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## While demanding political and economic reforms Yemeni opposition defends its initiative

SANA'A, Dec. 21 – Representatives of the opposition Joint Meeting Parties fiercely defended yesterday their reform program initiative proposed a few weeks ago, and called upon the ruling party to apply their recommendations.

In a symposium organized by the Yemeni Center for Strategic Studies in Sana'a, opposition leaders said the program was a national initiative aimed at removing the hurdles facing the democratization process in Yemen.

In a speech at the event, Dr. Mohamed Al-Mutawakkil, a prominent official in the opposition Popular Unionist Forces party, said the opposition has the right to propose reform initiatives that are not new to Yemen.

He reviewed the course of reform in the country since the beginning of the 20th century and affirmed that reform has always existed and was even called for during the era of Imam Yahia Hameeduddin before the 1962 revolution.

Al-Mutawakkil said reform calls took various forms during that era, but they were all aiming at resisting the tyrannical monarchy that existed at the time.

He then compared that era with today and defended the opposition's actions in proposing serious reform measures. He then called for their implementation on the ground.

Dr. Ali Al-Wafi of the Islah Party said there are dire needs for financial



Three opposition leaders defending their reform project.

reforms in Yemen but he emphasized that without political reform, no economic or other type of reform is possible.

He said economic reform would need to be carried out so as to fight poverty, reduce the high rate of unemployment and to promote social justice. "For real partnership with the private sector, reliable legislative bases and an attractive investment policy are also necessary," he added.

Al-Wafi said priorities also include the improvement of means to draft the annual general budget, set up tender systems and empower the Central Bank

of Yemen. "The establishment of an independent monetary system and curbing inflation will also have positive impact," he claimed.

Another prominent opposition figure, Mr. Mohamed Al-Sabri, the Head of the Political Department of the Popular Nasserite Party slammed the performance of Yemen's foreign policy makers. He noted that Yemen's diplomacy in certain areas, including relations with Gulf countries, has been extremely weak. "This was reflected in the refusal of Yemen to join the Gulf Cooperation Council", he claimed.

Continued on page 3

## Violent dispersal of protestors triggers conflicting reactions

The disproportionate use of force by police officers against individuals who had gathered outside the United Nations High Commission for Refugees (UNHCR) office in Sana'a last Saturday had triggered many reactions locally and internationally. The Somali Refugee Intellectuals Committee (SRICY) in Yemen denounced the killing of the five Somali refugees (of which was one child), while the Yemeni National Organization for Defending Rights and Freedoms (NORDF) known as 'HOOD' had put blame mainly on UNHCR-Yemen for the casualties. In their turn, the UNHCR headquarters in Geneva conveyed its deep regret for the death of and injuries. Explaining that the procession became increasingly aggressive. A spokes person of Yemen's UNHCR office said that the protestors were blocking the office entrance in "a very violent manner" preventing staff from leaving. Yemeni anti riot forces decided to intervene to protect UNHCR staff and restore public order.

UNHCR in Geneva requesting an inquiry into the action of UNHCR-Yemen which "called for force to be used against defenseless refugees who have been peacefully asking for solutions to their problems."

Mr. Al-Anisi said security forces had been called in large numbers to arrest protesters and disperse them by force from the scene, adding, "What is even more outrageous is the fact that the use of force was based on a request by the UNHCR-Yemen, which is an international organization concerned with protecting the rights of the people." He said his organization opened investigations into the use of force against the refugees who were demonstrating peacefully at the time the forces arrived in the scene.

Continued on page 3

By: Nadia Al-Sakkaf

SANA'A, Dec. 20 – The Yemeni National Organization for Defending Rights and Freedoms (NORDF) known as 'HOOD' had put blame mainly on UNHCR-Yemen for the death of the five Somali refugee and injury of another five during their demonstration last week. A press statement issued by HOOD on Monday Dec. 19 mentioned the UNHCR calling for security forces to the scene of the Somali sit-in outside the UNHCR office had indirectly caused the death of one Somali refugee and injury of others. Khalid Al-Anisi, Executive manager of HOOD said his organization had sent official memorandum to the Secretary-General of the United Nations and Director of



Somali refugee women demand the release of their husbands.

## Without Salary for three months

# Weaving and textile factory employees protest again

By: Hakim Almasmari

Hundreds of angry employees of the Weaving and Textile Factory hold a protest early Tuesday 20th of December. Between 1300- 1600 unorganized protesters walked the streets of Sana'a starting from Al-Shurta Street and ending at the Presidential Palace, shouting and complaining against the illegal procedures taken against them by the factory's administration.

The employees demanded the administration to give them their salaries, dating back to three months, and to reopen the factory. Protesters

called on President Saleh to interfere and solve this crisis. According to the protesters, employees of the factory have not received their salaries for over three months, which in return making their financial problems greater. "Because of their unjust policies, we were kicked out of our apartments by our landlords. Our families are on the streets; our children became sick because we couldn't give them medical attention. We blame the factory's Chairman, Mohammed Hajib, for this crisis", said an angry protester. Protesters complained that the factory closed down after selling its equipment for unclarified reasons, which resulted in them losing their jobs.

'Save us, save us, and reopen the factory in order to get our jobs back' was shown in one of the slogans lifted by the protesters in the protest. Mohamed Al-Salami, another angry protester quoted to the Yemen Times: "I have been working in this factory for 30 years and this is how I am treated after all these year. Now you will

only see white hair on my head. I will not stay quiet under this oppression. I also blame the Minister of Finance for this problem," he added. When asked about his salary Al-Salami confirmed that he used to get YR 35,000 as a monthly salary (which is equivalent 185 US dollars) before the closure of the factory. When trying to contact the chairman of Factory, Mr. Mohammed Hajib, for comments concerning this issue, his phone could not be reached. It was not long before the Yemen Times reporter was asked to leave the scene by some policemen.

It is worth mentioning that the employees of the same factory have protested earlier this month for the same reasons. Notable among these are the demonstration on the 11th of this month in front of the parliament and the strike took place by the employees in front of the factory. While covering the latter, Al-Jazeera correspondent Ahmed Al-Shalafi and cameraman Ali Al-Baidhani were stopped and interrogated by police without legal justification.



Hundreds of protesters flock the streets demanding their rights from the Weaving and Textile factory.

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## First national book fair opened in Aden

The Yemeni Book Authority and the Book friends' forum have successfully collaborated in launching the first national book fair in Aden, which was inaugurated on Saturday Dec 17, 2005, with the participation of many national publishing houses and featuring over 20 thousand books on politics, economics, literature and sciences such as autobiographies, and diaries as well as poems and novels.

Head of the Book Authority Dr. Faris al-Saqqaq is one of the main promoters of the fair and he made sure that the fair includes the complete publications of

the Book Authority, he also added that the fair aims to enhance the relationship between books and readership so that readers can get books at affordable prices, which are sold at a discounted rate of 70% of retail pricing.

The fair is set up at the Aden-based National Library and will extend until Dec 25, 2005. Yemen annually organizes international book fairs in the capital city of Sana'a. The last one was in last September, 2005. However, the most recent book fair in Aden is solely devoted to display locally published books.

## Japanese support waste management in Yarim

The government of Japan has decided to extend to Khadija Charitable Social Association a grant amounting to US\$ 91,850, in order to help improve the solid waste management and hygienic conditions of Yarim, Ibb Governorate. The grant will be used to purchase 5 dumping trucks to support the cleanliness efforts of the city of Yarim.

Mr. Yuichi Ishii, Ambassador of

Japan to Yemen, signed Sunday the agreement to this effect in Sana'a with Ms. Khairiya Mohammed Ismael, Chairwoman of Khadija Charitable Social Association.

During this Japanese fiscal year (April 2005-March 2006), the projects funded by the government of Japan under this scheme has reached 17 projects amounting in total to approximately 1.59 million dollars, including the above project.

## Yemen hopeful to join GCC in 2016

ABU DHABI, Dec. 19—The Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC) successfully concluded its 26th summit last Monday, with important initiatives towards regional political, economic and social integration among Gulf States.

With respect to Yemen, the general director of GCC, Mr. Abdul-Rahman-Atiya pointed out that Yemen should undertake fundamental reforms in order to facilitate joining the council perhaps by 2016. The GCC

have studied Yemen's proposal to join the council and President Saleh's letters regarding investment options available in Yemen, which may facilitate joining the GCC in the future.

Yemen News Agency (SABA) pointed that "The council studied president Saleh letters to the Gulf leaders over projects availabilities in Yemen which could be established in ten years to reinforce the infrastructure, according to the general director of GCC Abdul-Rahman-Atiya.

## Germany increases aid for Yemen's education sector

SANAA, Dec 21—Germany has decided to increase its support to Yemen's basic education. Negotiations between both countries in 2005 had resulted in new German commitments amounting to 68 million Euro to be provided in 2005 and 2006.

The German government agreed with the Yemeni government to continue the joint Basic Education Improvement Program (BEIP) and contribute an additional 5 million Euro for its implementation.

BEIP is intended to increase access and quality of basic education with special emphasis on female education. The program is targeting construction

and rehabilitation of elementary schools in the governorates of Ibb, Abyan, Hajja and Marib.

Basic education is one of the major focal areas of Germany-Yemen cooperation, which also include water supply, sanitation, and sustainable economic development.

