blood feuds, or for protection when traveling through remote or unfamiliar places. By tradition, guns are also fired into the air at Yemeni weddings. Accidental deaths are common.

Important or wealthy figures routinely employ armed guards at the gates of their houses or to accompany them on journeys. In the case of an important sheik, this may extend to a private militia, which can be supplemented by reserves from the tribe when needed.

Within the tribal area, such forces fulfill to some extent the law-and-order role that elsewhere would be assumed by the state. In a few cases, wealthy individuals also operate their own prisons.

According to the Interior Ministry, there are about 50 million privately owned firearms in Yemen - more than three per person. At a famous market outside San'a, one can purchase anything up to a rocket launcher or an armored car.

People carry guns because others carry them and because the authorities do not or cannot provide adequate protection.

The inadequacy of law enforcement is due partly to the lack of means and partly to the lack of inclination. Yemen has less than one police station for every 100,000 people. As in many poor countries, the police are poorly paid and thus less resistant to bribery.

The suggestion from Yemeni government sources was that Jihad elements rather than tribal bandits were behind the kidnapping of the 16 tourists - which may help to explain the unusually violent outcome.

For several years authorities have waged a less-than-vigorous campaign against Jihad and the "Arab Afghans." On one hand, under pressure from Western governments, they want to be seen to be doing their bit to combat terrorism. But on the other, they lack the resources - and, in the view of some observers, the will - to do so effectively.

* Distributed by Scripps Howard.

GRAPHIC: Photo, Yemenis, who on average own three firearms per capita, hold their weapons above their heads in a show of support for candidate Abdullah al-Buchri in Koneib before April 1997 elections., By Reuters

LANGUAGE: ENGLISH

LOAD-DATE: January 6, 1999



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The Independent (London)

January 13, 1999, Wednesday

SECTION: COMMENT; Page 3

LENGTH: 1145 words

HEADLINE: Forget the gunboats - it's time for good old-fashioned diplomacy; We must live with the consequences of giving fundamentalism a foothold in strategically vital **Yemen**

BYLINE: Anne McElvoy

BODY:

A MONTH ago, **Yemen** was just the mysterious Arabia Felix where they built houses on top of rocks, chewed qat through the long hot afternoons and produced the odd unsettling, but distant coup. Now, events at the tip of the Arabian Peninsula have interposed themselves rudely on Robin Cook's torrid career. Instead of Britain accusing Middle East nationals of being party to terrorism, we find ourselves in the uncomfortable position of our own citizens being accused of plotting kidnappings and bombings in **Yemen**.

The trail of terror and confusion leads back, via the Internet, to the less exotic setting of Finsbury Park, from where Abu Hamza advertises his Islamic training camp with due regard for equal opportunities: "Special lectures for sisters regarding women and the role of women in the field of Jihad". His bark may be worse than his bite. We should be suspicious when so much attention is focused on a single loudmouth prepared to deliver soundbites about the need to avenge Anglo-American "state terrorism". Mr Hamza has been preaching his views in the Finsbury Park mosque for some time. I imagine that they are rather well known to MI5 and the counter- terrorism squad.

Free speech is always the democratic principle we are keenest to throw away when it is others who are to be silenced, not us. It might not be very nice of Mr Hamza to carry in his Internet site passages of Osama bin Laden's philosophy such as: "The walls of oppression cannot be demolished except in a hail of bullets," but one could not ban it without coming down on every other revolutionary group which believes in violent final conflict to resolve the class struggle, in the name of animal rights or to end repressive male hegemony. That has never proved an effective approach to stifling dissent.

Mr Hamza is not really the problem. More important is what his son (sought by the Yemeni authorities) and step-son (under arrest there) were doing there and how justified the Sana'a government is in its accusations against them. It would be a more rash person than I who would claim to know whether those detained are being fitted up by the Yemeni government or whether they are guilty of plotting the violence of which they are accused. The Foreign Office's dilemma is that it is exerting itself for people who may turn out to have been terrorists, many of whose supporters are no enthusiasts for Western freedoms.



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The Independent (London), January 13, 1999

As things stand, the accused are being held without charge and are being denied access to their lawyer, so Britain is duty-bound to help. I see no justification for the charge that Mr Cook has bungled things by delay, beyond a general desire to kick a politician when he is down. The pressure at such times is always to proceed with a bang and a rush - never to take things steadily.

But some situations defy haste. This one, which combines internal tribal feuds, the undigested aftermath of the unification of **Yemen**, the ill-feeling generated by Britain's participation in the Iraq bombing raids and the sensitivity in Sana'a about the bungled hostage-release, demands a lot of looking before the leap.

Some 10 years ago I spent a summer visiting diplomatic friends in **Yemen**, the most beautiful country I have ever seen. I have never been so hot as I was at the vast Marib dam, nor as exhilarated by the terraced mountain slopes, negotiated by heavily laden donkeys far more speedily than by our four-wheel vehicles.

Of fundamentalism, the only hint was being stoned by a crowd of women as a "Nazarene", having been foolish enough to stray into a religious area. The kidnapping of Westerners was an occasional inconvenience, politely conducted in order to extort roads and clean water from the government, swiftly concluded.

That was before the unification of **Yemen**. The Cold War imposed its brutal simplicities here as it had in other troubled parts of the globe. The north was pro-Western, the south the heart of the Soviet Union's sphere of influence in the Middle East, where the Russians and East Germans sought - hopelessly - to centralise control in a tribal land by seeking to restrict the days on which qat could be chewed.

After the Berlin Wall fell, the Sana'a government re-imported fundamentalists from Saudi Arabia in order to chase out the Marxists in the south. Unification was in vogue everywhere. The West supported integration, believing that it would increase stability in the region. But we were cavalier about the terms on which it happened.

Whether Western governments would have approved of Mr Hamza planting explosives on behalf of the mujahedin also is a matter of dates. Osama bin Laden was a useful tool against Western enemies at the time. The end of the Cold War meant a realignment of friends and enemies whose less ethical implications were forgotten in the general relief and triumphalism nicely parodied (except he meant it) in PJ O'Rourke's boast: "We kicked Commie ass."

The trouble is, we live now with the consequences of how we kicked Commie ass in Afghanistan - a country bleeding itself to death - and helped give fundamentalism a foothold in the strategically vital country of **Yemen**. Using the sword of Islam against the hammer and sickle was a high-risk policy and we pay the price today.

I have had my doubts about Mr Cook as Foreign Secretary. Mr Blair's lavish praise of his "superb" performance was rank hyperbole. But on **Yemen**, he has the opportunity to rehabilitate himself by showing that he can hold his nerve in a situation which can not be resolved by the more dramatic means of mercenaries or



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gun boats. This one needs good, old-fashioned diplomacy

At the mention of the words "British nationals", however, rampant irrationalism sets in. Already, those who wish to raise the temperature of an already tragic situation - with three Britons dead - are recommending Libyan embassy tactics. Apart from the practical objection that the prisoners are being held, inconveniently, in Aden and not in St James' Square, an all-out confrontation with the Yemeni authorities would simply play into the hands of Islamicists seeking to strengthen their grip on power.

Yesterday, Michael Howard compared the alleged tardiness of the Government in dealing with the prisoners in Yemen, with the stream of prisoner releases in Ulster. As the Conservatives support the Good Friday agreement, this was off-message even by their own standards.

More seriously, his attack on Mr Cook risked fuelling aggression among some of the prisoners' supporters towards the British government. It was a shameful performance, the worse for coming from an intelligent and experienced former minister who knows that there are times when the national interest demands that the Opposition behaves loyally in order not to make a dangerous situation worse. This is one of them.

