

BAHRAIN

A monthly newsletter issued by the Bahrain Freedom Movement

Charity Starts at Home

Will GCC Leaders Address the More Serious Local Problems

To many, convening a summit is not the aim, but the outcome of it is what matters. In the Gulf the logic is the opposite. To hold a meeting of the rulers of the six countries comprising the Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC) is the aim, what happens next is immaterial. Last year, the ruler of Qatar, Sheikh Khalifa bin Hamad Al Thani, threatened to boycott the 13th summit of the GCC which was to be held in Abu Dhabi. He was extremely upset by the way the Gulf states had reacted to the use of force by the Saudi border guards against his own troops near the border post of Al Khafoos. The result was two Qatari soldiers dead and several others injured. The threat of a boycott sent a wave of shocks throughout the region, and many go-betweens expressed concern and offered to mediate. President Mubarak of Egypt was more than happy to use his good offices with Riyadh and Doha to bring about a compromise solution. The Saudis would gradually pull out their troops from the disputed area and the Qatari head of state would attend the summit.

Such is the fragility of the situation that boycotting the summit would be viewed as a threat to the strategy of the GCC. But the domination of the Saudis of the political and economic situation is resented by almost all other GCC states, except Bahrain. Sultan Qaboos bin Saeed of Oman does not want to be dictated to by the Saudi monarch, and has, over the last fifteen years adopted an independent foreign policy. His Ibadhi (an Islamic sect dominant in Oman) people have little love to the Wahhabis of Saudi Arabia, and have long had a suspicious view of Riyadh. Throughout the eighties, Oman maintained good relations with Iran, to the annoyance of other GCC states, most notably, Saudi Arabia. During the second Gulf crisis, Muscat maintained the link with Baghdad and received the Iraqi Foreign Minister, Tariq Aziz at the behest of the crisis. From a point of strength, Sultan Qaboos signed a border agreement with Saudi Arabia three years ago, thus putting aside a long standing conflict.

Recently, Kuwait exhibited an unease at the tendency of both Qatar and Oman to mend their relations with Iraq. Qatar sent her ambassador to Baghdad back last year at a time whilst the Kuwaitis were struggling to maintain an international blockade of Iraq. Last summer, Al Walkra, a Qatari sports club, signed a contract with two Iraqi football players, an event that brought out the anger of Kuwait to the open. Whilst the Qatari Foreign Minister was on an official visit to Kuwait, the president of the Youth and Sports Corporation of Qatar was in Baghdad to negotiate the details of the contract with the two players. Qatar maintains that they had joined the Allied forces to liberate Kuwait

only reluctantly, and once the Iraqis were driven out of Kuwait, their mission came to an end. Sheikh Hamad bin Jassim bin Jaber Al Thani, the Qatari foreign minister, in his address at the United Nations last October, called for the lifting of sanctions on Iraq which had been imposed after the end of the Gulf war.

Oman, on the other hand, has opened up for Iraq in a manner that leaves no room to doubt that the alliance against Iraq is beginning to fragment. Last month, Muscat was the venue of a major Iraqi cultural week, with big publicity in the Iraqi press for the event. Artists and musicians were among the Iraqi celebrities who participated in that week, and the Omani press gave good coverage of the event. It was organised only few days before Oman's National Day, 18th November. Undoubtedly, holding such an event could not help in maintaining a united anti-Iraqi front. Countries which had supported Iraq during the recent conflict are now being accepted back in the Gulf and a lot of confidence-building is in the process. Infact, Oman is undertaking an initiative of rapprochement among the Arab protagonists, to the annoyance of Kuwait, which finds herself helpless in the whole process.

These stands are in clear contrast to the Saudi and Kuwaiti positions which insist on maintaining the sanctions until Iraq abides by all UN resolutions. The Kuwaitis are especially demanding that Iraq returns her POWs, thought to number about 600. Iraq maintains her denial that she is still holding any of them. Many mediations in this matter have come to nothing, and Kuwait's government is under immense public pressure to act. Furthermore, Kuwait and Saudi Arabia insist that Iraq accepts the demarcations of the borders which have been undertaken by UN personnel over the last two years in accordance with UN resolution 833. This is not forthcoming and Iraq, on the contrary, is repeating her threats to Kuwait by insisting on her claims that Kuwait belongs to Iraq. This is causing concern both in Kuwait and in international bodies. It shows that the Gulf war which was the most dangerous in recent times, has failed to bring Iraq to her knees on the very cause of the conflict.