Despite some progress in recent years, the level of basic education in Yemen remains among the least in the world.

There is also a huge gap between Yemeni boys and girls receiving education. According to the most recent statistics, about 50% of Yemeni women are illiterate.

## German experts join SEDF

SANA'A, Dec. 19—The Small Enterprise Development Fund (SEDF) has recently hired two German experts, Ms. Sylvie Hoster - Executive Technical Manager and Ms. Jutta Suhr-Boehm - Human Resources Consultant (short term), to improve its overall performance in order to become a professional and sustainable financial institution applying private sector business principles.

The first German expert, Ms. Sylvie Hoster, who works permanently with the SEDF on a two-year contract, has started her activities aimed at strengthening the fund's different departments, currently focusing on the Management Information System (MIS). Ms. Suhr-Boehm, on the other hand, focused her extensive efforts on updating the Human Resource System (HRS) in the fund.

Both experts paid field visits to the SEDF's branches in Taiz, Aden and Hodeida, to get acquainted with the tasks and responsibilities of the staff and to collect data and information related to



Khaled Al-Khalidi, Chairman, Board of Directors SEDF

their assignments.

As part of its current Human Resource activities, the SEDF works on updating the fund's organizational structure, job description and internal bylaws. It also works on developing a special guide on policies and procedures related to human resources to make the fund a highly productive and professional financial institution.

Mr. Khaled Al-Khalidi, Chairman of the Board of Directors of SEDF, stated that the fund plays an important role in providing finance (on loan base) to the small enterprise sector in Yemen over the past five years.

"We in SEDF are proud of the achievements reached by the fund over the past few years. The small enterprises occupy the second position in terms of their contribution to improve the national economy," Al-Khalidi said.

For his part, Hisham Al-Hakimi, Human Resources Manager, pointing out that SEDF implements the HRS in compliance with international standards and the fund is due to finish the first phase of the HRS this month. According to Al-Hakimi, SEDF has well-qualified staff who do their best in the sector of small and medium-size enterprise financing.

It is worth noting that the SEDF contributes to finance a large number of small enterprises, distributes awareness-raising brochures and helps in conducting a number of economic studies.

## 'Peace from China' exhibition launched

The Ministry of Culture and Tourism and the Embassy of the People's Republic of China in Sanaa have organized an exhibition entitled "Peace messenger from China", started on the 21st of December in the Cultural House in Sana'a and will continue until the end of the Year.

The exhibition embodies the 600th anniversary of Zheng He's global voyages; the exhibition includes some artistic paintings, porcelain utensils that represent Zheng's travels and Chinese culture and civilization.

Zheng He is one of China's great maritime explorers, who utilized the most advanced nautical technology of his time to lead huge fleets of Chinese sailing ships on seven major



Zheng He, the Chinese globe-trotter



Chinese Ambassador reviews the Chinese globe-trotter's exhibition with Yemeni Minister of Culture.

transoceanic expeditions. Guided by Zheng He's uncompressing vision, these expeditions reached as far as the Red Sea and the east of Africa, establishing mutually beneficial trade and diplomatic relations with over thirty Asian and African countries and regions.

In each of the countries he visited, Zheng He engaged in wide-ranging cultural exchanges in areas religion, calendar development, architecture,

medicine, navigation, and shipbuilding. These activities promoted friendly Sino-foreign relations, bringing China into the world community and embodying the desire of people everywhere for peaceful coexistence.

The great western voyages of Zheng He were unprecedented in the history of maritime exploration, both in traditional China and the entire world. They represented a great advance in the evolution of human civilization

and exploration, and were instrumental in forging new links between China and the rest of the world. It is hoped that through this exhibition of Zhen He's great accomplishments, people around the world may come to better understand the indomitable spirit of the Chinese people, their determination to brave the challenges of the natural world, and the enterprising and peace-loving values that form the foundation of Chinese culture.

## Democracy activists call on President to step down

SANAA (Agencies), Dec 21 — Yemeni democracy activists requested President Ali Abdullah Saleh yesterday to honor his pledge not to stand in next year's presidential vote.

In an appeal memo announced yesterday, the activists called on Saleh to ignore calls from his General People's Congress (GPC) party to retract his position.

The message urged Saleh to "push ahead in strengthening democracy and demonstrate the peaceful transfer of power to be recognized as one of the world's greatest personalities."

Saleh had declared publicly in July 2005 that he would not stand in the presidential election next year. He said his motives were to encourage other younger potential candidates to take

charge and to set an example in being the first-ever Arab leader who steps down voluntarily, allowing a peaceful and democratic transfer of power to take place in his lifetime.

Analysts believe that Saleh had changed his mind and decided to run for another 7-year term in office, particularly after his party insisted on nominating him to run in the elections

on its behalf.

Saleh requested from his party to hold an extraordinary conference to announce its candidate.

A victory in the elections for Saleh, who has remained in power for 27 years, would give him a total of 35 years, making him as one of the current longest serving presidents in the world.

## Child and band tried for highway robbery

SANA'A, Dec. 18—The Specialized Security First Instance Court continued its second session December 12. It is trying 20 suspects on charges of forming an armed band for high robbery and burglary of marketplaces and traders' trucks. The band, led by a 50-year-old man, carried out their activities in Sana'a.

The court ordered the arrest of three suspects who still are fugitives. It also agreed that owners of the stolen property could submit their cases.

In the session, headed by Judge Mohamed Al-Ba'dani, the prosecution representative accused the suspects of forming an armed band for robbing marketplaces on March 24, 2005. They stole two cars from a Sana'a marketplace using force to resist night guards who tried stopping them. The attackers fired upon and hit two guards.

The prosecution noted that a trader bought stolen property from the band



and it asked for severe punishment on them. Owners of the stolen property demanded compensation and their property returned.

One suspect requested presentation before a doctor, because he was only 14 when arrested three years ago.

Another suspect also requested referral to a doctor saying he lost some of his teeth while beaten during interrogation at the criminal investigation bureau. Because this is a serious security case, after examination, the West Secretariat Court relegated it to the penal court.

## Chamber of Commerce complains to President of imprudent behavior by Central Bank

SANA'A, Dec. 18—The General Association of Chambers of Commerce and Industry this week submitted a petition to the President, complaining of the way in which the Central Bank dealt with the case of Watani Bank, which declared bankruptcy.

In its petition, the Association said what happened to the Yemeni bank is a pity, but the Central Bank's conduct was inappropriate, imprudent, improvised and unprofessional. It considered neither the national nor the international impact on other Yemeni banks, nor the influence on the Yemeni economy and attracting investments. The Central Bank did

not consider long-term effects on trust in the banking system when tackling this affair.

The petition continues, saying the Central Bank at least should have done what other international central banks do in similar cases. It should have issued an appeasing statement to reassure depositors, banks and markets, instead of leaving this to rumor and irresponsible bodies who do not consider the harmful effects of their announcements. Central Bank officials could have made an announcement against private banks through the press or network sites. The Central Bank simply could have issued a press release, as its main

job is to promote banking activity and encourage saving by creating confidence, the petition states.

The Association included in its message to the President:

"The private bank situation does not arouse concern because they have a good reputation in keeping the deposits of customers and investors. We submit this matter to you because of its vitality. We demand that the government take quick measures to determine their stance, if they still believe in the role private banks can play, besides public ones. The government should release an announcement that would calm depositors, investors and customers of these banks."

### Readers' Voice

Yemen Times features "Readers' Voice" a popular way for our readers to interact with us. This is your opportunity to have a say on world and local affairs.

#### This edition's question:

The state is almost decaying out because of corruption. Do you think that the resolutions of the seventh conference of the ruling party will help fighting corruption?  
Yes  
No  
I don't know

#### Last edition's question:

Do you think the UNHCR office in Sana'a would respond positively to demands of Somali refugees staging a sit-in outside UNHCR office for more than a month?  
No 50%  
Yes 36%  
I don't no 14%

Go to our website at:  
[yementimes.com/#poll](http://yementimes.com/#poll)  
and have your voice heard

## An actress runs for presidency election

ADEN, 21 Dec. 2005—Dhikra Ahmed Ali confirmed to Yemen Times what some Egyptian media have circulated that she has nominated herself for presidency leadership position. According to Dhikra, her decision to nominate herself for presidency came from her belief of woman's right to get the equal chance of running the election.

Dhikra is a 45 years old actress and broadcaster. She has a master degree in drama and has worked as a teacher of drama performance in Aden. She is now working as a drama supervisor in the Ministry of Culture and Tourism.

It is worth mentioning that Dhikra is the second woman to nominate herself for presidency election which will take place next year in July. Sumia Ali Raja was the first woman to nominate herself for the presidency election.



Dhikra Ahmed, presidential nominee.

## Tribal clashes in Amran

AMRAN, 18 Dec. 2005 - Local sources reported that more than 4 were killed and many injured in clashes between two tribes in Al-Houthi area (where the tribe of the rebel clerk Bader Al-Deen Al-Houthi resides) on Sunday 18th December 2005.

The clashes were reported to have been started on Saturday between Thukera from Al-Osimat tribe and Al-Samout

form Bani Surim tribe because of an old revenge case. The case was started when a tribesman was hanged in Khear area that belongs to Bani Surem tribe.

