

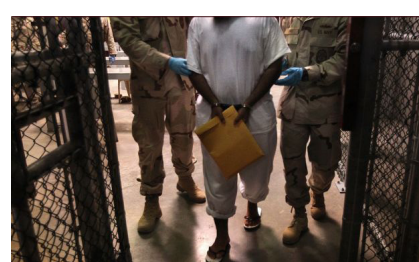
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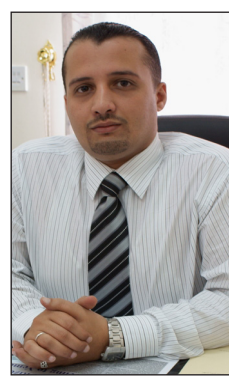
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NDC ENDS WITH SUCCESS; TIME FOR RESULTS

By Arwa Al-Anesi
YEMEN POST STAFF

Surrounded by all NDC representatives, President Abdo Rabbo Mansour Hadi officially announced the closure of the NDC, stressing that now that a consensus had been reached, he would, as the Head of State, strive to implement the people's will on the ground as to finalize Yemen's calls for change and introduce a new institutional era. Almost a year after its establishment, and following much delays and roadblocks, NDC representatives managed against all odds to fulfil their popular mandate by laying down the principles upon which Yemen new constitutions will be constructed around. And while challenges remain, President Hadi said he believed Yemen will pull

of Yemen on the conclusion of their National Dialogue," State Department deputy spokeswoman Marie Harf said at a press conference on Saturday. "The debates, discussions and compromises throughout the National Dialogue process are evidence of the will of the Yemeni people to work together constructively for the future of their country," she added. Cautious Harf warned that while Yemen should revel in its political achievement, she noted that the impoverished nation had yet a long way to go to achieve its democratic dream. While the NDC laid out the groundwork for the drafting of a new constitution and the move from a presidential governance system to a federal one, Yemen would have to carve its own way as it seeks to implement change on the ground. "While significant progress has been made,

“NDC representatives managed against all odds to fulfil their popular mandate by laying down the principles upon which Yemen new constitutions will be constructed around.”

President Hadi's remarks just ahead of NDC final curtain call

With tension high between the Houthis and the tribes as fighting re-emerged in the province of Amran, located directly north of the capital and a sudden surge in assassination, Yemen President Abdo Rabbo Mansour Hadi called on his countrymen to stand by him as he wished to oppose such "forces of evil." Having inherited a fractured and almost bankrupted nation (Yemen is the poorest and most restive nation in the Arabian Peninsula) President Hadi had from the onset an impossible task: mend decades of mis-management, nepotism, corruption and latent sectarianism as well as tribalism. However, the man who for the greatest part of his political career stood in the shadow of former President Ali Abdullah Saleh, as his long-standing Vice President, President Hadi managed in a short two years to introduce Yemen to a different form of governance, one based on democratic

principles.

And while of course Yemen's toward journey democracy remains difficult and at times painful, changes of such magnitude often are.

Following years of living under an absolute presidential system, Yemenis have only begun to comprehend dialogue and grasp political pluralism; Yemen as a nation will need to learn to find its way and define its course in consensus not in despotism, a brand new concept of governance. But if progresses have been promising, testament of Yemenis' dedication to democracy, dangers are legion and pitfalls are a plenty. If anything the NDC could be remembered as the easiest and less turbulent chapter of the country democratic transition. With all principles laid out in its book of resolutions, Yemen politicians will have now to implement change on the ground, a task many have said to be dreaded. As many will confirm, if managing to get Yemenis to agree on anything is a mighty task, the implementation of an agreement can be even more challenging, as often parties will have a different understanding of how what they agreed upon should come to be. As per noted by President Hadi, security remains a dire issue, a threat to the nation. The Yemen's cycle of violence needs to be ended if the nation is ever to pull through as fear and distrust are not conducive to growth and political stability, quite the opposite actually. Communities will only retract behind their walls, and Yemen democratic dream will wither in the shadows.

“The debates, discussions and compromises throughout the National Dialogue process are evidence of the will of the Yemeni people to work together constructively for the future of their country,” she added.

the leadership of President Hadi, as they work to implement the National Dialogue recommendations and subsequent stages of the transition process, including constitutional reform and national elections.”



through and become a beacon of the Arab Spring movement, an example to be followed and emulated.

"We will now strive implement the outcomes [resolutions] of the dialogue with the support of the international community," noted President Hadi while addressing on Saturday NDC representatives and other state and foreign dignitaries.