Last month, the Iraqis were involved in two cross-border incursions into Kuwait. In the first instance 350 of them wielding sticks and machettes attacked UN personnel at the borders and caused them to flee as they crossed the borders. They were protesting the erection of a border wall along the line drawn by the United Nations. In the second instance, 600 Iraqis did the same. Despite the UN protestations, it is unlikely that these provocations will end. Iraq feels her hands are tied up but she can still use

her feet and mouth to annoy her neighbours. Such actions are unlikely to be received with ease by the Kuwaitis. Furthermore, Kuwait sees that there is a tendency in the West to lift the sanctions against Iraq at least partially and allow Baghdad to start exporting oil, a development which will annoy Kuwait greatly. The recent arms inspAI: Torture AllegationsAI: Torture Allegationsection teams to Iraq have given a clearance on Iraq's arms industry confirming that Baghdad had destroyed her arms of mass destruction, thus adding weight to the calls to lift sanctions on Iraq.

It is in this political environment that the 14th GCC is to be held on 20th of this month in Riyadh. Coupled with a deteriorating economy throughout the Gulf, the stage is set for a gloomy outcome of the annual gathering. With this inter-Gulf deteriorating realtions, the Saudis are now beginning to realise how difficult it is becoming to hold the Gulf alliance together. Perhaps it is this depressing environment that has led the Saudi monarch to seek a truce with his enemies at home. It is now known that a deal had been struck with the Shia opposition in the Eastern region that would spare him the international criticism. Over the last 13 years, Saudi Arabia has been plagued by non-stop propaganda outside and political dissent internally. The Shia, who have been the underdogs in the Kingdom have carried out a successful campaign against the Al Saud dynasty, and managed to get their message across to the decision makers in many western capitals. After months of negotiations, the Saudis have been forced to accept a truce with the Shia opposition. Over the last two months many Saudi nationals who have, hitherto, been unable to return to their country, were allowed a safe entry into their homeland. All Shia prisoners, numbering about 40, were released and steps are being taken to ensure equal treatment for the Shia as Saudi citizens.

It is difficult to imagine the Saudis bowing to internal pressure if their outside influence was not shaken. Whether this fact is going to induce any discussion in Abu Dhabi when the six rulers meet later this month is not yet known, but what is certain is that the inter-Gulf relations are becoming so weak that sensible rulers will find it difficult to escape addressing the real problems at home. It is unlikely that the 14th GCC summit will result in any concrete steps towards resolving the intricate problems engulfing the ruling tribes. Certainly discussion of a process of democratisation is not on the table in Abu Dhabi, but failing to do so can only result in weaker regimes, and, consequently, a more fragmented alliance. Charity starts at home, they say. They may be right.

Education: Mission Unaccomplished

Modern education in Bahrain started in 1919 for boys and nine years later, girls primary schools were established. Education was run by the British up until the Second World War when Ahmed Al-Omran was appointed as director of education. After independence in 1971, an education ministry was created and a member of the ruling family took over. Sheikh Abdul Aziz Al-Khalifa ran the ministry until his sudden death in 1982. The then health minister, Dr. Ali Fakhroo, was appointed to run the education ministry in addition to the health ministry. This continued for just under a year, after which the health minister was transferred to the education function and another person, Jawad Al-Urayedh, was appointed health minister. In the absence of any form of democratic institution, Bahrain's education policy has been formulated by some half a dozen people for the past eight decades.

From a literacy point of view, Bahrain's records are impressive. Illiteracy, if it exists, pertains to the older generation and accounts for about 11%. This is compared to a 40% in the early seventies and 66% in the fifties. Since Dr. Fakhroo's appointment, several modern techniques were introduced, such as designating a class teacher for small group for primary subjects. Basic literacy education is technically adequate and a diversified secondary education is available. After twelve years of primary, intermediate and secondary education, the Bahraini youth start wondering what is next.