The road between Sana'a and Saada was blocked because of the clashes between the two tribes. Witnesses said that security forces are not trying to resolve the conflict and that the number of killed people may increase.

## A murderer appointed as judge in Rada'a

TAIZ—The Supreme Judiciary Board had recently appointed Abdulgawi Mohamed Saeed Al-Marwani as a judge in Rada'a First Instance Court.

Reliable sources in Taiz said Al-Marwani had committed willful murder in a Taiz hospital in March 1999.

He was allegedly working in Yafros First instance court in Jabal Habashi in Taiz when he committed his crime six years ago. He killed Noman Ahmed Ismail following a quarrel between the judge's father and the deceased.

Many newspapers including Al-Ayam, Al-Jomhoria, Al-Wahdawi, Al-Quds and Al-Sharq Al-Awsat had tackled the case of murder at the time.

Some prominent personalities, sheikhs and the dignitaries of Shra'ab then intervened to ensure that Al-Marwani is not punished.

The Islah party also exerted pressure because the judge apparently was one of its prominent leaders. The victim's family said it accepted blood money because of fear that the crime could escalate into a revenge clash between the relatives of each family.

The family received blood money four times the actual value to drop the case and set the killer free.

A Taiz source said the former minister of justice Ismail Al-Wazeer had re-appointed the judge to a court in Shabwa province a year after he committed his crime.

In the recent judiciary appointments in December 2004, the murderer was re-appointed by the Supreme Judiciary Board to a court in Rada'a.

He is still working in Rada'a, Albaidha despite being proven to have killed another citizen.



Dr. Adnan Al-Jifri, Minister of Justice.

## Ministry of health to undertake comprehensive review

SANA'A, 21 Dec. 2005 - Ministry of Public Health and Population signed a statement on Tuesday 20th of December, in which it confirms its commitment to intensify its relationship with its national and international partners in order to increase aid effectiveness and harmonization of donor inputs. The statement was also signed by representatives of bilateral and multilateral development partners in Yemen, namely the ambassadors and charge daffier of Netherlands, United States, United Kingdom, The Federal Republic of Germany, as well as representatives from the World Health Organization (WHO), UNICEF, UNFPA, and the World Bank. In addition to their commitment to develop

mechanisms for more effective dialogue and cooperation between the Ministry of Health and national and international development partners, the signatories were also committed to jointly undertake within the year 2006 a comprehensive health sector review. This includes a thorough review of health development priorities, existing health policies, institutional arrangements, and experiences of development cooperation in the health sector; which will lead to preparation of an updated health sector strategy. According to the statement, the signatories will work towards a more formal partnership declaration (such as a code of conduct) for further alignment and harmonization in the health sector, with the delivering of

the developmental inputs in a complementary manner as a long-term goal.

In recent years, policy making in the health sector was led by the overarching objectives of the national Health Sector Reform Strategy of 1998 (to improve access, equity, quality, efficiency and financial sustainability of service provision). Efforts were made to coordinate the reform in the Ministry of Health with the wider reform agenda of the Government, like Civil Service Modernization and decentralization of Government administration. Furthermore, since the beginning of the health sector reform in 1998, repeated efforts were made to coordinate donors support to the health sector.

## Workshop on preservation of wetland in Aden

Aden, 21 Dec. 2005 - The General Authority for Environment and Preservation, Aden branch, organized a workshop in cooperation with Sustainable Program for Natural Resources. In the workshop, the administrative plan of the wet land preservations in Aden was discussed. These constitute the Aden lakes, Caltex and Al-Haswah.

Engineer Abdullaqeeb Mohamed presented a paper on the wet areas in Socotra and their success in the areas of Mahmal and Hashasha. A scientific study was conducted on the natural medical plants and emigrating birds

that come to Socotra from the neighboring countries. The awareness among Socotra citizens contributed to the success of this experience.

Engineer Faisal Alsa'adi also introduced a paper on the wet natural preservations. It reviewed the importance of wet areas in Mimlah and Caltex, pointing out that the total area of wet areas in Aden is about 1238.962 Hectares, or 3.45 percent of the total area of Aden. 80 percent of the area is covered with a vegetation cover, which is visited by 10, 000 of sea birds.

The study also mentioned the salt

basins in Mimlah, which were established in 1886. This area is now subjected to pollution because of the oil station in the area, which will affect the salt basins that will be polluted by the poisonous petroleum by-products.

The participants in the workshop recommended that the local councils should take decisive measures to save the wet lands from the offense of the so called financial investments.

In a related issue, the Yemeni Society for Sustainable Environment in cooperation with the Regional Center for Eradication of Solid Organism pollution organized a workshop. Dr. Ashar Ahmed Saeed, head of the Society gave a speech in which he confirmed the importance of the workshop, mentioning that Yemen is one of the first countries to sign the Stockholm treaty for eradicating solid organisms' pollution.

She spoke of the danger of pollutants and hoped that this workshop will come out with recommendations confirming the importance of environment protection. She also hoped that concerned parties will also cooperate in eradicating this phenomenon.

## Originality verified for Yemeni artifacts

SANA'A, 21 Dec. 2005—The originality of some 465 archaeological pieces is reported to have been verified, following their return from international exhibitions in different capitals around the world, stated Saba News Agency. The result of the examination was positive, SNA added.

The artifacts were on show in different cities in Europe and America including Paris, Vienna, Munich, Rome, London, Madrid, Sicily, and eventually Washington D.C.

A committee was set up to scrutinize and verify the originality and the safety of the pieces upon their arrival in Yemen. It started its work last

week, opening 76 crates which contained a very rare collection of Yemeni archaeological finds.

In a statement to Saba News, Muhammad al-Sayani, the officer in charge of international exhibitions at the Antiquities and Museums Authority, said that the committee found that the pieces were the ones sent out on the promotional trip around the world and that they meet the pertinent registered data.

These pieces, which started their journey in 1997, and returned a couple of weeks ago, represent the cream of the Yemeni archaeological stock. They reveal many facts about the history of ancient Yemen civilizations.

They were selected carefully from many museums in the country such as the national museums in Sana'a, Aden, Dhafar, Dhale', and the Military Museum besides other miscellaneous pieces and those displayed at international museums.

The collection include differently sized and shaped antiquities with varied historical significance such as Yemeni old inscriptions (Musnad) and bronze statues depicting Awsan kings as well as old coins. It is expected that the collection will be displayed here in Yemen in the following few days for the public to see before they are returned to their original places at Yemeni museums.

Continued from page 1

## Yemeni opposition defends its initiative

Al-Sabri said the government failed its people in handling its relations with the sole superpower of the world, the United States of America.

He also noted the regime's failure to achieve the minimum financial performance in handling donors' money, costing the country the trust of those donors.

Al-Sabri said donors were disappointed by Yemen's failure to develop foreign resources and investments despite its significant dependence on foreign debts and donations. These weak indicators, according to Al-Sabri, led to the decision by the World Bank to reduce its aid to Yemen in 2006 by 34%.

Apart from reforming foreign policy, the regime's internal communication with its own diplomats has been scoring low too, Al-Sabri noted. He gave

the example of the asylum sought in the UK by former Yemeni ambassador to Syria Ahmed Abdullah al-Hassani, who sought asylum in the United Kingdom.

Al-Sabri condemned the regime for accusing the opposition of betraying the country and for suspecting its devotion. "On the other hand, the government itself does not see any wrongdoing in pledging to foreign ambassadors to do fundamental reforms in the country," he said.

Defense for the opposition's draft came from Dr. Al-Dhahiri, a lecturer in political sciences at Sana'a University when he described the initiative as "a precise description of the situation, supported by evidences and indications."

He did however, criticize the lack of practicalities in the program, which he

thought presented an ideal and utopian goal for Yemen without counting the difficulties in reality.

Dr. Al-Dhahiri also criticized the failure of opposition to lead the Yemeni people and present itself as a viable alternative to the regime.

He said opposition parties lacked the means to solve their own problems and are not strong enough to fill the shoes of the ruling party.

He supported this view by noting the inability of the opposition to mobilize its forces when subsidies for oil products were lifted in July, causing massive instantaneous riots, which could have been organized in a peaceful manner if there had been good opposition.

He advised the opposition to adjust its position and improve performance so as to play an active role in Yemen's future.

## Violent dispersal of protestors triggers conflicting reactions

Simultaneously, the Somali Refugee Intellectuals Committee (SRICY) in Yemen denounced the killing of the Somali refugees in Sana'a on during the protest last Saturday 17 December 2005. The press release issued on 18 December 2005 by SRICY stated: "The Sana'a police used tear gas, water cannons and live ammunition to disperse the demonstrators, killing poor and destitute refugees including children."

"There was no need for the police to use violence to break up peaceful demonstrations," said Abdulrahman Al-Marwani the Dean of Dar al-Salaam Organization, as quoted in the Somali press release.

On the other hand the UNHCR expressed its sadness at the way things turned for both the Somali refugees and the Yemeni security officers - of which four were injured during the clashes.

In the press release issued by the UN agency it said: "Since the start of the protest, UNHCR had sought to reach a peaceful solution through dialogue. UNHCR staff met several times with the demonstrators to discuss their demands. We agreed to meet several of them, including more assistance for vulnerable refugees; more Somali-speaking UNHCR staff; and additional health care. One of their main demands, resettlement to third countries, is only an option for a few vulnerable cases and at the discretion of the resettlement countries themselves - not UNHCR. Registration and provision of ID cards is also being arranged."