LANGUAGE: ENGLISH

LOAD-DATE: January 13, 1999



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Copyright 1999 Midland Independent Newspapers plc
Birmingham Post

January 19, 1999, Tuesday

SECTION: Pg. 13

LENGTH: 926 words

HEADLINE: **YEMEN** A LONG WAY FROM THE GARDEN OF ADEN;
CHRIS GRAY CHARTS THE HISTORY OF **YEMEN**, THE ARAB COUNTRY THAT HAS NOW BECOME A
BY-WORD FOR TERROR.

BYLINE: Chris Gray

BODY:

Kidnappings, terrorist executions and torture have hardly been out of the headlines since the New Year began.

They have all been coming from one of the smaller countries in the Middle East, which normally rarely figures in news bulletins, even when that turbulent region is at the centre of the world's attention.

Its relative obscurity made it an attraction for the more adventurous British tourist, such as the group who travelled there with the Explore travel company before Christmas.

Their horrific experience, when members of the group were kidnapped and four killed in a rescue attempt, propelled **Yemen** into the British public's consciousness.

Since then, five British Muslims have been arrested in **Yemen** on suspicion of terrorist activity, another hostage has been released and the trial has started of the Yemenis accused of murdering the four tourists.

Every day seems to reveal another frightening aspect to the country.

In fact the terrible events in the **Yemen** have occurred partly because it is in the last decade that it has become more accessible than at any time in its history.

Although Britain had a presence in **Yemen** for more than a century, it was restricted to the city of Aden and its surrounding area, near to the Red Sea and the shipping route that led north to the Suez Canal.

Britain ruled the city for 129 years and held protectorate status over its hinterland until 1967, but it was always in conflict with the Hamid al-Din dynasty, which ruled the country after Turkish occupation collapsed at the end of the First World War. During the reign of Imam Ahmad, clashes with Britain occurred regularly and Ahmad sought protection from Cairo, resulting in a short-lived pact between **Yemen**, Egypt and Syria.



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Birmingham Post, January 19, 1999

On his father's death in 1962, Ahmad's son, Muhammed al-Badr, ruled for only a week, before a military coup led by Colonel Abdullah al-Sallal proclaimed a republic.

Backed by the United Arab Republic, this new regime was known as the **Yemen Arab Republic (YAR)**.

A civil war followed between the republic, backed by Egypt, and Royalist forces, backed by Saudi Arabia.

The war continued until 1970, when the republic was finally recognised by Saudi Arabia.

In the meantime, the British had held on to Aden against fierce guerilla fighting, but in 1967 were forced to withdraw, making way for a new state, the **People's Republic of South Yemen**, to be established.

The new republic relied heavily on economic support from Communist countries and became the first and only Arab Marxist state.

In 1970 the republic's name was changed to the **People's Democratic Republic of Yemen (PDRY)**.

It existed in a state of mutual distrust with the other **Yemen** republic to the north and tension broke out into a series of short border wars in 1972, 1978 and 1979.

Two presidents of the YAR were assassinated during this period. But under the Presidency of Ali Abdullah Salah of the Hashid tribe, in the late seventies/early eighties, the stability of the YAR steadily improved.

By the end of 1981 a constitution had been drafted to implement a peaceful merger between the two states.

Unification was delayed by political instability in the PDRY and it was not until May 22, 1990 that the merger was made official.

The new country was named the **Republic of Yemen**. The border was opened and demilitarised, although the border with Saudi Arabia remained in dispute.

Currencies were declared valid in both of the former countries and a referendum sealed the unification of the **Yemen**.

Since then the **Yemen** slowly became more accessible.

Although there was no major tourist industry, visitors were welcomed on a modest scale, and Yemeni society became more modernised.

However, it was still plagued by conflict and the coalition Government set up in 1993 of the General People's Congress, the Islamic Islah and the Yemeni Socialist Party was unstable.

The elites from the former northern and southern republics remained at each others' throats and after occasional clashes a new civil war broke out in May 1994.

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Birmingham Post, January 19, 1999

The Northern forces proved victorious, taking Aden in July and a new coalition Government of the General People's Congress and the Islamic Islah was formed.

In theory the country is now a **democracy**, but human rights organisations are deeply concerned about the activities of **Yemen's** security forces.

Despite producing about 400,000 barrels of oil a day, **Yemen** remains one of the world's poorest countries and life expectancy is only 50.

Most of its 14 million population still work in agriculture, which produces mainly subsistence crops for consumption at home.

Politically the country has never been fully reconciled with the West and was seen as supporting Iraq during the Gulf War, which led to Saudi Arabia banning Yemeni nationals from working in Saudi Arabia.

Events in the Gulf appear to have sparked the recent outbreak of terrorism, which are seen as revenge attacks made in response to the British and American air strikes on Iraq.

Many Yemenis emigrated to Britain to escape the turmoil and civil war occurring in their homeland.

Now some of the original immigrants fear some of their offspring are growing up to see their adopted home as the enemy and turning instead to the values of Islamic fundamentalist extremists who believe **Yemen** should throw off Western-style rule and become an Islamic nation.

British citizens who travel to the country have now been proved highly likely to be caught in the cross-fire.

LANGUAGE: ENGLISH

LOAD-DATE: January 20, 1999



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The Independent (London)

January 31, 1999, Sunday

SECTION: NEWS; Page 18

LENGTH: 974 words

HEADLINE: They chant of bitterness and hell; Patrick Cockburn in Yemen on a country paralysed by tribal conflict and weak government

BYLINE: Patrick Cockburn

BODY:

We are the Awaleq

Born of bitterness,

We are the nails that go into the rock.

We are the sparks of hell.

He who defies us will be burned.

THUS RUNS the tribal chant of the Awaleq, one of Yemen's most powerful tribes. Nor are they alone in their fierceness. In the mountains of Abyan province, east of Aden, are the Kazam, a warlike tribe famous for their generous hospitality to strangers arriving in their lands.

But the well-fed guest should be wary as he bids farewell to his hosts. Once he travels out of their territory, the tribesmen of the Kazam consider him fair game. The laws of hospitality no longer apply. He becomes, in their own phrase, "a good back to shoot at" and the Kazam are known locally for the excellence of their marksmanship.

Neither the Awaleq nor the Kazam are exotic remnants on the margins of Yemeni society. The central government in the capital, Sanaa, with little real power of its own outside the main cities, is wary of offending them. In one of the poorest countries in the world, it wages a constant battle to assert itself against a host of rivals who may have a tribal, political or religious base.

The city of Aden and the countryside around it is full of signs of this conflict. The airport roof is supported by freshly rebuilt raw concrete columns, repairing the damage caused by bombing during the Yemeni civil war in 1994, when the south of the country, united with the north only three years before, tried to secede with the backing of Saudi Arabia.

The political legacy of the war is a constant topic of conversation in the former British protectorate, where the domination of officials from the north is deeply resented. One well-informed Yemeni observer said: "I think the hatred now is greater than it was during the war."



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Leaving Aden to the east along the Chinese-built coast road, there are a few holiday chalets under construction on the seashore to the right, but nothing to the left where there are extensive mine fields. On the outskirts of the city there is a shanty town, home of some of the 850,000 Yemeni workers expelled from Saudi Arabia in 1990 when **Yemen** took a neutral stance after the Iraqi invasion of Kuwait. Their expulsion devastated the Yemeni economy, which has never recovered.

The coast road is considered safe from kidnappers but, further north in Abyan province, 16 tourists were kidnapped in December by Abu Hassan, the Islamic militant now on trial, and four tourists, three Britons and an Australian, were killed during a rescue attempt.