Job prospects are non-existent for those completing secondary education. These people can't compete with 120,000 foreign cheap work-

force imported from the Indian sub-continent and the Far East. There are more than 20,000 national unemployed. Expatriates dominate the job market by a hefty 56%. Bahrainisation has been talked about since 1972. Up until now the media is beating the drums of Bahrainisation. To Bahrainise, it is little more than a joke. For one, the educational system is not geared to a carefully studied development plan. That is apart for odd sectors, like tourism, hotels and catering, where the school graduate is guaranteed a job in one of the hotels. University education is not available to every person. The places are not enough and the cost of fees and books is beyond the capability of many families. The secondary school leavers wonder for five years and end-up taking such jobs as market porters, fishing, washing cars, receptionists and any other form of work, which really don't require a secondary school education.

The educational system fails also to achieve its social objectives. Citizenship development is an alien element of the curriculum. The history being taught, the social studies, the religious textbooks and language are fragmented and distorted. Indeed, Bahrainis depend on their own to study their country's history and to understand their heritage. Students are told that Bahrain virtually did not exist before Al-Khalifa "conquered" the islands more than two centuries ago. The National Assembly experiment in 1973-75 is mentioned in passing. No information or details are available to explain why it only existed for two years. Citizenship is vaguely defined. What is

a good or bad citizen. Who qualifies for being a good or bad citizen is not clear. The joke is that the easiest way to be a good citizen as required by the government is to join the informers and spies network managed by British officers, like Ian Henderson. Only then, would a person be declared a "good citizen". More over, Bahrainis are told that they should be thankful to the royal family which provided them with bread, houses and highways. A common phrase usually reiterated by all members of the ruling family to who ever talks to them is: "Your stomach is full of our food".

Not surprisingly that most school graduates end-up joining the larger frustrated sections of the society, with no future to look for. Moreover, the government has encouraged a two-tier system. The private expansive-fees schools are operated nationally and by expatriate communities. In these schools, students learn to love English language (not Arabic) and are taught the American or any other country's history, but not Bahrain. Most graduates of these school then go abroad to complete their education and return for more or less secured career prospects. This upper or upper-middle class system of education is revered by the government as the jewel in the crown. Hence the conclusion: Bahrain's education system or systems score well on teaching how read and write, how to calculate and how to appreciate science, but at the same time fail to address the country's development requirements and fail to develop a sense of citizenship.

Demise of the Regional Career

Gulf Air has been the only national airlines for Bahrain, Qatar, Oman and the UAE up until 1985, when the ruler of Dubai formed a rival airlines company "Emirates". Then Dubai claimed that Abo Dhabi was the main beneficiary in the partnership of Gulf Air. The Emirates airlines was not allowed to function where Gulf Air managed to monopolise.

Few months ago, Oman announced it was unhappy with the Gulf Air and that she allowed her internal airlines company to extend its services to India and Dubai. Last month Qatar followed suit, and announced that a new national airlines was formed under the chairmanship of a member of the royal family, Mohammed bin Ali bin Jabr Al Thani.

This leaves only Bahrain as the main dedicated member of the Gulf Air. Had it not been for the financial difficulties, Bahrain would have announced a separate airlines. All this signifies how grave the differences between such states claiming to be members of a regional grouping, i.e. the Gulf Cooperation Council. In fact one thing is missing and shall continue to be missing, that is integration between economical and political structures of the GCC countries. In fact competition and clashes on every minor and major issues, including military clashes on disputed borders. The GCC is more of a political joke than a reality.

They Have Done it ... At Last The Ruling Family Celebrated Their Son's MSc Degree

A year ago, Bahrain was hit by a wave of enforced celebrations. The big news was that His Highness Shaikh Salman Al-Khalifa (son of the heir apparent) has just completed his Bachelor Degree in the US. What a major achievement. At last, the Al-Khalifa family has proved to the world that they can match the thousands of common Bahraini citizens who have been graduating for decades, while members of the royal family were less caring about education. The many thousands Bahraini youth were astonished to see themselves without proper prospects in life despite graduating from all recognised universities in the world, while the young Al-Khalifa chap (Shaikh Salman) has been appointed as deputy of his father chairing Bahrian Centre for Research. More over, the young sheikh has been attending all sorts of seminars and "briefing" delegates and speakers on what is to be discussed.