However, despite all UNHCR's attempts and advocating for a peaceful solution, by last weekend the crowd had become increasingly aggressive and were blocking the entrance to the office and was in a very violent manner preventing staff from leaving. Yemeni anti riot forces decided to intervene to protect UNHCR staff and restore public order. UNHCR's Yemen's office commented on the security intervention: "The intervention was done in a professional manner, but turned violent when the demonstrators started attacking the police with heavy stones." In a letter to the Yemen Times - to be published next week - the UNHCR Yemen's office stated that it is ensuring that the injured receive medical care and is assisting the family of the deceased, whose identity and cause of death until today remain unknown. We also remain in contact with the demonstrators to ensure our previous agreements are met.

### Background

The Somali refugees in Yemen who

are estimated to be more than seventy thousand had been complaining to the Yemeni authorities and UNHCR's local office of their deteriorating conditions continuously. Since last month, hundreds of the refugees residing in Sana'a held a sit-in regularly outside the UNHCR premises demanding their rights as refugees. For more than a month, about 500 refugees, along with their families, have been expressing their demands for improving their current legal, economic and social living conditions, as well as, their forsaken human rights. They complain that they have been badly treated and still they have not received their financial allocations. Some of them reported to the Yemen Times that "with the help of police officers, some Yemeni nationals who look like Somalis managed to get aids from the commissioner for refugees in Yemen, while real Somali refugees have not received any aid".

Following a 12-day continuous sit-in in front of the UNHCR's office end of last month, Somalis refugees had their names registered in six centers in Sanaa in an effort by UNHCR and the Yemeni government to sort their problems. However, this effort did not seem enough as the Somali refugees continued their protesting plight again. Last Saturday Yemen Times reported that four Somali refugees and one child were killed during clashes with Yemeni security forces who rushed to break up a sit-in outside the office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) in the capital Sana'a. Five others were also hurt, one of them died in the hospital. Police detained 25 others. Four policemen were badly injured while trying to disperse the refugees. Anti-riot police also moved in to control groups of refugees who attacked officers. Police forces first used water hoses and sticks to break up the sit-in, and then they resorted to using arms. Yemen Times source at the Ministry of Interior stated that the clashes took place outside the UNHCR in Sana'a between Somali refugees assembling there and security forces that tried to disperse them at the request of the UNHCR.

The clashes have taken a serious trend violating the international standards for free assembly, association, and expression the government of Yemen has ratified. The international human rights law guarantees the rights to freedom of peaceful assembly and association. Article 20 of the Universal Declaration states, "Everyone has the right to freedom of peaceful assembly and association." Article 21 of the Civil and Political Covenant secures the right to peaceful assembly and

Article 22 protects freedom of association. Article 11(1) of the European Convention declares, "Everyone has the right to freedom of peaceful assembly and to freedom of association with others..." In addition, Articles 15 and 16 of the American Convention guarantee the rights of peaceful assembly and freedom of association.

In terms of containing a demonstration; generally, both local and national authorities have the power to control demonstrations in the interest of restoring public order.

The United Nations Basic Principles on the Use of Force and Firearms by Law Enforcement Officials stress the need for governments and law enforcement agencies to adopt and implement rules and regulations on the use of force and firearms against people by law enforcement officials. In particular, the general provisions state that the use of force and firearms should be a last resort, and that law enforcement officials must always:

- "exercise restraint...and act in proportion to the seriousness of the offence...;
- minimize damage and injury, and respect and preserve human life;
- ensure that assistance and medical aid are rendered to any injured or affected persons at the earliest possible moment";

The general provisions also state that:

"Exceptional circumstances such as internal political instability or any other public emergency may not be invoked to justify any departure from these basic principles."

During the 1991 Somali Civil War, many Somalis fled to neighboring countries like Yemen. Here, Somalis live in refugee camps, cities and villages begging with their children who, as a result, are uneducated. They survive by begging, washing cars, shoe shiners, porters and becoming housemaids and prostitutes. Their earnings from these menial jobs pay mostly for food and house rent. There are approximately 50,000 registered Somali refugees in Yemen, while officials here in Yemen estimate the number of refugees and illegal immigrants to be around 70,000. According to the UNHCR, Somalis entering Yemen are automatically granted refugee status by the government. At the end of October, some 79,000 refugees had been registered with UNHCR in Yemen, more than 68,000 of whom were from Somalia. Somalis in Yemen are able to work and to stay in the country indefinitely. Most Somalis live in urban areas, with roughly 7,500 staying at the Kharaz refugee camp in the Lahj governorate in the country's south.

### VACANCY

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# Yemen: Failure or Democracy

By: Jane Novak

Ahmed Al-Rabei recently described the worst case for Yemen as, "an Afghan scenario and a civil war that will spread to the borders of GCC countries." Al-Rabei, a columnist for Alsharq Alwasat, wrote with great affection for the Yemeni people of his concern for the future of Yemen. Al-Rabei is not alone in his assessment of an uncertain future for Yemen. A variety of international organizations and reports have highlighted increasingly dysfunctional Yemeni institutions and governance.

Transparency International has noted widespread and growing corruption, ranking Yemen near the bottom of the corruption scale. The qualification assessment for the US funded Millennium Challenge Account determined the Yemeni regime has moved backwards from previous assessments. In the 2005 round, Yemen failed all six "ruling justly" indicators. It failed three of the four indicators of "investing in people." As a result, Yemen did not qualify for substantial US developmental funding. The World Bank recently cut Yemen's funding by 34% due to corruption. Christiaan Poortman, World Bank Vice President, noted at a press conference that the regime's performance indicators fell markedly.

Yemen is ranked eight on the Fund for Peace's "Failed State Index." The goal of the Fund for Peace (FFP) is the prevention of war, and the Failed State Index analyses states in terms of the potential for state failure, whether from implosion, explosion, or erosion, with the hope of averting violent crisis. Yemen exhibits many symptoms of a failing state. In the FFP analysis, Yemen scored lower (more stable) in terms of social indicators and was ranked higher on economic and political indicators. An analysis of the methodology used by the Fund for Peace reveals how the Yemeni state is increasingly distorted by the concentration of power.

### Uneven Development

One of the two standard economic predictors of state failure is "uneven develop-

ment," defined as "group based inequality, and/or impoverishment." Yemen scored high on this criterion.

The 1990 unification of "republican" North Yemen, headed by Ali Abdullah Saleh since 1978, with the formerly Marxist South Yemen brought Yemenis together under one flag. The basis of unification was power sharing between the two former states through a democratic multi-party system held in check by a free press. A brief civil war in 1994 was won by the military domination of Saleh's northern forces. Saleh retained and consolidated his control of the nation during the next ten years.

Today, discriminatory state policies threaten the stability of Yemen. Large numbers of Southerners have been forced into early retirement. Biased hiring practices in the civil services and military have resulted in widespread unemployment in the former South Yemen. A large amount of land and property has been confiscated from rightful owners. With an unequal application of the law, little legal redress is available to the victims. The preponderance of military bases and checkpoints throughout the south and monitoring by security forces give some Southerners a sense of being "a crushed minority."

Although many natural resources are located in the South, a reduced allocation of public funds leaves the region awash in poverty. Recent years have seen an increase in the number of homeless citizens and citizens whose only resort is begging for sustenance. Those who define the grievances of the Southern minority in the public sphere are labeled by the regime as separatists, traitors, and guilty of treason. The al-Thoury newspaper, mouthpiece of the Socialist party representing many Southerners, has been a repetitive victim of the regime's deployment of the legal system as a tool of repression.

It is worth noting that USAID has reported that half of Yemen's children nationally are physically stunted from chronic malnutrition. There are at least 35,000 street children in Yemen and 326,000 children in the work force, a phenomenon attributed to extreme poverty, as is the increase of child trafficking.

### Criminalization of the State

One political indicator in the Fund for Peace's assessment of the potential failure of the Yemeni government is the "criminalization and delegitimization of the state," defined as massive state corruption and crimes syndicates associated with the elite. Often accompanying this phenomenon, according to the FFP, is resistance to accountability, transparency and representation.

Elite run criminal enterprises in Yemen include wide scale weapons trafficking, diesel smuggling, drug smuggling, and human trafficking.

The Central Organization for Controlling and Audit (COCA) in 2004 documented 68 cases of corruption totaling (YR) billions in the theft of public funds. The COCA report documented corruption by government authorities, the oil and mineral ministry, the electricity ministry, and the ministry for local administration. There were no prosecutions. For the first half of 2005, COCA has listed 55 cases, resulting in financial losses exceeding YR 3 billion, (15 million US). Corruption in governmental agencies has previously been reported exceeding 9 million US annually.

In an encouraging turn of events, the governor of Mahweet, despite strong pressures contrary, decided that eight education officials should be charged for the alleged embezzlement of nine million riyals. This is one of the first corruption prosecutions of high government officials in recent history.

Public funds do not receive a transparent accounting. While oil revenues account for 75% of national income, the proceeds from oil sales are not accounted for publicly. One parliamentarian observed that the 2006 budget estimates oil revenues with a sale price of USD 40, while "the average cost of one barrel is USD 57." The central authority requested and received a budget increase of 43% in December 2005 for the fiscal year. A parliamentarian said the reason the increase was necessary was "luxurious cars, high per-diem travel allowances, financial awards and aid packages to government officials on the expense of the public."