This was a shock: no foreigner had been hurt in more than 100 kidnappings by the tribes. None the less, hostage-taking has become a recognised way of putting pressure on the government. **Yemen** is famous in the Arabian peninsula for the quality of its honey. Hives were traditionally kept in hollowed-out tree logs on metal stilts to protect them from ants. A year ago the police angered one tribe by destroying some of its prized hives. The tribe demanded compensation from the government. When nothing happened they put up a checkpoint on the main road and kidnapped a Chinese person to underline their grievance.

The central government is weak, but **Yemen** is also more **democratic** than most of the Arab world. There is an embattled but vigorous opposition press. When Abu Hassan, the kidnapper, was put on trial earlier in the month, state-owned Yemeni television broadcast 45 minutes of his tirade from the dock against the government.

Into this violent, anarchic and suspicious world eight British Muslims and two Algerians with French passports entered last year. They say their purpose was the innocent study of Arabic and Islam. The prosecution at their trial in Aden which resumed yesterday says their real aim was to form the "Aden cell" of the Supporters of the Sharia (Islamic law), the group formed by Abu Hamza al-Masri, the militant Islamic cleric of Finsbury Park, north London.

It was not a visit likely to end well. Two of the eight Britons now under arrest in **Yemen** are related to Abu Hamza who openly denounces the Yemeni government as not fully Muslim because it does not follow Islamic law. One is his stepson Mohsin Ghalain, a rusty haired 18-year-old student, and the other his full son Mohammed Mustapha Kamil, also 18, who was arrested last week. A third member of the group is engaged to marry Abu Hamza's sister-in-law.

In a suspicious country, these relationships were bound to cause suspicion, even if the intentions of the visitors from Britain were entirely academic and religious. There is reason to think that the suspicions grew early.

Yemeni sources have told The Independent on Sunday that their investigation started in early December when they detained but later released, after 10 hours of interrogation, a Yemeni named Mohammed Nader at Aden airport.

But it was the kidnapping by Abu Hassan of the tourists on 28 December which turned the arrests in Aden four days earlier into a cause celebre. When it was revealed that he had used his mobile phone from his scrubland encampment to seek



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The Independent (London), January 31, 1999

advice from Abu Hamza in London, the Yemeni government saw a triangular conspiracy. The fanatical sheikh in London, the kidnappers in **Yemen** with whom he was in contact, and the group in Aden strongly linked to him by family ties.

"Perhaps they found a string and are trying to turn it into a rope," said one Yemeni. Torture is routine in Yemeni jails. As a Yemeni saying about such interrogations has it: "They can make a zebra say he is a gazelle."

In some respects, **Yemen** has managed to get the worst of all possible worlds. It freely allowed television cameras into the courtroom - but got no credit for this because pictures of men with marks of torture were immediately flashed around the globe.

LANGUAGE: ENGLISH

LOAD-DATE: February 02, 1999



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Birmingham Post

February 20, 1999, Saturday

SECTION: Pg. 21

LENGTH: 786 words

HEADLINE: DEATH OF THE MIDDLE CLASS IN NATION HIT BY HARDSHIPS;
DIVING OIL PRICES AND SECURITY FEARS ARE DRAGGING **YEMEN'S** ECONOMY DOWN

BYLINE: Alistair Lyon In Sanaa

BODY:

Yemen, among the Arab world's poorest countries, has stuck to arduous measures to put its economy to rights, but plunging oil prices and recent kidnaps of foreigners have kept the outlook bleak, analysts have warned.

"It will be a very tough year," said the World Bank's resident representative, Mr Gianni Brizzi.

Yemen produces about 400,000 barrels a day of crude, and oil exports provided some 70 per cent of revenue before world oil prices dived nearly a year ago.

Central Bank Governor, Mr Ahmed Abdul-Rahman al-Samawi, said last year's budget had been prepared assuming an oil price of \$ 18 a barrel. This year's assumed a price of \$ 12.

"Oil prices are still depressed and likely to remain so," Mr Brizzi said.

"The shock has had a profound impact on the economy and it will be aggravated by the impact of the security situation on tourism."

Western countries have tightened warnings about travel to **Yemen** after a spate of kidnappings of foreigners.

Four Western tourists were killed in December in a shoot-out between their Muslim militant captors and Yemeni troops.

Yemen wins high marks from the International Monetary Fund and World Bank for its adherence to a demanding structural adjustment programme launched in 1995.

Mr Brizzi said: "Since 1995 **Yemen** has made tremendous progress on macroeconomic management. Previously there was high inflation, multiple exchange rates, a high budget deficit and foreign exchange problems.

"Things have improved dramatically, without reaching all the targets."

Mr Samawi said foreign reserves now exceeded pounds 600 million, a cushion



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equivalent to more than five months of imports.

Yemen responded to the oil price shock by slashing its development budget by one third and cutting petrol and other subsidies in June, which provoked price riots.

"The authorities deserve to be commended for holding to the programmed fiscal stance in the first months of 1998 despite the unexpected sharp decline in oil prices and the shortfall in external financing, as well as for holding to - and not rescinding - the June administered price increases despite the strong public reaction," an IMF report said.

Mr Brizzi said much more needed to be done in financial and fiscal reform. Poor public administration, corruption and a deficient judicial system were deterring private investment.

"Our expectation was that private sector investment would come in once the macroeconomic situation was controlled. This has not happened last year or this year," he said.

"If investors can't calculate the cost of doing business in Yemen, they won't come."

Government hopes of luring investors are pinned on Aden, where a new container port is due to open next month.

A senior European diplomat said this was the only potential bright spot he could see for the Yemeni economy.

"The hope is that this will focus attention on Aden as a major international port and that the industrial area and free zone will take off with large-scale investment," he said.

Economic growth at around five per cent a year has not kept pace with Yemen's exploding population growth of about 3.5 per cent annually, one of the highest in the world.

The population, estimated at anywhere between 16 million and 20 million, is set to double in the next 20 years or so. Per capita income has declined to no more than pounds 171 a year, against an average of pounds 344 for sub-Saharan Africa.

"The middle class is dying," said Ms Marta Colburn, resident director of the American Institute for Yemeni Studies.

"In 1984 a teacher's salary was worth about pounds 600. Now it is less than pounds 60. The private sector opportunities are just not there."

Mr Habib Hammam, representative of the UN Children's Fund, said the economic reform programme had imposed severe hardships, with 30 per cent of Yemenis now living below the poverty line compared to 20 per cent previously.

"I am expecting an increase in malnutrition and child and maternal mortality," he said.



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Birmingham Post, February 20, 1999

"Child mortality is already high at 110 deaths per 1,000 live births, or 200 child deaths a day."

Mr Hammam said **Yemen** had pleased the international community with its commitment to economic reforms and its developing **democracy**, but was experiencing teething pains.

"They are putting in place all the right building blocks in a serious way and they deserve all the help they can get to really be put on their feet," he said.

"It is extremely important for the government to counter austerity with visible social services such as water, health and education. Otherwise, if people have no outlet, things can blow - and no one can afford things to blow in **Yemen**."

GRAPHIC: Bleak outlook: A town west of Sanaa, **Yemen**, which is one of the poorest countries in the Middle East.

LANGUAGE: ENGLISH

LOAD-DATE: February 23, 1999



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March 2, 1999, Tuesday, BC Cycle
03:34 Central European Time

SECTION: International News

LENGTH: 710 words

HEADLINE: FEATURE: **Yemen's** Jews and Moslems live in fragile balance

BYLINE: By Hans Dahne

DATELINE: Sanaa

BODY:

"The Jahudi (Jew) will not open his shop again. I have bought his silver jewelry," Adel says, answering questions on why a Moslem has taken over a Jewish silver shop with an evasive "Maschakil (Problems)".

With every passing sale Adel opens up to relate a family drama.