After graduating last year, he chaired a seminar (July 1992) on Bahrain in the year 2010. The first paper was titled "Alternatives to oil for national income". When the questions session started, a young Bahraini graduate asked for permission to speak to the chairman (the graduate Sheikh Salman). The question raised by the common Bahrain graduate was: What have you (AL-Khalifa family) achieved for this country since you started ruling for the past two hundred years? The national income is well-known in fact and figures, and has always been pumped into security and defence expenses. Why don't you

allocate such huge amount of expenditure on education to enable the young of the country to contribute in development programmes? In the advanced countries, people are taxed but are granted their rights. In this country we are milked without any rights. Would we get our rights in the year 2010? The Al-Khalifa graduate was furious and interrupted the common Bahraini graduate by saying: You have deviated from the subject. See me later and I will explain to you my answers. The common Bahraini graduate replied: How do you claim there is freedom of speech and democracy while you shut me up? If you have an answer say it now in front of the audience. The red-faced young sheikh went into an embarrassing silence.

Yet, this year another shock wave hit the media. The young Sheikh has managed to complete a Masters degree in international relations, this time from Cambridge University in the UK. Again, congratulations and celebrations were every where for this "miracle" achievement. Photographs of the young Sheikh chatting with his father was a main item of the news. Every day the young sheikh is congratulated for his magnificent achievement which only several hundred of common Bahrainis have achieved. Directly upon his return, the young Master-holder Shaikh chaired another seminar on industrial investment in the GCC countries. This time only selected delegates were present to cheer the magnificent Shaikh

Expansion on Borrowed Money

Gulf Air buys new Boeing planes despite financial problems

Last month we reported the prominent visit to the Gulf and more importantly to Bahrain of the U.S. Transportation Secretary. No sooner had the Secretary left the region than Gulf Air (GA) finalized a deal with Boeing for the purchase of civilian aircraft.

Many industry analysts were surprised given Gulf Air's already massive buying and the financial difficulty. The air business in the region has been experiencing huge losses.

The deal calls for Gulf Air placing orders for six Boeing 777 jets and an option for additional six. The long range planes are state of the art. No mention was made of the financing but it is widely believed that the U.S. Export/Import Bank has provided a guarantee for 80% of the deal. The deal's worth was not disclosed. But industry sources said that the business was worth US \$1,400 and 1,700 million based on a similar previous sale. As part of the deal, Gulf Air ordered \$350 million GE engines. This way GA has bought everything American to the delight of President Clinton.

The pressure brought on Saudia, Gulf Air and Kuwaiti Airways to make investments resembles the sort of urging made on the Opec countries to invest in their oil industries for future purposes. Opec is forced to take only the residual or the remaining in the market and accept low oil prices, still it must invest so as to

avoid rise in the oil prices in the future. But the U.S. firms are sparing their funds.

True prospects for traffic in the Middle East are expected to boom in the years ahead but that remains only a forecast; needless to say in the Middle East everything is subject to unpredictable change.

In the pipeline is the impending decision by Saudia for aircraft put at the value of some \$8,100 million; American firms such as Boeing and McDonald Douglas have already secured attractive financing package from the Export-Import Bank in Washington DC. The US government is making the financial arrangement so attractive and hard to resist. Have no sufficient funds, Washington says still need not worry. Buy on credit and pay later, the American way. After all, the Saudis listen to the Americans to the delight of both parties.

The US president is personally lobbying with King Fahad to buy American and not Airbus. Saudi newspapers spare no time hailing Clinton's repeated calls to King Fahad and consider that as a sort of prestige for the Kingdom. What Saudi Arabia's many newspapers fail to realize is that Mr. Clinton is ready to do whatever it takes to help export American goods. Clinton has fallen in love with Boeing; he makes it a point to visit the company during his stops in Seattle. The Europeans are not happy

with Clinton's blatant interference with the notion of free trade.