### Deterioration of Public Services

A second political indicator of possible state collapse is "progressive deterioration of public services," in essential areas like security, health, sanitation, transportation, and education services. In a typical failing state, the FFP notes, state mechanisms "narrow" to function only in areas that serve the ruling elites (security forces, presidential staff, central bank, diplomatic service, customs and collection agencies.)

An analysis of Yemen 2006 budget shows the regimes priority is neither development nor services, but military spending, an area dominated by Saleh's relatives. In the budget for 2006, the electric sector is allocated YR 27 billion, which constitutes a decrease of almost 60% from last year's budget, although electricity is not yet available in most rural areas and the urban population faces rolling black outs.

The increase in funds for education in the 2006 budget barely covers new enrollment. The 2006 budget makes no allocation for the one million children not in school or for the upgrading of schools. (Some schools in reality are tents or shacks.) First grade enrollment was 56% in 2003. Yemen has the highest rate of illiteracy in the Middle East at 51%, which includes 74% of women.

Defense and security spending, already comprising a large portion of public funding, is increased in the 2006 budget more than 50% from last year. Military expenditures for 2005 were four times the amount spent on health care. Yemen is at the bottom of all Arab countries in health spending and has only 2 medical doctors for every 10,000 Yemeni citizens. In rural areas, infant mortality is over 8%.

In addition to the deficiency in the basic services of medical care and education, the Yemeni public suffers health consequences from the lack of clean water and sanitation systems. A parliamentary report noted that 55,000 children die each year from water related diseases. An Environmental Protection Agency report indicated sewage service is available to half of urban dwellers and 17% of rural dwellers. In rural areas, where the majority of the population resides, 75% or more do not have ready access to clean water.

### Terrorizing the Opposition

A third standard political symptom of a failing state is when state supported security forces "terrorize political opponents, suspected 'enemies,' or civilians seen to be sympathetic to the opposition." The Fund for Peace ranks Yemen high on this criterion as well.

Gulf States News noted in its December newsletter that the Political Security Organization, which reports directly to President Saleh, "has long carried out direct actions, including the harassment of journalists and political opponents." 2005 has seen a marked increase in the number of attacks on non-governmental journalists, drawing strong protests from numerous journalist and human rights organizations and some governments. Yemeni journalists have been kidnapped, stabbed, beaten, threatened, and hauled into court in unprecedented numbers. Journalists report their cell phones have been stolen and the numbers run in an apparent attempt to discover their sources.

The population of Yemen's prison system includes children, hostages, regime critics and their relatives. Some citizens are imprisoned without charges, or held in prison for longer than their sentence requires. Women prisoners are reported to face degrading treatment. One of the regime's retribution tactics is kidnapping younger siblings of opponents including human rights workers, journalists, and minority advocates. Recent regime kidnap-

ping victims range in age from 12 to 14. Several reports indicate that Yemen's political security prisons use torture techniques that affect the nervous system of prisoners, causing paralysis or palsy.

The judiciary, headed by President Saleh, also acts as a tool of terror. Fuad al-Shahari wrote in a letter to Amnesty International, "I never expected that I will be tortured, witnesses will be threatened and the documents will be forged." His execution, ordered by a commercial court, was carried out in November. The trial and death sentence of Yahya al-Dailami is viewed by much of Yemeni civil society as politically motivated. Amnesty International has labeled al-Dailami a prisoner of conscience and recently appealed to President Saleh to release him unconditionally.

Gulf State News has noted the regime's use of "some irregular units of former jihadists" which indicates "a return to Yemen's predilection for the use of Salafist proxies." Previously used by Saleh in the 1994 civil war against Southern Socialists, who were fatwa-ed and described as apostates, these irregular forces have been deployed recently against a band of Zaidi (Shiite) "rebels" and against the wider Zaidi civilian population in the northern Sa'ada region of Yemen. The al-Shoura newspaper, a prominent defender of civilians in Saada, has been prohibited from publishing and a clone newspaper issues in its place.

### A Factionalized Elite

A fourth political predictor of a failed state is what the FFP calls "the emergence of a factionalized elite," or the "fragmentation of ruling elites and state institutions along group lines."

The structure of the elite in Yemen has President Saleh at its head. Power and privilege descends through his immediate family. The leadership of the military and security forces is in the hands of the close relatives of President Saleh including his son, his nephew, and other relatives and extreme loyalists. Elite designation also spreads from Saleh through members of his tribe. (It is equally worthwhile to highlight that Yemeni tribes are an important sector of the community, have an inherent democratic component, and valuable tribal institutions are modernizing, as noted in the Yemen Times.) In addition to privilege flowing down from Saleh through members of his family, his tribe, and the military, Saleh is also head of the ruling party, the General People Conference, where patronage is traded for loyalty. Unsurprisingly, the GPC nominated Saleh as its presidential candidate, despite his public pledge to the nation not to run for reelection in order to permit "young blood" into the political system.

Saleh loyalists dominate the business arena in both criminal and legal enterprises and the political arena including the ruling party, the ministries, the parliament, the diplomatic corps, and the official media. Some civil society organizations are actually an extension of the state, although others are not. The leadership of some opposition parties has been co-opted by the regime either willingly through bribery or unwillingly through threats, while other opposition leaders remain steadfast at any cost in their determination to fulfill their representative obligations.

On a positive note, authentic judicial reforms have been made by Justice Minister al-Jaifri despite interference from powerful individuals and systematic under funding. Some members of Parliament, including members of the ruling party, have begun demanding transparency and accountability from the government, criticizing the 2006 budget before its approval by Saleh loyalists who dominate the body.

According to the Fund for Peace, accompanying the emergence of a factionalized elite is often "the rise of nationalistic political rhetoric." This explains the Yemeni regime's predilection for name calling, insults, fear mongering, and alarmist statements that abound in the state owned news papers, the nation's government run TV station, and President Saleh's speeches. It is typical behavior displayed by failing states.

### Conclusion

As Mr. al-Rabei wrote of Yemen, "the reality remains that the worst possible out-

come will be disastrous for everyone." To pull Yemen back from the brink of disaster, "worry is not enough," al-Rabei writes. The situation is so grave that he believes immediate direct action is warranted. "Persian Gulf countries should adopt a plan similar to the Marshall Plan with regards to Yemen," Mr. al-Rabei suggests.

As the root cause of the Yemeni crisis is the extreme concentration of executive power, any economic solution must be preceded by the decentralization of political power. "Sanaa needs to realize that no one can be more Yemeni than the Yemenis themselves," al-Rabei notes. And Yemenis have taken the lead in devising a political and economic reform program.

The Joint Opposition Meeting Parties-the Yemeni Islah Party, the Yemeni Socialist Party, the Nasserite Popular Unionist Organization, the Arab Socialist Nationalist Baath Party, the Popular Forces Union, and the Haq Party- have drafted a workable reform platform, the centerpiece of which calls for the nation's conversion to a Parliamentary system and the empowerment of local governing bodies. Seating power in multiple elected and accountable representatives is a textbook solution and may be the most expedient remedy to address the advanced decay of the Yemeni state. The reform plan goes on to tackle economic and developmental issues. The cause for optimism is the consensus of the ideologically diverse opposition parties to work together for the betterment of the nation.

Predictably, the government labeled the reform plan treasonous. The official government daily, al-Thoura, said those who devised the strategy were guilty of a conspiracy as severe as the separatist conspiracy of the 1994 civil war and that they were terrorizing the population with falsehoods.

Yemenis for 15 years have had a national consensus favoring democracy, a multi-party system, equal rights, and unity. President Ali Saleh has deployed these terms as the foundation of the legitimacy of his regime. As the country trends toward instability, the popular expectation of growing self governance and a range of protected civil liberties has come face to face with a bewildering descent into authoritarianism, chaos, and poverty.

A sense of normalcy has been overcome by a continuing scramble whereby the disenfranchised Yemeni society tries to fill in for the non-existent Yemeni government. Throughout Yemen, teachers are working without pay, women give birth relying on female neighbors, individuals are responsible for their own security and water, and starving people are fed by the extremely poor. The strong and community oriented nature of the Yemeni national character is the greatest bulwark opposing anarchy in Yemen.

Yemen may be on the verge of state failure or it may be on the verge of an authentic, self constructed democracy. One critical factor is whether a broad public consensus and peaceful political mobilization can be achieved in the context of elite domination of the mass media.

Another critical factor is elite reaction should a widespread consensus for change emerge. Over 50 people, including children, died at the hands of security forces during the nationwide, leaderless July protests. The regime blamed "saboteurs in military uniforms" for the violence. Currently the regime is escalating the level of violence against journalists, who deploy only intellect and a pen. Amnesty International has noted the regime's targeting of civilians in the Sa'ada region. The jails are full of prisoners of conscience and identity. As Mr. al-Rabei stated, sisterly and friendly nations have a peaceful and important role to play in supporting the development of Yemen.

Another scenario centers on a peaceful transition of power from the entrenched elite in the 2006 presidential elections. In this scenario, an opposition or non-elite candidate faces extreme disadvantages including the biased election law and electoral budget. But the momentum of a rapidly failing state coupled with rising public dissatisfaction means that a change is coming to Yemen, in one form or another.