"The daughter of the Jew married a Moslem and converted to Islam. Her father wrote a document indicating that she had reconverted to Judaism, and his son-in-law shot him.

"He is now facing a court of law and will probably be executed. Whoever kills is killed."

Jews and Moslems strive to create the appearance that the incident has not unsettled the fragile balance between the groups in Saada. In this northern Yemeni town most of the around 1,000 Jews left in **Yemen** carry on their widely known craft as silversmiths.

"No, there is no problem between Moslems and Jews. Everything is "adi" - relaxed. We are brothers," the men in the tea-house say. Jussif, the dead Jew's son, does not want to say anything.

Some 450 Jews still live in Saada, according to Raja Sagar, a researcher living in Sanaa, and there are rumours that there are even Jews abroad who would like to return.

"The Jews belong to the tribe and are therefore entitled to its protection," she says. By contrast with the Moslems they do not carry a curved dagger and are not required to do military service.

"But everybody has a Kalashnikov at home. The women have even adapted to local custom and go veiled in public," Sagar says.

The Jews can be distinguished by their hair locks, but like the Moslems they chew Khat leaves, which contain a mild stimulant.



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"The Jews speak Hebrew at home and Arabic in public," Sagar says. "It's a kind of tacit agreement. The Moslems pretend that they don't know and the Jews that they don't do it." Sagar says the Yemeni Jews have remained "pure and orthodox" because there have been few external influences.

The thirteen centuries of co-existence between Jews and Moslems in Yemen have resembled a roller-coaster ride. At the beginning of the sixth century, in the pre-Islamic era, King Dhu Nuwas ordered a mass conversion to Judaism. The Islamic period began in 630, and Jews and Christians had to pay taxes in exchange for protection.

There were two crises - one in 1676 when a Messianic cult of approaching salvation unleashed fear and another in 1792 when the imams ordered synagogues to be destroyed.

By decree Jews had to differentiate themselves from Moslems through their clothing; they were allowed neither to bear arms nor to wear jewelry, and when travelling by donkey they had to adopt the women's riding position.

From the middle of the 19th century the first organized emigration to Palestine took place. The United Nations resolution on the founding of the state of Israel led to a "shameful outbreak of violence" perpetrated by an "incited mob" against the Jews, according to eyewitness reports.

During the unrest in Aden on December 2, 1947, for example, 82 Jews were killed, 106 of 170 Jewish shops were plundered and almost all cars belonging to Jews were set alight.

Mass flight ensued.

Under the auspices of "Operation Flying Carpet", more than 48,300 Yemeni Jews left for Israel between 1948 and 1951, with another 6,000 leaving later. According to the statistics office there are 182,700 Jews of Yemeni origin now living in Israel.

Many have settled in the cities of Rosh Ha'ajin and Petach Tikva in the Tel Aviv area.

There are no official relations between Yemen and Israel. "There has thus far been no Israeli delegation to Yemen, and Yemen does not accept anyone with an Israeli visa," Interior Minister Hussein Mohammed Arab says.

"There are Jews in Yemen. They have the advantage of being treated like any other citizen. They have the same rights, they can travel at any time, they can go where they want and return. Some have even taken part in elections."

Especially with regard to freedom to travel Moslem Jews feel that they are at a disadvantage.

"Jews are not constrained any more," an official at the Information Ministry says. They get visas to the United States without any difficulty. We don't. To



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them we are Moslem terrorists." dpa da/le ps

LANGUAGE: ENGLISH

LOAD-DATE: March 3, 1999



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Copyright 1999 Agence France Presse
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April 12, 1999 16:11 GMT

SECTION: International news

LENGTH: 299 words

HEADLINE: **Yemen** government promises to reform electoral lists

DATELINE: SANAA, April 12

BODY:

Yemen's government on Monday promised to reform the country's electoral lists prior to October's presidential **elections**, following protests of irregularities from the opposition.

"The process of rectifying the lists should begin on the ground over the next three weeks," the head of the electoral commission's information department, Mansur Ahmed Saif, told a press conference here.

He added that some 13,000 people from **Yemen's** 18 political parties would participate in the effort.

The opposition has protested that half a million voters have registered twice, out of a total of 4.6 million people eligible to vote. The opposition has also said it is under-represented on the electoral commission.

Yemen is to hold its first free presidential **elections** in October following an amendment to the country's constitution.

Official sources say President Ali Abdallah Saleh has been in talks with opposition leaders to settle disagreements about the **elections** and the commission charged with preparing them.

The president's mandate, which began in 1978, expires in October. He is presently the only candidate, but the constitution stipulates that he must have at least one competitor.

The elected president will have a term of five years, renewable once.

Parliamentary **elections** were held in 1997. They were won by Saleh's party which now, together with its political allies, controls about two-thirds of the parliament's seats.

General Saleh was nominated in 1978 by North **Yemen's** parliament, which subsequently renewed his mandate in 1983 and 1988.

When **Yemen** was re-united in 1992, the parliament nominated him president of the new state. It renewed his mandate for a further five years in 1994.



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Agence France Presse, April 12, 1999

Yemen is the only republic in the Arabian peninsula.
mou-sam/sw/bsm

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LOAD-DATE: April 12, 1999



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Copyright 1999 Agence France Presse
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April 13, 1999 09:27 GMT

SECTION: International news

LENGTH: 296 words

HEADLINE: Yemen president urges opposition to name election candidates

DATELINE: DUBAI, April 13

BODY:

Yemeni President Ali Abdallah Saleh on Tuesday urged the opposition to nominate their candidates for the state's first presidential elections in October.

"We think there should be a maximum of 10 candidates ... and we have encouraged political parties to hold meetings to nominate their candidates," Saleh said in an interview with the United Arab Emirates' Al-Khaleej daily.

Asked whether he himself would be a candidate, the president, who has held power since 1978, said "it is too early to say."

"It is up to the (ruling) General People's Congress to decide at its meeting in July who its candidate for the elections will be," he added.

The president's mandate expires in October, following a change in the constitution. There must be at least two candidates for the election in the Arabian peninsula's only republic.

The elected president will have a term of five years, renewable once.

Parliamentary elections were held in 1997. They were won by Saleh's party which now, together with its political allies, controls about two-thirds of the parliament's seats.

Meanwhile, Saleh said it would be "difficult to pardon" five former southern leaders condemned to death in 1998 for seceding during the country's 1994 civil war.

"They were the principal cause of bloodshed ... In any case, even if they are (pardoned), they will not return to Yemen because they have financial interests abroad," he said.

Commenting on relations with Kuwait, which soured when Yemen supported Iraq's 1990 invasion of the emirate, the president said he wished to normalise them.

"We read in the press (in March) the comments by Kuwait's foreign minister that he would invite his Yemeni counterpart, but we have not received this invitation yet," he said.



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BBC Summary of World Broadcasts

April 29, 1999, Thursday

SECTION: Part 4 The Middle East; ALGERIA; ME/D3521/MED

LENGTH: 297 words

HEADLINE: US Central Command chief meets president, premier

SOURCE: Source: Republic of Yemen TV, San'a, in Arabic 1800 gmt 27 Apr 99

BODY:

[38]

Excerpts from report by Yemeni TV on 27th April

President Ali Abdullah Salih today received Gen Anthony Zinni, commander of the US Central Command, who is currently visiting Yemen. They discussed aspects of bilateral relations and fields of cooperation between Yemen and the United States, especially cooperation in the military area. They also discussed the work of the US team of experts in Yemen in the field of mine clearance - mines which were planted by the secessionists during the war of sedition and secession in the summer of 1994 - and the removal of some wrecked ships in Aden port. The two sides also reviewed several issues and developments of common interest.