The Saudis are expected to buy planes worth some \$6,000 million from the U.S. and \$2,000 million for various Airbus models. The current Saudia fleet is second to none in the Middle East. It is a current joke that the US tells the Saudis what they need in terms of arms and the like; the only thing the Riyadh government has to do is pay for the goods. Instant credit is provided to make up for the shortage in funds.

Currently, Gulf Air charges \$156 or so for a 45-minute flight between Bahrain and Dubai for a one-week ticket only. Fare for a month-long ticket is much higher. This supposedly low price follows a Gulf Cooperation Council's decision to reduce prices in the respective GCC cities to increase contacts among the subjects. Relations between Gulf Air and the Dubai-based Emirate Airline remain strained due to Gulf Air's refusal to allow Emirate to fly to fellow member states. But the policy has shown some cracking. Oman is not happy with Gulf Air. So is the case with Qatar.

Oman is threatening to expand its domestic airline to regional airports. Already Dubai has granted the Omani airliner four weekly flights and Oman returned the favour. Qatar is likewise threatening with its own version of an airline. Both Oman and Qatar are annoyed with Gulf Air's strategies such as heavy company presence in Bahrain at the expense of other locations.

Bahrain as Viewed by US State Department

(Extracts from Background Notes, Published By The Bureau of Public Affairs)

Area: 693 sq. km. (268 sq. mi.); about four times the size of Washington, DC. People: Population (1989 est.): 500,000 (66% indigenous). Ethnic groups: Arab 73%, Iranian 9%, Pakistani, Indian. Religions: Shi'a and Sunni Muslim. Languages: Arabic (official), English, Farsi, Urdu, 56% expatriate. Most of the population of Bahrain is concentrated in the two principal cities, Manama and Al Muharraq.

Islam is the dominant religion. Though Shia Muslims make up more than two-thirds of the population, Sunni Islam is the prevailing belief held by those in the government, military, and corporate sectors. Roman Catholic and Protestant churches, as well as a tiny indigenous Jewish community, also exist in Bahrain.

HISTORY: Bahrain was once part of the ancient civilization of Dilmun and served as an important link in trade routes between Sumeria and the Indus Valley as much as 5000 years ago. Since the late 18th century, Bahrain has been governed by the Al-Khalifa family, which created close ties to Britain by signing the General Treaty of Peace in 1820. A binding treaty of protection, known as the Perpetual Truce of Peace and Friendship, was concluded in 1861 and further revised in 1892 and 1951.

This treaty was similar to those entered into by the British Government with the other Gulf principalities. It specified that the ruler could not dispose of any of his territory except to the United Kingdom and could not enter into relationships with any foreign government other than the United Kingdom without British consent. The British promised to protect Bahrain from all aggression by sea and to lend support in case of land attack.

After World War II, Bahrain became the center for British administration of treaty obli-

gations in the lower Persian Gulf. In 1968, when the British Government announced its decision (reaffirmed in March 1971) to end the treaty relationships with the Persian Gulf sheikhdoms, Bahrain joined the other eight states (Qatar and the seven Trucial Sheikhdoms, which are now called the United Arab Emirates) under British protection in an effort to form a union of Arab emirates. By mid-1971, however, the nine sheikhdoms still had not agreed on terms of union. Accordingly, Bahrain sought independence as a separate entity and became fully independent on August 15, 1971, as the State of Bahrain.

GOVERNMENT AND POLITICAL CONDITIONS: In 1973, the Amir enacted a new constitution, setting up an experimental parliamentary system and protecting individual liberties. In August 1975, however, the Amir disbanded the National Assembly. No date has been announced for the reintroduction of representative institutions.

US-BAHRAIN RELATIONS: When Bahrain became independent, the traditionally excellent US-Bahrain relationship was formalized with the establishment of diplomatic relations. The US embassy at Manama was opened September 21, 1971, and a resident ambassador was sent in 1974. The Bahraini Embassy in Washington, DC, opened in 1977. In October 1991, Amir Isa bin Sulman made a state visit to Washington, after which he visited other parts of the US as well.