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## Iraq official rejects Sunni call for poll rerun

BAGHDAD (Reuters) - Iraq's Electoral Commission rejected on Tuesday a call from the biggest Sunni Arab bloc to rerun last week's vote in Baghdad after partial results showed the ruling Shi'ite Alliance with a big majority in the capital.

"So far there are no objective grounds to order a rerun in any province," Hindawi told Reuters, saying the commission had expected such complaints after Thursday's parliamentary poll.

He describing the demand for a repeat vote as "political" and added: "No one is satisfied with the results but those who won are less critical than others of course."

Adnan al-Dulaimi, leader of a Sunni Arab umbrella group which ran in alliance with the Iraqi Islamic Party in the election under the name Iraqi Accordance Front, said the results were fraudulent and the commission should order a new ballot.

Hindawi said the commission would study any complaint.

"Their position is rather political," he



A U.S. soldier patrols alongside a tank on a street after a roadside bomb blast in central Baghdad, Dec. 20. REUTERS

said of the Sunni Arab complaints. "If they have proof of fraud then they should send a letter to the commission and we will reply to them. But I'm sure that they will also be dissatisfied with

our reply." Hindawi acknowledged there may have been some violations but said they were minor and would not affect the overall results.

## Gunmen storm city hall in biblical Bethlehem

BETHLEHEM, West Bank (Reuters) - Palestinian gunmen briefly seized Bethlehem city hall, overlooking the Church of the Nativity, on Tuesday in a jarring interruption to Christmas preparations in the traditional birthplace of Jesus.

The incident, five days before Christmas, was another sign of growing lawlessness in Palestinian territories and the turmoil within Palestinian President Mahmoud Abbas's Fatah faction ahead of a January parliamentary election.

About 20 gunmen from Fatah's al-Aqsa Martyrs Brigades fanned out on rooftops and in the offices of city hall, firing several shots in the air and forcing workers out. They demanded money and jobs for about 320 members.

Masked gunmen carrying assault rifles appeared beside the glittering star set up on the roof ahead of festivities.

Witnesses said that the gunmen left after about an hour after Bethlehem's governor promised to address their demand for jobs and pay.

"What happened in Bethlehem is regrettable, especially as it comes at a time when the city is preparing itself for Christmas festivities," said Bethlehem Mayor Victor Batarseh.

The episode revived memories of a five-week standoff between the Israeli army and a band of gunmen who took over the Nativity church in 2002.

Bethlehem has only just begun to recover from the siege, which turned the town into a virtual war zone and badly damaged its tourism industry.

As the drama in Bethlehem unfolded, about a 100 al-Aqsa brigades gunmen took over the local Fatah offices in the southern Gaza Strip city of Khan Younis to demand jobs for members.

Abbas's Fatah faction has been split ahead of a January 25 parliamentary election in a power struggle between veteran leaders tainted by corruption and a young guard seeking a bigger share of power.

In an ultimatum to Abbas, the Gaza gunmen said they would prevent foreigners from entering Gaza and would lead a boycott against the election unless the Palestinian leader found jobs for militants in the security forces.

"We will also split from Fatah if our rights are not achieved," one of the gunmen said.

## Jordan embassy driver abducted in Iraq

BAGHDAD (Reuters) - A Jordanian driver for his country's embassy in Baghdad was kidnapped when he left his home on Tuesday, Iraqi police and Jordan's state news agency said.

Gunmen in three cars pulled up at the Jordanian's home in the south of the Iraqi capital and seized Mahmoud Saadat, who was described by Jordan's Petra news agency as a driver for the embassy and by police as the ambassador's personal driver.

Jordanian diplomats in Baghdad declined comment but Petra said officials were in contact with the Iraqi authorities to begin efforts to rescue the missing employee.

Several Arab diplomats and

embassy workers have been kidnapped and killed in recent months by Islamist militants, hampering already frosty relations between Iraq's U.S.-backed Shi'ite-led government and Sunni-dominated fellow Arab states.

Egypt's envoy and two Algerian diplomats were killed in July after being abducted by al Qaeda in Iraq, led by Jordanian Abu Musab al-Zarqawi. The group said last month it had killed two Moroccan embassy staff who were also abducted.

Al Qaeda claimed a triple suicide bomb attack in the Jordanian capital Amman last month in which it said Iraqi Islamic militants took part. Jordan arrested an Iraqi woman it says

was the fourth, unsuccessful bomber and the wife of one of the three men who blew themselves up in three hotels.

The Baghdad embassy of U.S. ally Jordan has been the target of two car bomb attacks since the fall of Saddam Hussein, including one in August 2003 that is seen as marking the start of a campaign of such attacks that has continued ever since.

Washington has urged Arab states to ease the relative diplomatic isolation of the new Iraqi government. But Arab governments, dominated by the Sunni Muslim majority, remain wary of Iraq's Shi'ite-led administration and its close ties to both the United States and non-Arab, Shi'ite Iran.

## Israel's Sharon leaves hospital after minor stroke

JERUSALEM (Reuters) - Israeli Prime Minister Ariel Sharon left hospital on Tuesday after a minor stroke and vowed to return to work quickly to pursue his battle for re-election on a platform of ending conflict with the Palestinians.

Smiling and joking with reporters but looking slightly drawn, Sharon, 77, said: "It appears that you have missed me."

Sharon's health scare on Sunday shook Israel and raised questions over how long the bulky ex-general, nicknamed "the Bulldozer", could continue to dominate the political landscape. Doctors said Sharon would make a full recovery.

"Now I must quickly get back to work and move forward," he said in a pun on the name of his new party "Kadima", which means "forward" in Hebrew and was set up by Sharon after a dramatic break from his ruling Likud.

Opinion polls showed that the stroke had not harmed Sharon's prospects for the general election on March 28. A Maariv newspaper poll said Kadima would win 42 seats in the 120-member parliament, the largest number predicted so far.

But political analysts say that any further health problems ahead of the



Israeli Prime Minister Ariel Sharon addresses the media upon his release from the hospital in Jerusalem on Dec. 20. REUTERS

vote could be more damaging. If Sharon were to leave the political stage it would inevitably mean a major upheaval.

### Campaign

Likud, shattered by Sharon's departure, set in gear its campaign to recover from third place in opinion polls after picking ex-premier Benjamin Netanyahu -- Sharon's most bitter rival in the party -- as leader on Monday.

Netanyahu resigned as finance minister in protest at Sharon's removal of troops and settlers from the Gaza Strip this year after 38 years of occupation and rejects pull-backs from land captured by Israel in

the 1967 war.

Sharon has said he wants to pursue peace with the Palestinians, but insists on keeping major settlement blocs in the West Bank and Arab East Jerusalem, land that Palestinians also want for a state.

Talks on statehood have also been ruled out by Israel before Palestinians disarm militants under a U.S.-backed peace plan.

But Palestinian President Mahmoud Abbas says such a move could bring civil war and is struggling to deal with growing chaos ahead of January parliamentary elections in which his Fatah movement is challenged by Islamic militant group Hamas.

In a sign of the turmoil, Palestinian gunmen stormed the city hall in Bethlehem on Tuesday to demand money and jobs, disrupting preparations for Christmas in the city of Jesus's birth.

Armed Palestinian security forces surrounded the building, overlooking the Church of the Nativity, where about 20 gunmen from al-Aqsa Martyrs Brigades -- part of Fatah -- were holed up.



### Job Vacancies

The Yemen LNG project involves the construction and operation of a gas pipeline, a harbour and a liquid natural gas processing plant at Balhaf which will export 6.7 million tones of LNG per annum. The company headquarters are in Sana'a and the project has an anticipated lifespan of over 20 years. Yemen LNG Company is now recruiting the temporary and permanent staff who will participate in the development and management of the project.

Candidates applying for these posts must be Yemeni Nationals

#### Technical Instructors - Reference No. 038

Yemen LNG is looking for experienced technical instructors for the implementation of a training program which will be conducted at YLNG training centre in Sana'a. This program will train and develop young trainees to become technicians at the company production plant and facilities at Balhaf.

Reporting directly to the Head of Technical Training, Yemen LNG Company is looking to recruit a number of instructors to participate in training of 200 young Yemeni technicians and operators to work in Balhaf, Shabwa. Duties will include preparation and delivering of training materials in production, maintenance and safety as well as monitoring of progress of the trainees using "Job Competency Training Models". The incumbents will also be responsible for identifying specific training needs and preparing remedial action plans and monitoring/supervising "On Job" training activities. The incumbents will prepare and administer weekly tests; weekly activities report for supervisor review and participate in Training Centre's weekly meetings

Candidate should hold a Bachelor Degree in engineering and have minimum of 10 years experience in Oil and Gas Industry in a supervisory level and a minimum of 5 years experience in training or development as instructors. Instructors must possess good organization skills and good level of initiative and team spirit.