Zinni stressed the US's eagerness to advance cooperation ties between the two friendly countries in various political, economic, military, and other fields. He expressed appreciation for and admiration of the progress Yemen has made in the area of democratic practice and development, including what was accomplished in Aden free zone.

For his part, the president welcomed Gen Zinni and noted the continuous advancement of bilateral relations and cooperation. He pointed out that there are wide horizons for enhancing and developing these relations in the interest of the two friendly countries. He voiced appreciation for the US assistance in the field of mine removal...

Prime Minister Abd al-Karim al-Iryani also received Gen Zinni today. During the meeting, the two sides reviewed aspects of cooperation between Yemen and the United States, especially in the area of mine removal and training Yemeni experts in this field. The prime minister commended the level of relations between the two friendly countries...

General Zinni left San'a today concluding a two-day visit...

LANGUAGE: ENGLISH

LOAD-DATE: April 28, 1999



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The Associated Press

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May 17, 1999, Monday, PM cycle

ADVANCED-DATE: May 10, 1999, Monday, PM cycle

SECTION: International News

LENGTH: 983 words

HEADLINE: Women in Iran, Qatar, Yemen can vote but not dress as they please

BYLINE: SCHEHEREZADE FARAMARZI, Associated Press Writer

DATELINE: DOHA, Qatar

BODY:

One woman running for office hid behind a black veil, spoke to male voters only by telephone and refused to show her face on television or posters throughout her campaign.

Another faced men in person, but showed them only her eyes through a slit in her veil. A third let men see her face, but her hair and her body were swathed in a cloak and scarf.

The three candidates live in Middle Eastern countries - Qatar, Yemen and Iran - where women not only can vote, but can play a role in government. Yet they must do so under conditions Western women would find undemocratically restrictive.

"We live in a very conservative society ... We have to play by the rules," said Wadha al-Suwaidi, the head of Qatar University's teaching college and the candidate who refused to show her face during recent Qatari municipal elections.

Some Islamic scholars see no contradiction in the imposition of the veil and the extension of electoral rights. They maintain that Islam has always given women rights and that the veil is a privilege, because it frees women from unwanted male attention.

Other observers see a real attempt by Islamic societies to adapt to the modern world, allowing certain freedoms while retaining traditional values symbolized by dress codes.

But skeptics say the veils reveal insincerity. States that are at heart anti-



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The Associated Press, May 17, 1999

democratic keep their women cloaked and allow them to vote only to gain international acceptance and perhaps money from agencies that make aid conditional on reforms and women's rights, the critics say.

"They can use the jargon of **democratization and election** as a way to legitimize themselves, appear to be modern and counter the claims of authoritarianism," said Shiva Balaghi, associate director of the Center for Middle Eastern Studies at New York University.

Such academic arguments seem of little interest to the women wearing veils and casting votes in the Middle East. Yemeni women, for instance, are more concerned with issues like jobs and illiteracy.

Yemen, with a population of 16 million, is by far the Arabian Peninsula's most **democratic** country, and women there, almost all of whom wear veils, have traditionally had a role in public life.

Rauffa Hassan al-Sharki, director of the women studies program at San'a University, says the veil is part of Yemeni tradition.

Modernization does not mean local customs "should vanish," she said. Yemeni women wear veils as a result of tradition and social pressures.

Women make up 28 percent of Yemeni first-year college students, but the percentage drops in later years either because women leave to marry or are forced to quit by parents who accuse them of having relationships with male classmates.

In **Yemen**, where a candidate in 1997 parliamentary **elections** campaigned in a veil that revealed only her eyes, two women sit in the 301-seat Parliament. A woman is deputy information minister and a sizable number of lawyers and professors are women.

Under the Marxist regime that governed southern **Yemen** after independence from Britain in 1967, women served as judges - a role forbidden to women under most interpretations of Islamic law - and even as leaders of the ruling party. When the north and south merged in 1990, social disruptions that followed gave women a chance to take a bigger role.

But with the victory of the conservative north in a 1994 civil war, women lost many of their gains. Today, women activists see politics as their arena of struggle.

Women have a similar outlook in Iran, separated by culture and language from the Arab states. While the majority of Arab countries are from the mainstream Sunni Muslim sect, Persian Iran is predominantly Shiite Muslim.

From beneath the long and constraining garments Iran's constitution requires, Iranian women are showing a growing determination to moderate the hard-line policies and strict social guidelines put in place by the late Ayatollah Ruhollah Khomeini, father of the 1979 Islamic Revolution.

"We are trying to give women their full Islamic rights," said Suheila Jelowdarzadeh, who campaigned and won in cloak and scarf in 1996 national

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The Associated Press, May 17, 1999

elections and now is one of 13 women in the 270-member parliament. As she spoke, she constantly adjusted her black chador, a sheet-like cloak draping her from head to toes.

It was largely Iranian women's and young people's votes that in May 1997 elected moderate President Mohammad Khatami. He named a woman as one of eight vice presidents, and a few women occupy senior government posts.

In February municipal **elections**, where there were only 5,000 women among the 330,000 candidates, women stunned Iranians by winning seats in at least 20 cities, including three out of 13 in the capital, Tehran. In the provincial town of Zanzan, 10 of the 15 seats went to women.

"I think the Iranian state has reached a point of no return," said Balaghi, the New York University researcher.

"They have admitted enough women, enough people with more moderate views into the governmental system, that I don't think that they will be able to go back to a totally conservative authoritarian form of Islamic government again. They may have opened a Pandora's box."

Qatar's emir, Sheik Hamad bin Khalifa Al Thani, started his people toward **democracy** in March by holding his country's first **democratic election** and letting women vote and run for office.

Still, none of the six women candidates won seats on the Municipal Council. Qatar is a country where women themselves are usually the most outspoken advocates of restrictive customs. Although no law requires them to, almost every woman in Qatar wears the veil.

"The majority of women lack brains and are submissive," said Shooa al-Yousuf, a female professor of biological science at Qatar University.

She faces her male classes at the university draped in a black cloak that envelops her from head to foot, with a slit for her eyes.

LANGUAGE: ENGLISH

LOAD-DATE: May 17, 1999



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BBC Summary of World Broadcasts

May 21, 1999, Friday

SECTION: Part 4 The Middle East; EGYPT; ME/D3540/MED

LENGTH: 2615 words

HEADLINE: President Salih interviewed by Egyptian news agency on various issues

SOURCE: Source: MENA news agency, Cairo, in English 1622 gmt 19 May 99

BODY:

[32]

In a wide-ranging interview, President Salih has talked about "terrorism" and Yemen's relations with Egypt, Saudi Arabia and Kuwait as well as with the Horn of Africa countries. He also mentioned economic problems, such as the economic burden on Yemen of Somali refugees, coupled with the marked increase in Yemen's own population, the decline in remittances from Yemenis overseas and the return home of 1.2 million of these expatriates. Salih added that on 22nd May he would address the nation in order to invite all political groups and parties to present their presidential candidates for the elections in October. He also mentioned his campaign to replace kat-chewing by sports. The following is the text of a report on the interview by the Egyptian news agency MENA; subheadings inserted editorially:

San'a, 19th May: President [Ali] Abdullah Salih characterized Egyptian-Yemeni ties as strong. No-one can impair them, he told MENA Editor in Chief Mahfuz al-Ansari on Wednesday [19th May].

He highlighted the special and distinguished relations he maintains with Egyptian President Husni Mubarak and said they are both working for elevating economic cooperation between their two countries to the same level. Yemen's markets are fully open for the Egyptian products, reputed for their high quality, he added. Referring to the projected joint bank and shipping line between both countries, President Salih held such projects as capable of opening wide the scopes of cooperation between Egypt and Yemen.