In 1977, the agreement establishing Bahrain as the home port for the US Navy's Middle East Force (MIDEASTFOR) was terminated. Arrangements have been made that allow the MIDEASTFOR ships to call at Bahrain. The US Department of Defense-sponsored Bahrain

School remains, along with a small, administrative support unit. After the Gulf war, close cooperation between the two nations helped to stabilize the region. Bahrain expressed a willingness for cooperation with proposed plans for joint exercises, increased US naval presence in the Gulf and future cooperation on security matters.

US-Bahraini economic ties have grown steadily since 1932, when Americans began to help develop Bahrain's oil industry. Currently, many American banks and firms use Bahrain as a base for regional operations. In 1986, the United States displaced Japan to become the top exporter to Bahrain.

Al: Torture Allegations

In its November 1993 issue, Amnesty International newsletter published the photograph of Mr. Mohammed Jamil Al-Jamri with the following news item:

"Mohammed Jamil Abd al-Amir al-Jamri, the 33 year old civil engineer arrested in 1988 and reportedly tortured to force him to confess to spying for Iran, continues to serve the 10 year prison sentence handed down by the State Security Court after an unfair trial in 1990.

In June, the Bahrain authorities denied allegations of torture and maintained that the charges were properly brought under the Bahrain penal code.

Although Amnesty International welcomes the assurances that he received a fair trial and was not subjected to torture, the organization has not received details of any investigations into his torture allegations. A request for the court's judgement has also not been forthcoming. (See Worldwide Appeal, April 1993)".

The "American" From Bahrain

Profile on Tariq Al-Mo'ayyad, Bahrain's Information Minister

Mr. Tariq al Mo'ayyad left Bahrain on 27 September for London and then the U.S. Mr. al Mo'ayyad is the longest serving information minister among the regional security arrangement grouping, the so-called Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC). Al Mo'ayyad's regular visits to the U.K. and the U.S. have been raising eyebrows in the country. Many throw doubts on the real purposes of the visits. For one, Al Mo'ayyad who loves seeing his pictures in the press, does not do so in the case of his repeated trips to the U.S.. After all, the country's publications, including the two daily newspapers, fall under Tariq's jurisdiction. For another, the intention of these repeated visits are not disclosed. All that the papers say is that the trips were of business nature. This is a vague statement by the best accounts.

Many believe that Tariq al Mo'ayyad represents the US interests in Bahrain. And that he is collaborating with America's agencies to bring about maximum U.S. media and cultural influence in the Gulf in general and Bahrain in particular. Cases in point are the American television company of CNN or Cable News Network being screened on Bahraini television and the wide availability of American publications in the news-stands throughout Bahrain. The Minister is said to be involved with attempts to establish a 24-hour music program through a separate channel on Bahrain's ever expanding television stations. As to the 24-hour screening of the BBC for free, this is part of government drive to woo foreign investors by giving the impression that yet there is more of a reason to invest in Bahrain. The authorities in Bahrain appreciate the fact that the BBC provides more world and business news when compared to American networks especially the CNN; the audience are the investors and the foreign executives.

Mr. Tariq al Mo'ayyad is one of the most outspoken supporters of the U.S. policy in the region. Some say that the Minister is more American than most Americans. For example, when the U.S. forces decided to intervene directly in the Iran-Iraq war on the side of Saddam Hussein, Mr. al Mo'ayyad was the first to express his full support for the U.S. position. Incidentally, Mr. al Mo'ayyad used to be a regular visitor to the Iraqi dictator during the course of Iran-Iraq war.

The Minister supports anything American. If he gets it his way, al Mo'ayyad would even turn Bahrain into a place of free sex. The Minister is in charge of media and much of the tourism industry at the same time. His many enemies censure the two portfolios given to him. It was Tariq al Mo'ayyad who decided to change the classification of the hotels in Bahrain in the late 1980s from first, second and third classes to the more common star arrangement. The point is that the Minister took credit for the move. Currently, in the name of tourism, al Mo'ayyad has made alcohol and illegal sex widely available in the country to the satisfaction of some Gulf subjects who make the weekend trip to Manama. Alcoholic beverages are



sold in the country to all ages, even those below 21 and even 18. The argument is that some buyers ask their dependents to buy for them, and that the final consumers are not the minors. This is true in most cases but not all. Drunken driving is a common problem in the country, much to the satisfaction of the Traffic Directorate which charge the violaters handsomely. The Minister likes to see Manama becoming the Las Vegas or at least Atlantic City of the Gulf.

