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Stephen W. Day

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# Regionalism and Rebellion in Yemen

## *A Troubled National Union*

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The photograph on the cover depicts the aftermath of a tragic scene in the city of Taiz on May 29, 2011, when Yemen's republican guard and central security forces stormed "Freedom Square," where peaceful protesters had camped for months as a rallying point for demonstrations against President Salih's regime. The invading troops fired live ammunition, including heavy anti-aircraft weapons and RPGs, on unarmed citizens, many of whom had taken shelter in tents that provided shelter whenever they slept in shifts outdoors. During the attack, at least four protesters died, some burned alive inside the tents, including disabled youth unable to flee without their wheelchairs and crutches. Many more people were left with serious injuries. According to the photographer, Wael al-Absi, before capturing this image on his camera, he and others had tried to dissuade the troops from attacking, pleading that all Yemenis are brothers and sisters. But the troops apparently acted under strict orders to carry out their murderous assault. After the injured were rescued, and the corpses of martyrs retrieved, Wael al-Absi snapped this photo of a man using a blanket to extinguish flames engulfing one of many tents that were intentionally ignited by soldiers. The anonymous man struggles as he fans the fire, while seeking to put out the flames. Credit: Wael al-Absi, and Aleshteraki.net newspaper.