Turning to his country's relations with Riyadh, President Salih termed them as "good", adding that there remain only two points in the file of the border dispute between them to have it all settled. He further told the agency's editor that ties with Kuwait were normalized, with the Gulf War file finally closed.

He refused to name Aden Port as a US base. It is rather an international petrol station, he said.

On the Horn of Africa, the Yemeni president said it is a vital region for us. He and President Mubarak are making endeavours to solve the conflict between Eritrea and Ethiopia. Hostilities raged between the two Horn countries in February after a nine-month cease-fire.



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"Terrorism"

President Salih denied that his country sponsors terrorism, adding that the Jihad leaderships are now on trial in the court of law. The accused in the cases of terrorism involve, besides Yemenis and Egyptians, also Algerians, Sudanese, Britons, Libyans and Syrians, as well as others from other Islamic states, he told MENA editor in a nutshell.

Economic relations with Egypt

The economic relations between Egypt and Yemen do not match the bilateral strong and time-honoured political ties and the businessmen from both sides are to blame for this, President Salih told Ansari.

A preparatory committee is now arranging for the meeting of the Higher Joint Committee that will be held at the level of prime ministers in both countries in June, said the president. The preparatory committee will undertake the assessment of the projects carried out and the agreements signed and diagnose the reasons of disruption which obstructed the implementation and propose solutions, said Salih in an interview with [the] MENA editor in chief.

He proceeded, saying: "We in Yemen prefer the Egyptian products and commodities as this is part of the policy of integration we seek to achieve with Egypt in order to set the scene for a larger pan-Arab integration. Our markets are open for Egypt and the sister countries. The private sector is assigned a major role and is responsible for the success of the Egyptian-Yemeni cooperation and its translation into concrete projects and applicable agreements."

President Salih admitted that the lack of a navigational [shipping] line between Yemen and Egypt also marks a colossal hindrance to cooperation and trade exchange, although its operation was agreed on during the latest meeting of the Joint Higher Committee in San'a. "The establishment of an Egyptian-Yemeni bank, which was also endorsed, has not yet come to existence in spite of its vital importance."

Arab solidarity; Horn of Africa

Commenting on the current political situation and the wave of rapprochements and reconciliations now taking place among Arab countries and whether this would mark a prelude to an Arab summit, President Salih said: "We are pro any endeavours by Arab leaders to overhaul the cracks in the inter-Arab relations and restore solidarity. The Arab nation is undergoing a state of incoherence and division due to the Gulf crisis and its repercussions. President Husni Mubarak and, likewise, UAE President Shaykh Zayid Bin Sultan Al Nuhayyan, are obviously exerting tremendous efforts in that direction."

"We, like President Mubarak, are trying to settle the Ethiopian-Eritrean dispute because the security of the Horn of Africa is part and parcel of the Arab region's. Yemen in particular is suffering from the volatile situation in Somalia and receives many Somali refugees who flee the fighting there and add to our economic and social burden," President Salih said.

President Salih urged the Arab League to call on Arab leaders to hold a summit that might regain the lost solidarity and to take during this summit



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measures necessary to render it regular with a pre-set agenda. He recalled that, since 1981, no ordinary Arab summit has ever been held and all the summits held were emergency ones. "We are not inferior to the Organization of African Unity (OAU) which convenes regularly and we will support the league to stabilize the regular system," said Salih.

Saudi Arabia, Kuwait

Asked where did the border talks with Saudi Arabia reach, Salih said the problem is on its way for settlement and the process of demarcation in accordance with Ta'if Agreement signed in 1934 is about to conclude.

"Only two points have not yet been settled and each side is presenting its view in that regard until they are sorted out on a fair basis," added Salih. The real difference is on pinpointing the demarcation lines set in Ta'if Agreements and both the Saudi and Yemeni sides have sincere desire to get through it peacefully," said Salih. "We have waded through a large part of this problem since we embarked on negotiations in 1995 and I think that a final solution will be reached soon," President Salih said.

Asked whether detente with Saudi Arabia and Kuwait would materialize in the return of Yemeni workers to the kingdom and resumption of assistance to San'a, Salih said: "A limited return of Yemeni workers to Saudi Arabia has been allowed and, to be frank, the situation will not be the same as it was before the Gulf War. "The kingdom no longer has such huge projects that need the previous number of manpower because it had been saturated with the infrastructure works. Concerning the visit by Foreign Minister Abd-al Qadir Bajammal to Kuwait, it came at the invitation of Shaykh Sabah al-Ahmad, the Kuwaiti foreign minister. Normalization of ties with Kuwait is not that strange as our relations are already strong and distinguished."

President Salih argued that the stance of Yemen was not truly depicted by the media during the Gulf War. "Yemen remembers that the Kuwaitis had been supporting it since its September Revolution. But a misunderstanding was created by the foreign media during the Gulf crisis, although we were not involved in the conflict," argued Salih.

Eritrea and Ethiopia

Citing the circumstances in which the relations between Yemen and its old ally, Eritrea, were back to normal after the arbitration decision on [the] Hanish islands came in favour of San'a, President Salih recalled that his relations with Eritrean President Isayas Afewerki date back to pre-independence when Yemen used to support Afewerki, then leader of the Popular Front for the Liberation of Eritrea.

"The crisis of [the] Hanish islands then popped up and the relations were subsequently affected. And after the arbitration decision, President Afewerki visited me twice: once in Aden and another in San' a. And whatever were the external or regional motivations that charged this dispute in the Red Sea, both me and Afewerki recognized that a war will lead nowhere, neither will it serve the stability and security in the area, let alone the navigation in the Red Sea. And hence we decided to resort to arbitration which is a civilized way we prescribe for the settlement of all disputes."



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On Yemen's efforts to end the current dispute between Eritrea and Ethiopia, President Salih said he sent a letter via his minister for legal affairs to Ethiopian Premier Meles Zenawi maintaining that Eritrea has accepted all OAU resolutions regarding the dispute and agreed to sign a relevant framework. "The Ethiopian answer that came read: All the Eritrean forces have to pull out first from the territories they occupied," added Salih.

He noted that Egypt and Libya interfered to solve the problem and voiced hope all their efforts would be capped with success.

Economic problems

Three years ago, President Ali Abdullah Salih engaged in a hard battle for reform only to see the Yemeni field littered with more problems such as unemployment, price hike and stagnation. These problems emerged within the process of the reform programme which kicked off in cooperation with the World Bank and the International Monetary Fund.

In his comment, President Salih said: "Indeed, so many problems broke out once the economic reform programme started. But unless we launched this programme the dollar price against the Yemeni currency would have amounted to 1,200 rials now. The programme enabled us to stabilize the dollar rate at 160 rials. I preferred the economic measures to investments and the programme left unescapable negative effects. But reform was an inevitable remedy to stop the economic deterioration and rehabilitate the destruction brought about by war."

"We issued treasury bonds, raised the interest rates on the savings in rials, although we knew that this could badly affect development and economic growth. We faced this with the creation of the Social Security Network (Social Fund) which curbs the impact of development on the people. This network spends about 29bn rials to tone down the impact reform measures."

Salih said the latest oil price plunge aggravated the problem and caused a drop in the foreign currency. He added that the baby boom in Yemen, where the population index has now spiralled to 18m people, gobbling up any growth surplus, has further added oil to the fire.

The decrease in the expatriates' hard currency remittances and the mass return of workers abroad also was tantamount to a catastrophe, he remarked.

Given this gloomy background, the importance of the economic reform became an unavoidable surgery to rescue the country from a real disaster, said Salih. "Frankly speaking, this was an apparently intended scheme to drive the people to revolt by herding expatriates back home in extremely dire economic conditions," noted Salih, adding that the reform was the lifeboat. Salih set the number of returnees at 1.2 million.