President Hadi stressed that the NDC' success should act as a reminder that Yemen can as a nation pull together and carve a way for itself no matter the turmoil or difficulty.

The president who will remain in power for another year as to overview the implementation of Yemen's last power transfer chapter called on all Yemenis to stand by office as all will attempt to transform Yemen into a "modern civil state".

Addressing the Yemeni nation through a recorded televised message, UN Secretary General Ban Ki Moon congratulated the people of Yemen on their dazzling victory over chaos, stressing that the people had rightly chosen unity over division, consensus over chaos.

Washington stands by Sana'a through thick and thin

As Yemenis came together on Saturday to celebrate the successful conclusion of the National Dialogue Conference, the United States of America, which has been instrumental in promoting dialogue over unrest and territorial unity over fragmentation, hailed the nation for such its historical breakthrough. "The United States congratulates the people

Yemen versus France: President Hadi threatens TOTAL with international court over LNG prices

YEMEN POST STAFF

Faced with an aggravated economic crisis and dangerously low foreign currencies reserve, President Abdo Rabbo Mansour Hadi first had to turn toward the oil sector to try to establish how best to maximize Yemen's income revenues, when he took power in 2012. Since the oil and gas industry represents over 70% of Yemen's national budget, it was only natural for President Hadi to want to how so far his predecessor, former President Ali Abdullah Saleh had managed the country's main source of revenues.

A closer look at Yemen developing LNG industry revealed that under current arrangements Yemen had agreed to sell its LNG at a significantly discounted price: \$3 per million British thermal units (Btu).

In a remark to the press back December 2013, when the coalition government looked into Yemen LNG dossier, prompted by expressions of outrage from the public over the perceived squandering of public money, Shawki Al-Mekhlafi, the deputy minister of Yemen's Ministry of Oil and Minerals, emphasized that "agreements signed during the former regime deprived Yemen of full and fair compensation for LNG sales."

According to national data, Yemen has sold its gas well beyond market prices, \$9 below market price to below to be precise. For the past decade Yemen has systematically lost an average of \$700 million per annum, which given the state of Yemen's finances seems rather odd. As per the Oil Ministry record Yemen signed with TOTAL, KOGAS and GDF-Suez a 20 year agreement for the sale of its gas at \$3 per million Btu.

As Yemenis called on the coalition government to immediately look into the matter as to re-align Yemen with global markets and secure the nation a fair return on its natural resources, France, which has a majority interests in Yemen LNG and represents both TOTAL and GDF-Suez, Yemen's main LNG buyers, has dragged its feet, keen on perpetuating Saleh's arrangement over a price re-adjustment.

In December, Ahmed Dares, Yemen's Oil minister confirmed that following a round of negotiations with KOGAS (Korean company) Yemen had modified its sale agreement to match current market level. Starting 2014, Kogas will buy Yemen LNG at a rate of \$12.6 per million Btu.

So far France remains undecided. Earlier this January, Prime Minister

Mohammed Salem Basindwa discussed with Chairman of the French energy company TOTAL Christophe De Margerie future cooperation and collaboration in the industry. The PM notified de Margerie of KOGAS' decision, stating that TOTAL now faced two options: a discounted rate of \$12.6 per million Btu



or full market price at about \$14 per million Btu.

As per noted by officials, Yemen cannot afford to discount its natural resources when millions of its people face unprecedented economic hardship.

Because TOTAL has so far declined to respond to Yemen's offer, Prime Minister Basindwa warned that should an agreement fail to be brokered according to the nation's expectations; the government would take the matter to the international court and debate there the matter of Yemen-France's LNG agreement. Since it has been rumoured that TOTAL heavily bribed former regime's government officials to secure such discounted prices, a simple matter of contractual price change could turn into a corruption case with great ramifications.

While former President Saleh has always denied wrongdoings, officials at the Oil ministry noted that despite many requests, Saleh had fail to ever explain why he voluntarily chose to discount Yemen's LNG resources when he could have easily secure the nation an income of \$1 billion per year instead of \$300 million per year.

Since 2005, when former President Saleh signed the LNG agreement with TOTAL, KOGAS and GDF-Suez, Yemen has lost an estimated \$5.6 billion of unrealized income. When considering Yemen's current national deficit stands at \$3.2 billion, one can easily understand why so many Yemenis feel deeply uneasy about the situation, especially since the impoverished nation has been put in a situation where it had to bed the international community to pledge funds to finance its economic recovery.