black.

Suspension: By a fixed loop at the top of the medal hanging from a square suspension on a rectangular bar.

**Fourth Governate (Shabwa) Medal of Resistance**

Obverse: A circular medal with a small central, inverted, blue triangle bearing a silver five-pointed star.

Reverse: In the center the outline of an AK-47 assault rifle surrounded by the Arabic inscription **THE PEOPLE'S DEMOCRATIC REPUBLIC OF YEMEN FOURTH GOVERNATE HERO OF RESISTANCE** (Figure 6).

Size: 40mm silver medal made from the smoothed disc of a Maria Theresa Thaler, a predominant unit of currency in Yemen. Manufacturer unknown, but probably by an artisan in the Governate capital of Shabwa.

Ribbon: Unknown.

Suspension: A straight bar suspension 37mm wide fixed to the top of the medal.

This award would appear to be an award instituted, manufactured and presented locally by the administration of the Fourth Governate to recognise distinguished or brave service during the period before independence.
Hadhramaut Governate Medal

Obverse: A circular medal with a central circular design surmounting a scroll with the inscription HDR – HADHRAMAUT GOVERNATE (in Arabic) – GOV (Figure 7). The main design consists of the following elements: a wreath of barley and wheat sheaves extending upwards to complete a circle. At the base a circle with the head of an oryx and the word HADHRAMAUT in Himyaritic script between the horns. Above this device a semicircle being a depiction of the tower city of Shibam. To the left two palm trees and to the right a dhow at sea. Above this a multi-rayed sun with a five pointed star and a pair of crossed hammers.

Figure 7: Obverse of the Hadhramaut Governate Medal.

Reverse: Around the top and bottom the inscription in Arabic and English THE PEOPLE’S DEMOCRATIC REPUBLIC OF YEMEN (Figure 8).

Figure 8: Reverse of the Hadhramaut Governate Medal.

Size: 51mm diameter of patinated bronze of unknown manufacture.

Ribbon: Unknown.

Suspension: By a loop affixed to the uppermost part of the medal.

I was advised by the vendor that he believed that this award was for agricultural merit but I have no evidence to support this claim.

Conclusion

In the study of the aforementioned awards and in the absence of any of the instituting decrees I have tried, where possible, to place them in a political context. It is difficult to appreciate that the P.D.R.Y. was a government based on a radical version of a Marxist ideology, which its leaders referred to as “scientific socialism.” All aspects of life came under the control of central government and ruthless methods were employed to ensure loyalty to the state. Execution and torture were commonplace. This resulted in the mass exile of many citizens and the disappearance of the large foreign community once resident in Aden. In their place came many advisers from the Soviet Union, People’s Republic of China, Cuba, East Germany and Hungary to oversee the development of the various state security forces and economic development. Nationalisation and political repression contributed to huge economic problems and by the mid-1970’s the national economy was one of the least developed and poorest in the world. External relations were focused on revolutionary and radical movements and support was given in varying degrees to such groups as the Popular Front for the Liberation of Palestine, the Popular Front for the Liberation of Oman, the Italian Red Brigades, the German Bader-Meinhof Group and even the arch terrorist Carlos. The P.D.R.Y. became a land of fear and poverty, which has only regained a hope for a brighter future with the unification of the two Yemens in 1990.

The Port of Aden is one of the world’s largest natural harbors and was once the world’s premier ship bunkering port. The Republic of Yemen government is eager to restore the Port of Aden to its former glory and even prior to the 1994 civil war established in 1991 the Yemen Free Zone Public Authority with the charter to encourage privately funded initiatives to develop the Aden Free Zone. In 1993 the Y.F.Z.P.A. completed a 25-year plan which required the direct investment of US$5.8 billion. The initial stages of this plan commenced with the development of the Aden International Container Terminal. Also to be developed, adjacent to the Terminal, is a 1,550 hectare industrial and commercial park that will support international industrial users and operators of the free zone. In addition to be developed are power plants, an air cargo village, the construction of a new international
airport, new sewage and wastewater treatment facilities and the development of new tourist facilities.

Since the initial drafting of this article the security of Yemen was again under question with the bombing of the USS Cole in Aden in 2001. The Yemeni government acknowledged the presence of supporters of the terrorist group Al Qaeda though it has since moved to try and eliminate the movement with support from the United States. However the continuing security threat has had a direct impact on the economy. Notwithstanding the dire straits in which the economy finds itself, I have had the good fortune to visit the south of Yemen on a number of occasions and each time I was received with great kindness and courtesy. The medals I have collected mark a sad and unpleasant period in its history, which with good fortune the new unified Yemen can move away from with hope.

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**Appendix A – National Democratic Front Medal**

Obverse: A clenched fist rising out of the outline of a united Yemen and surrounded by the inscription NATIONAL DEMOCRATIC FRONT, THE YEMEN ARAB REPUBLIC (Figure 9). To the left of the wrist a small ear of corn.

Reverse: The circular outline of the Yemen Arab Republic flag, surrounded by the inscription PRIMACY FOR THE NATION, DEMOCRACY FOR THE PEOPLE, UNITY FOR YEMEN (Figure 10).

Figure 9: Obverse of the National Democratic Front Medal.

Figure 10: Reverse of the National Democratic Front Medal.

Size: 34mm diameter brass, of east European manufacture.

Ribbon: Although seen with various ribbons I have no evidence of which, if any, are correct.

Suspension: A ring through a loop affixed to the top of the medal.

A group supported by the P.D.R.Y. was the National Democratic Front of North Yemen. Founded in 1976 and advocating the unity of Yemen it was based in Aden. In 1979 with the support of the P.D.R.Y. it fought limited actions in the south of the Yemen Arab Republic. A semi-official medal was issued for the N.D.F.