Politics

Asked whether his vast political activity in north and south Yemen and his recent meetings with leaders from the Socialist Party were meant to shore up national unity and at the same time serve as a prelude to the October presidential election, Salih made clear that his meeting with the party



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leaderships [as received] was one with a party that is active on the Yemeni arena as a whole and not in its capacity as a body representing the south.

Speaking of conditions in the south, Salih said southern governorates were being accorded greater care since the July 1993 secessionist attempt.

Various issues

Drawn on reports on deals with the US regarding military arrangements or bases in Aden, Salih dismissed the reports by saying that the Americans already were present in the region and needed no new bases. Salih, asserting that Aden port was open to all, added that Egyptian companies were taking part in construction work there.

We also have an Egyptian company investing in Sumatra island [as received; possibly Socotra] to turn it into a tourist site and build hotels, chalets and resorts, he said.

Salih said his country is seeking to lure more foreign investments and cited a new law on offering facilities to investment companies. He said that during his recent visit to Singapore, an island country he greatly admired, he agreed with officials there on helping in setting up the free-trade zone in Aden.

Speaking of huge natural gas reserves in Yemen, Salih said some 11 trillion cu.m. of natural gas with a turnover of 33bn dollars would expectedly be exported over the coming 25 years.

- [Ansari] Mr President, you stand accused of letting terrorists find refuge in Yemen, is this true?

- [Salih] May God never forgive those who had put in the heads of our Egyptian brethren that we sheltered terrorists.

Yemen condemns terrorism and rejects any terrorist action, Salih said, adding that his country had deported every foreigner who entered the country illegally, be they Egyptian, Libyan, Algerian, Syrian, Sudanese or from any other Islamic country. Salih went on to say that Yemen, like other countries, suffered from terrorism and cited the repeated kidnappings of foreigners in the near past as proof of such a plight.

Salih refuted Internet threats by Islamic Jihad to Yemeni authorities that the group would resume abduction of foreigners. All the leaderships of Jihad along with its cadres are now behind bars pending trials, he said. Salih attacked Yemeni tribesmen who kidnap foreigners as an arm-twisting tactic to force the government to comply with demands for improving services and deemed their action tantamount to political terrorism. Salih was convinced that such abductions were likely to scare off tourists.

Asked if he planned to run again for the presidency in the coming October election, and whether other candidates were allowed to compete, Salih said he was not till now a presidency candidate.

Were there other candidates?

Salih responded by saying he would address a speech to the nation on 22nd



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May, inviting all political organizations and parties to come forward with their presidential hopefuls, within the context of the concept of peaceful power rotation. Of course many Arab brethren will not believe me when I call others to step forward and have a go at the presidency, joked Salih who said he had been president for the past 21 years. The Yemeni constitution mandates that two candidates at least should come forward for the presidency and that 10 candidates is the limit, he said.

Asked to confirm reports that he was personally spearheading a campaign against kat, an indigenous plant with narcotic effects, Salih was quick to say he was. But in view of the fact that the habit is so entrenched in Yemeni society that it has become everybody's cup of tea, according to Salih, the president was taking the campaign easy. Admitting that he himself was an occasional chewer, Salih said he was preaching sports as an alternative. Salih said he received many letters from different parts of Yemen purporting that local leaderships have kicked off the habit and embraced sports instead.

Salih was happy to say that he had succeeded in convincing a number of his inner circle, such as Vice-President Abd Rabbuh Mansur Hadi, to discontinue the habit. Deputy Premier and Foreign Minister Abd-al Qadir Bajammal, according to Salih, remains faithful both to the centuries-old pastime and the new introduction of sports.

LANGUAGE: ENGLISH

LOAD-DATE: May 20, 1999



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Business Times (Malaysia) (Malaysia)

May 22, 1999

SECTION: Diplomatically writing; Pg. 4

LENGTH: 1276 words

HEADLINE: A new democracy comes of age

BYLINE: By Mohamad Taha Mustafa

BODY:

THE Republic of **Yemen** will celebrate the ninth anniversary of its National Day today.

On the 22nd of May 1990, all artificial barriers erected by the colonial powers and protected by the political tendencies of the Cold War vanished. These events gave birth to a United **Yemen** and this in turn, contributed greatly to the stability and peace of our region and facilitated the joint efforts of all the Yemeni patriots - who held different political agendas - in building the country.

Yemen is a democratic, parliamentary republic, with a free market oriented economy. The country enjoys a good reputation within the region due to its political principle of non-interference as far as the affairs of its neighbours are concerned and its defence of peace as well as its cooperation within the region in particular and the world in general.

The relationship between **Yemen** and Malaysia dates back to the 15th Century. Historians of the Malay culture and civilisation have always acknowledged the crucial role played by the Yemeni merchants, Ulama and Muftis - especially from Hadramout - in the Islamisation process which started among the Rajas and the high strata of the Malays, converting the Malay people into Islam.

Today, Islam has become a symbol of the identity and being of the Malay society.

However, it was not until January 1998, that the two countries took a solid step towards strengthening their relations with **Yemen** by establishing a resident mission in Kuala Lumpur.

This move laid the foundations for the official visit by His Excellency Ali Abdullah Saleh, the President of the Republic of **Yemen**, to Malaysia. This was an important milestone in our bilateral relationship and it took place from 11 to 14 February last year, upon an invitation from the then Yang di-Pertuan Agong, His Majesty Tuanku Jaafar and the Government of Malaysia.

During his visit, President Ali Abdullah Saleh held many official talks



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with Malaysia's Honorable Prime Minister Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad.

During these talks, the leaders underlined the unique character of our bilateral relations which are based upon a common history, sanguineous ties and culture as well as a need to fill the gap caused by many years of separation through the boosting of an economic and trade partnership.

The presidential visit culminated with the signing of four important agreements. The Economic, Scientific, Technical and Cultural Cooperation Agreement which laid the foundations for the establishment of an Inter-Governmental Joint Committee; the Trade Incentive Agreement; the Investment Guarantees Agreement and a Memorandum of Understanding between the Malaysian Authority for Industrial Development and the Yemen Investment Authority.

Economic and trade ties may be the milestones by which the future aspirations of our two countries are assessed, but we must never underestimate our cultural ties. As the honorable Malaysian Prime Minister once mentioned, the people of Yemen were the first people from the West to come to Malaysia.

During my first year in Kuala Lumpur, I had the pleasure of being exposed to the many vivid facets of the Malaysian people and was pleasantly surprised by their keen interest in interacting with the people of Yemen.

Representatives of the Malaysian business community have visited Yemen as part of delegations and in separate groups in order to make their own assessment of the opportunities available in my country. The Yemeni Embassy, in cooperation with Malaysian institutions such as Matrade, organised a seminar on "Doing Business with Yemen and the Investment Opportunities".

The first official visit of a Malaysian high official to Yemen was headed by Datuk Paduka Dr Abdul Hamid Othman, a Minister in the Prime Minister's Department. The visit took place in September 1998 and resulted in a better understanding of our profound relations.

The most important visit by a senior Malaysian Minister was the visit made by the Honourable Datuk Seri Syed Hamid Syed Jaffar Albar, Foreign Minister of Malaysia. This visit took place in April 1999. The Minister was accompanied by an important business delegation.

The official talks, during this visit, reflected the fact that our views on international and regional relations coincided in many important ways and revealed our willingness to further strengthen our cooperation within the framework of the Organisation of Islamic Conference and the United Nations as well as on a bilateral basis.

The economic outcome of the visit was also positive with both parties having discussed the refining of Malaysian oil in the Aden Refinery, investments in the Aden Free Zone and infrastructure projects such as those involving power production.