Deadline: Tuesday, January 31, 2006

#### Recruitment Officer - Reference No.039

Reports to the Head of Recruitment, the job Holder will develop and place job advertisements on the company's website and in the Yemeni media, reviews CVs to screen candidates for 1<sup>st</sup> interview in liaison with line management, conduct personal interviews and prepare assessment reports of candidates' attributes and suitability against the requirements of the job, make short list of recommendations, organizes recruitment assessments including medical tests and interviews for Line Management, administers spontaneous applications database, review CVs regularly, prepare and send appropriate letters to candidates, maintain statistics of recruitment activities, prepare weekly status report, quarterly/yearly activity reports.

Candidate should have Degree level education and an HR-relevant additional qualification would be advantageous, experience with Recruitment and Personnel Management, fluent in English and good report-writing skills. Mature with strong communication and interpersonal skills and has strong commitment to business ethics principles and recruitment practices and able to use standard computer software such as MS Office, Visio, Access etc.

Closing Date: 15th January, 2006

Applicants should send their CV in English with a short covering letter explaining why they believe they are qualified for any the above posts to:  
The Human Resources Department  
Yemen LNG Company  
P.O. Box 15347  
Sana'a, Yemen

Candidates may apply by e-mail to: [HR@YEMENLNG.COM.YE](mailto:HR@YEMENLNG.COM.YE)  
Candidates selected for interview will be contacted by Yemen LNG.

[WWW.YEMENLNG.COM](http://WWW.YEMENLNG.COM)



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Sana'a, Republic of Yemen

**Deadline to receive CV 15 January 2006.**

Please do not phone us. We will call you for interview, i you are a successful candidate.

# War-hit Congolese flocked to vote in referendum

KINSHASA (Reuters) - Voters in Congo's war-ravaged east have turned out in huge numbers to vote on a constitution designed to end years of war and chaos, UN officials and diplomats said on Monday, when the vote officially closed.

The vast country held its first national democratic vote in over 40 years to decide whether to adopt a constitution paving the way to elections next year.

Voting on Sunday appeared relatively calm but there were several incidents of violence and intimidation by opposition supporters, resulting in low turnout in some areas.

UN officials and diplomats said turn-out in the east, where most of Congo's last five-year-war was fought and where there are now thousands of peacekeepers, was particularly high, averaging around 70 percent.

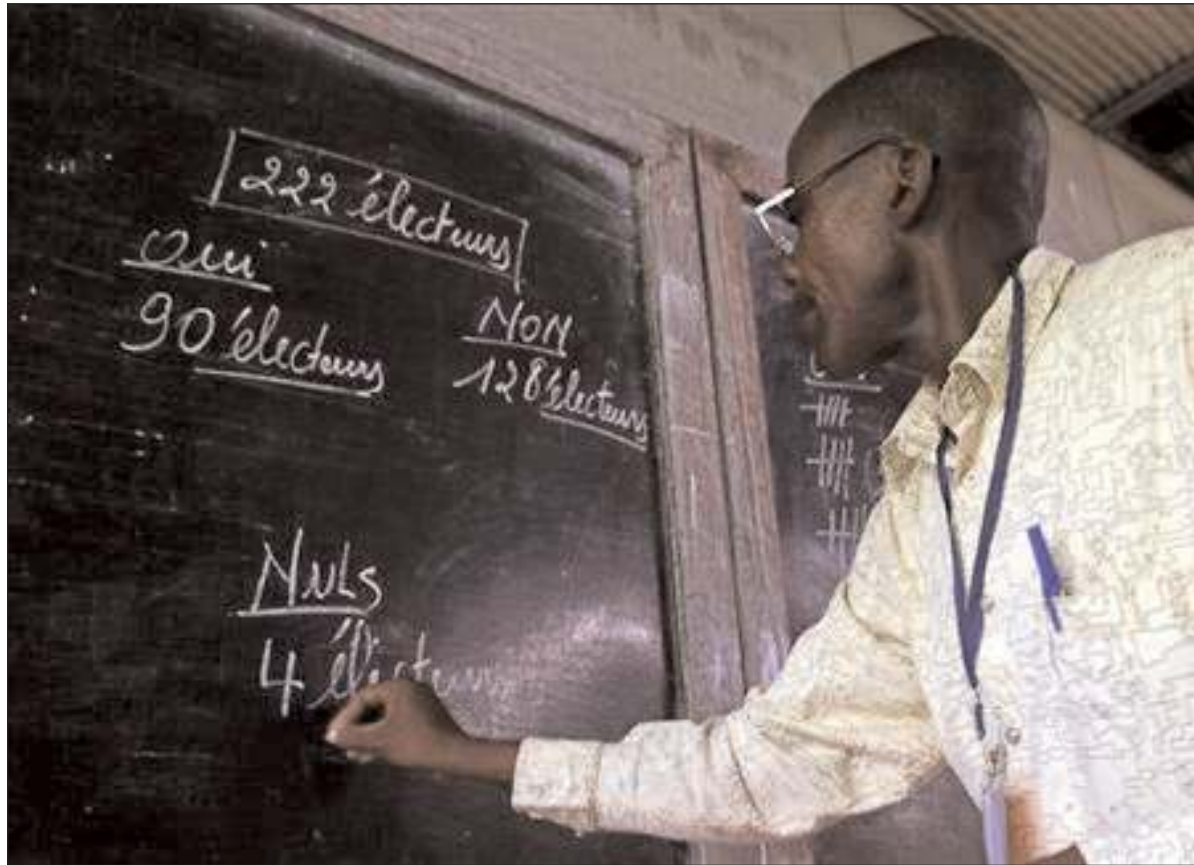
The United States praised Congo for holding the referendum despite the difficulties of organizing a vote over an area as large as Western Europe, and pledged political support for the country's transition to democracy.

"The Congolese have demonstrated their desire to elect their leaders and join the political process by actively and peacefully participating in the referendum," U.S. State Department spokesman Sean McCormack said in a statement.

A baby and a woman were killed in separate stampedes in the east on Sunday as people eager to cast their ballots crowded into voting booths, officials said.

"We've seen a very high turnout in the Kivus (eastern provinces), but intimidation, support of the opposition and a lack of transport seems to have affected a number of areas, particularly in the Kasais," a Western diplomat told Reuters.

Opposition calls for a boycott coupled with intimidation at some



A Congolese election worker counts votes on a blackboard in Kinshasa Dec. 19. REUTERS

polling stations in Kinshasa and strongholds in East and West Kasai provinces, appeared to have kept turnout in those areas to around 30 percent, diplomats and UN officials said.

### Step forward

"People in the east were those who bore the brunt of the war so, no matter how compromised by corruption and abuse of power in Kinshasa, they see the elections as a step forward," International Crisis Group senior analyst Jason Stearns said.

Following decades of dictatorship, war and chaos, Congolese were asked to accept a constitution that would

pave the way for elections in 2006 and outline how the mineral-rich but deeply divided former Belgian colony would be run in the future.

The constitution provides for a decentralized political system with provincial administrations responsible for local decision-making and controlling 40 percent of public funds. It also limits the president to two five-year terms, and requires the president to nominate a prime minister from the parliamentary majority.

Extra voting on Monday allowed everybody a chance to vote.

Election officials were unable to say how high overall turnout was or give an indication on the result.

Few results were in by nightfall on Monday, one official at the electoral commission said, adding that communications problems had not helped, including problems sending results by text message on satellite phones from remote areas.

In spite of the biggest UN peacekeeping mission with some 17,000 police and troops, thousands of gunmen roam the hills of the east, terrorizing civilians, raping, killing and pillaging.

Around 1,000 people die every day in the Congo, mostly from war-related hunger and disease, adding to nearly 4 million estimated to have been killed since the conflict began in 1998.

# New York hit by mass transit strike

NEW YORK (Reuters) - New York transit workers walked off the job for the first time in 25 years on Tuesday, stranding millions of people who rely on the bus and subway system each day.

Last-ditch talks between the Transport Workers Union and the state-run Metropolitan Transportation Authority collapsed shortly before a 12:01 a.m. (0501 GMT) strike deadline when the union rejected the MTA's offer and left the bargaining table.

"Transit workers are tired of being underappreciated and disrespected," TWU chief Roger Toussaint said in announcing the walkout about three hours after the deadline.

"The Local 100 has voted overwhelmingly to extend strike action to all MTA properties immediately," he added, referring to the union that represents 34,000 transit workers.

The strike shut down the entire subway and bus system, which carries 7 million daily passengers, and promised to cause an arduous if not chaotic morning rush hour.

As dawn approached, police set up checkpoints as part of a plan to ban cars carrying fewer than four people from midtown Manhattan. The city has contingency plans such as strict car pool rules to help avoid gridlock.

The walkout violates a state law prohibiting strikes by public employees, and union members could face heavy fines.

"They should all go to jail," said Jim Giannella, 53, standing outside a Times Square station closed off with red tape. "They should have sat there and stayed on the job. It's just going to make everyone miserable."

At the height of the holiday season when shoppers and tourists tend to fill the city, the strike could cost the city as much as \$400 million a day, officials have warned.

"This means better conditions,"

said striking bus cleaner Everick Jacobs, 57, at a depot in Manhattan. "I feel sorry for the people, but we have got to stand up for ourselves."

### A "cowardly attempt"

Minutes after the union announced the walkout, Mayor Michael Bloomberg denounced the strike as "illegal and morally reprehensible" and a "cowardly attempt" by the union to gain leverage at the bargaining table.

"We cannot give the TWU the satisfaction of causing the havoc they desperately seek to create," the mayor said.