Saudi Arabia likes Bahrain's Information Minister. The Saudi regime could not allow the sale of the alcoholic beverages in the Kingdom if only to avoid angering the strong religious circles; after all, the regime is in power in the name of the faith. Bahrain authorities have come to the rescue of their Saudi brothers by making the country as a place of all sorts of pleasure to some Saudi visitors. The Information Minister's role comes to play here. The Minister is very much liked in Saudi Arabia despite the fact that Tariq Al Mo'ayyad could not conceal his animosity to anything related to Islam. In return, Bahrain expects favourable treatment from the big brother across the causeway. The Saudis could not forget Bahrain's many favours. Only recently, the Saudis decided to give Bahrain further share of the Abu Sa'fa oil field, just off the northern coast of Bahrain; previously, the two neighbouring states shared the production's sales.

The Minister has many enemies within the cabinet. People with access to the various ministers say that the Foreign and Information Ministers have a hostile relationship. The Foreign Minister belongs to the junior class of the "ruling family." It is said that the Prime Minister personally likes Tariq. Moreover, some members of Al Khalifa have spread the following story, namely that Tariq has the full backing of the influential U.S. Embassy in the country. That al Mo'ayyad is one of the best servants of the American interest in the region. A good number of people think the support of the American diplomatic mission in Manama is the reason behind the forceful post enjoyed by

the Information Minister. Members of Al Khalifa, who are anxious to take over Tariq's post, realize that there is nothing they can do given the backers and supporters of the Minister. Still, there is a strong rumour in the country these days, namely that Mr. Tariq al Mo'ayyad may become the country's next Minister of Economy & Finance replacing the current Ibrahim Abdul Karim. It is said that Mr. Abdul Karim would like to resign and devote his energies to private activities. No matter what, Tariq al Mo'ayyad will remain in the cabinet and very influential in the social aspects of the country, to the disappointment of many. In order to further ensure his position for the future, Tariq al Mo'ayyad has been displaying his obedience to rising members of the ruling family. Mr. al Mo'ayyad made a point that he be screened on the national television while kissing the nose of Salman, son of the heir apparent. Nose kissing is "reserved" currently for the Amir, the Prime Minister and the Crown Prince. The family members of the three above mentioned persons are regarded as the key VIPs in the country. Nose kissing is a one side practice, that the Amir or so only receives kisses. Many locals hate this awkward practice and consider it as degrading to dignity. If all goes to the wishes of the al Khalifa regime, Hamad's son would be the new heir apparent following the death (or abdication) of the current Amir. True the Amir has been in power since 1961, but he has heart problems. The point is that the Information Minister is unique among all cabinet figures to having kissed the nose of the Crown Prince's son, Salman, while the latter remains practically outside office.

Al-Mo'ayyad could not tolerate any sort of opposition to his authority. Only recently he stopped the daily Akhbar al Khaleej following printing of a map on Qatar including the Howar islands as part of Qatar. The two neighbouring countries are at odds due to a pending case before the International Court of Justice for sovereignty over the islands.

Strangely enough, many people in Bahrain from the public and members of Al Khalifa see Tariq al Mo'ayyad as an arrogant man. On the surface, Tariq would look as a liberal person but that is not really true. The Minister could not tolerate any opposition to the regime. The only matters the media publish are praises of the imposed royal family. The credit for all of the country's achievements is reserved for the Amir, the Prime Minister and the Heir Apparent. Tariq al Mo'ayyad is quite feared in his Ministry and many other posts. His enemies are eliminated very often.

The Minister keeps delegating many of his functions at the Ministry to Dr. Hala al Omran. Hala is a female and bachelor, good looking if not tall. Hala's last name is derived from the mother's side not the traditional father's part. Those who know her say that the "doctor" as she is referred to in the workplace, has found her father's name to be inferior when compared to that of her mother. Formerly, Dr. Omran used to teach at the University of Bahrain.