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I would now like to spend a little time giving you a political and economic perspective of **Yemen**. **Yemen** is first and foremost, a **democratic** country.

Yemen has held two **democratic elections** during the last nine years. They were held in 1993 and in 1997 with the participation of all the political parties in the national arena. These elections were conducted with total freedom as well as transparency and have been recognised by all the necessary international and regional monitors as well as observers.

Yemen is facing yet another **democratic** experience this year with its presidential **elections**. This is the first time that a president will be elected through a direct popular vote. Another matter on the agenda this year will be the approval of extended jurisdiction for local governments. The framework of the decentralisation process will give a more profound tone to our **democracy**.

For its crucial role in the implementation of **democratic** structures, **Yemen** has been given the honour of hosting the International Summit of Newly Established **Democracies**, this year.

In the economic arena, the Government of **Yemen** has reiterated its unflinching commitment to economic, administrative, judicial and industrial reform in order to create the most conducive climate for foreign direct investment.

In line with these objectives, the project to convert the city of Aden into a Free Trade Zone is fast becoming a reality with the culmination of the first phase.

Foreign investment is being sought and encouraged in almost every aspect of the economy, from infrastructure projects such as roads, power plants and sewerage and wastewater treatment facilities, to agriculture, fishing and oil production.

The country's laws provide sufficient guarantees to foreign investors seeking to undertake projects either unilaterally or through joint ventures with local investors. The laws also guarantee the free and smooth transfer of capital and all profits in any convertible currency.

Economic reforms have been further strengthened by a set of political and legislative reforms which are aimed at liberalisation through privatization, reforming trade and fiscal policies, the lifting of all restrictions on imports and the phasing out of price controls.

The reforms have received widespread international recognition from well-respected financial institutions which have recognised and acknowledged the real growth of our economy.

These reports have also helped to boost international confidence in the Republic of **Yemen**.

Finally, I would like to thank Business Times and the Malaysian media for their interest in **Yemen**, its people, business, culture and politics. I

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think that the press can contribute highly in bringing our two countries and their peoples together.

The writer is the Ambassador of Yemen to Malaysia.

GRAPHIC: Picture - President Ali Abdullah Saleh (left) and Mohamad Taha Mustafa ... committed to economic, administrative, judicial and industrial reform to create a conducive climate for foreign investment.

LANGUAGE: ENGLISH

LOAD-DATE: May 26, 1999



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May 25, 1999, Tuesday

LENGTH: 337 words

HEADLINE: **YEMEN: SALIH URGES PARTIES TO NOMINATE CANDIDATES FOR PRESIDENTIAL ELECTIONS**

SOURCE: Republic of **Yemen** Radio, San'a, in Arabic 2013 gmt 24 May 99

BODY:

Excerpts from report by Yemeni radio on 24th May President Ali Abdullah Salih stressed that the presidential **elections**, which will take place in **Yemen** for the first time this year, will be a new experience for the society, who will get acquainted with the peaceful rotation of power. He said that **Yemen** has come a long way in political awareness.

In an interview with the Lebanese Space Channel LBC broadcast last night, he said, that the most important condition of presidential candidacy is that whoever gains confidence will maintain unity as a historic achievement. If this condition is met, the people will elect that person, regardless of the party he belongs to.

Salih called for all political parties and cliques to nominate their candidates for the presidential **elections**. He said that there will be a general public conference to determine presidential candidates. The president said: We call all political forces to nominate their candidates, whether as members of parties or as independent people in **Yemen**, whoever they may be. All Yemeni citizen have the right to nominate themselves for the presidency.

He added that **Yemen** was among the first countries to adopt the **democratic** system. He said that San'a will host a conference for the nascent **democratic** nations next month. He added that this conference has not emerged from a vacuum, but it reaffirms that **Yemen** is a **democratic** country...

Answering a question on **Yemen's** request to join the Gulf Cooperation Council GCC, the president said: We consider the council to be a good accomplishment towards Arab, economic and political integration, as well as Arab unity. He added: We exist, whether as members of the council or not. We have good relations with Oman, the United Arab Emirates, Saudi Arabia, Kuwait, Bahrain and Qatar.

On the borders issue with Saudi Arabia, he stressed that what has been accomplished through dialogue, meetings, the memorandum of understanding and committees is a good step towards solving the issue.

LANGUAGE: English

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LEVEL 1 - 4 OF 161 STORIES

Copyright 1999 Guardian Newspapers Limited
The Guardian (London)

June 5, 1999

SECTION: The Guardian Features Page; Pg. 24

LENGTH: 596 words

HEADLINE: Abd al-Aziz al-Saqqaf;
Editor of the free-est press in the Yemen

BODY:

Abd al-Aziz al-Saqqaf, who has died in a car accident aged 48, was a courageous warrior whose weapons were paper, ink and computers. As editor and publisher of the Yemen Times, he took the country's ostensibly liberal press law at its word -and regularly suffered the consequences.

Saqqaf, an economics lecturer at Sana'a University, launched his paper in 1991 during the political spring that accompanied Yemen's first steps towards democracy. It was one of several dozen new titles thrust upon a 60 per cent illiterate public. Many disappeared, and the Times should have been among the first to hit the rocks. It was published entirely in English, apart from the occasional page in French. This was Saqqaf's masterstroke. His paper was able to get away with saying things, because there was no danger of inflaming the masses. But the authorities became apprehensive when they realised that it was read by every foreign diplomat and businessman in Yemen.

He ran the paper from a cramped office just outside the walls of the old city. The first time I met him, after listening to his views on the Yemeni economy, delivered at high speed, I asked him for a copy of the paper. 'You'll have to pay for it,' he said. 'I'm a capitalist.' I handed over the money - slightly less than 10p. Within a few years, the Times had become Yemen's most influential paper and the most successful commercially. I met Saqqaf in his large new offices where he gave me a bundle of back issues. 'Don't you want me to pay for them?' I asked. 'Ah!' he replied, 'In those days I was a POOR capitalist.' The Times's first brush with the law was farcical. The information minister could not read English, so articles had to be translated into Arabic for him. The translator made a mistake which led to the paper being prosecuted - and acquitted -for something it had never said. In 1994, shortly after Yemen's war of secession, Saqqaf was briefly imprisoned without charge and the paper's computers seized. Another time, the paper's landlord decided to throw them out. When Saqqaf was out of town, the landlord invited the entire staff to lunch and, while they were eating, changed the locks on their offices.

In 1995, the Times won the American NPC's award for freedom of the press. This marked a recognition abroad of its efforts, as Saqqaf put it, 'to make Yemen a good world citizen'. Last year, the paper was threatened with prosecution over an article which listed foreign aid Yemen had received under the headline: "Where did it go?" Innocently put, but readers were left in no doubt that money had been siphoned off.



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The Guardian (London), June 5, 1999

Occasionally, he imagined the government feared him more than they did. Saqqaf, summoned to the presidential office, said: 'If you're going to offer me money or a job, I won't take it.' The president, taken aback, replied: 'I wasn't intending to offer you either.' Co-opting opponents is an old Yemeni tactic, and in 1997 Saqqaf was appointed to the new upper house of parliament, the consultative council. Frustrated at its ineffectiveness, he resigned, telling the president it was 'a lethargic organ'. He was persuaded to return.

There was always something in Saqqaf's boldness that pointed towards a tragic end. On June 2, he had lunch with the minister of labour. On the way back he was hit by a car. The death of a critic of the government is liable to arouse suspicions.

Saqqaf is survived by his wife Aziza and four children.

Brian Whitaker Abd al-Aziz al-Saqqaf, journalist and human rights campaigner, born 1951; died June 2, 1999

LANGUAGE: ENGLISH

LOAD-DATE: June 7, 1999



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