"We cannot let inconveniences, as massive as they are, stop our economy, shut down our schools or jeopardize public safety."

Attorneys for the MTA and the city immediately requested an emergency court hearing to seek a contempt ruling against the union and ask the court to impose heavy fines on the union and its members, Bloomberg said.

MTA Chairman Peter Kalikow called the strike "bullying tactics."

"I guarantee the public that we will take every necessary step to bring this illegal act to an end as quickly as possible," he told reporters.

The last strike against the transit system was in 1980 and lasted 11 days.

The union and management have been battling over wage hikes, health-care and pension costs and employees' retirement age. The union disputed the MTA's contention that cut-backs in benefits are necessary, noting the agency has a \$1 billion surplus.

MTA spokesman Tom Kelly said the agency "put a fair offer on the negotiating table."

"The MTA remains ready to continue negotiations," he said late on Monday.

# N.Korea says to build light-water nuclear reactors

SEOUL (Reuters) - North Korea said on Tuesday it plans to build light-water atomic reactors and develop two other reactors that can produce large amounts of fissile material to boost its nuclear deterrent.

The official KCNA news agency blamed the U.S. administration of President George W. Bush for the decision, made during a hold up in six-party talks aimed at ending North Korea's nuclear weapons programs.

It could complicate an already difficult diplomatic process further, analysts said.

Pyeongyang had not said before it planned to build relatively proliferation resistant light-water reactors (LWRs) but had threatened to resume work on two graphite-moderated reactors (GMRs), which can produce large amounts of material for atomic bombs, a South Korean Foreign Ministry official said.

"There have never been any plans for North Korea to build LWRs on their own," the official said.

KCNA repeated the North's demand for compensation for an international consortium's decision to pull the plug on a long-stalled deal to provide it with two light-water reactors in exchange for it freezing its nuclear weapons programs.

The countries in the consortium — known as the Korean Peninsula Energy Development Organization, or KEDO — said the project was shut down because the North had cheated on the original 1994 deal by having a secret uranium enrichment plant.

Pyeongyang denied having such a project.

"The Bush administration's abandonment of its commitment to provide LWRs to the DPRK compels it to develop in real earnest its independent nuclear power industry based on 50,000 kilowatt and 200,000 KW GMRs and their related facilities," KCNA said.

DPRK is short for North Korea's offi-



South Korea's Unification Minister Chung Dong-young bows during a news conference at the National Press Club in Washington, Dec. 19. REUTERS

cial name, the Democratic People's Republic of Korea.

KCNA said North Korea would "start developing and building LWRs of Korean style in reliance upon its indigenous technology and potential when an appropriate time comes to put further spurs to its peaceful nuclear activities". It did not elaborate.

### No money, stalled talks

Nuclear experts say North Korea, which operates one, small nuclear reactor built with technology from the 1960s and 1970s, does not have the technology or money to build light-water reactors any time soon.

"As long as the Bush group persistently pursues the policy to stifle the DPRK, bent on arrogant, self-justified and high-handed practices while regarding 'force' as all-powerful, the DPRK will steadily bolster its nuclear deterrent as a powerful treasured sword for defending the sovereignty of the country," KCNA said.

Daniel Pinkston, director of the East Asia Nonproliferation Program at the California-based Center for Nonproliferation studies, said it would take years for North Korea just to complete the graphite-moderated reactors.

Any construction of nuclear reactors presented problems for the diplomatic process, he said.

"The further this goes forward, the more difficult it is to walk away from it and the more costly it becomes to dismantle them," Pinkston said by telephone.

The next round of nuclear talks among the two Koreas, China, Japan, Russia and the United States has been put in doubt, partly because of North Korea's anger at a UN vote to condemn it for human rights abuses and a U.S. crackdown on its finances.

Washington, which accuses North Korea of funding its nuclear programs partly through money obtained from counterfeiting, money laundering and the drug trade, has frozen a few of its assets and is trying to put the brakes on some firms.

The next round of the talks is likely to be held in January, sources familiar with the discussions say.

North Korea almost scuttled an outline statement agreed in September among the parties by demanding the United States build it a light-water reactor before it even started to consider scrapping its nuclear weapons programs.

# Man held over failed July 21 London attacks

LONDON (Reuters) - British police said on Tuesday they had arrested a man in connection with the failed bomb attacks in London on July 21, saying he had been held by anti-terrorist officers as he stepped off a plane from Ethiopia.

The 23-year-old man, from the Tottenham area of north London, was arrested on suspicion of the "commission, preparation or instigation of acts of terrorism" as he left the plane from Addis Ababa at London's Gatwick airport at 0500 GMT.

The man, who has been out of the

country since June, has been taken for questioning at a central London police station. A house in Tottenham was searched last Friday but no further homes are currently being investigated, a police spokeswoman said.

Detectives say four men tried to set off bombs on three underground trains and a bus in the capital on July 21 but their devices failed to detonate.

The botched attacks came just two weeks after four British Islamists killed themselves and 52 others in an identical plot in the British capital.

A police source said the arrested man was thought to be involved in the logistical side of the alleged plot and his links to the other suspects are now being investigated.

"At this stage we are not suggesting he would have been a fifth bomber," the source said.

Four men appeared in court earlier this month accused of planning to carry out the July 21 attacks whilst 11 others have also been charged in connection with the attempted bombings.

The trial of the four main suspects is due to start next September.



A general view of the scene at Oval train station in London on the morning of July 21. Police said on Tuesday they had arrested a man in connection with the failed bomb attacks, saying he had been held by anti-terrorism officers as he stepped off a plane from Ethiopia. REUTERS





# Countdown to withdrawal from Iraq

By: Joseph S. Nye

How long will the United States maintain a large deployment of troops in Iraq? That is now the central question of George W. Bush's second term. Until recently, the Bush administration answered with an evasive cliché: "as long as it takes and not one day longer." But not anymore.

The ice began to crack on November 17, when Representative John Murtha, a hawkish Democratic congressman and marine veteran, suggested pulling troops out of Iraq in six months. Soon after, the Republican-controlled Senate voted for "a significant transition to full Iraq sovereignty in 2006." After initial resistance, Bush began to change his rhetoric by suggesting that a troop drawdown would occur sooner than previously expected.

The erosion in public support for Bush's Iraq policy is stark. Fifty-four percent of Americans now say that the US erred in sending troops, up from 24% at the start of the war in March 2003. In part, this reflects the rising casualty rate, with more than 2,100 American soldiers killed thus far.

But it also reflects a growing belief that the war is failing. As Duke University's Peter Feaver, an expert on public opinion who is now serving as a White House advisor, recently pointed out, Americans will tolerate

casualties when they believe that a war is just and has a reasonable prospect of success. But citizens now doubt both these points. The administration is paying the price for overselling the reasons for the war and bungling the post-invasion occupation. Not surprisingly, Bush's new rhetoric stresses that he has a "strategy for victory."

If "victory" remains defined as stable democracy in Iraq, it is unlikely that Bush will have enough time to implement his strategy. In September, General George Casey, the senior American military commander in Iraq, testified to Congress that modern insurgencies last about a decade, and that the Iraqi army had only one battalion capable of fighting without help from American military forces. A month later, the influential International Institute for Strategic Studies in London estimated that US troop withdrawals next year were likely to be small, and that it would take at least five years for Iraq to build the 300,000-strong army needed to fight the insurgency on its own.

But, with Congressional elections in 2006 and a presidential election in 2008, five years is too long. It seems more realistic that the Republican administration will have only 18 months to two years to implement its strategy.

The Democrats, meanwhile, are divided. Some, like John Murtha and Nancy Pelosi, the minority leader in the House of Representatives, want a

short timetable, while others, like Senator Joseph Biden, resist a firm timetable but predicts a withdrawal of 50,000 US troops in 2006, with many of the remaining 100,000 to follow in 2007. Those of us who believe that invading Iraq was a mistake, and that Bush is guilty of hubris in his failure to plan adequately for the aftermath, face a dilemma: if America withdraws too precipitously, it may compound these mistakes.

Iraq is not like Vietnam, where American departure was followed by stability imposed by an authoritarian government. In Iraq, the danger is that departure could be followed by civil war and chaos – ideal conditions for terrorists to maintain havens.

Iraq differs from Vietnam in another way as well. Unlike the North Vietnamese, the Sunni insurgents will have a difficult time taking over a country where they represent only 20% of the population. Indeed, with Shia Arabs and Kurds making up 80% of the country, the insurgency is focused on only four of Iraq's 18 provinces.

America's quandary is that it is both part of the problem and part of the solution. So long as a large number of American troops remains as an occupying force, they serve as a recruiting tool for insurgents. As the political scientist Robert Pape has shown in a careful study, resistance to foreign occupation is a prime motivation for suicide bombers. But, if America leaves too soon, the



elected Iraqi government may be unable to cope with the insurgency, sending Iraq the way of Lebanon in the 1980's or Afghanistan in the 1990's.

Similarly, if Bush sets a short timetable, he may encourage the insurgents to wait him out. But, unless he makes it clear that American troops will leave in the near term, he will reinforce the impression of imperial occupation. The key to resolving this dilemma will be to press for local compromises that involve Sunnis in the political process, and to step up the rate of training of Iraqis to manage their own security. Even then, success is uncertain.

One failure is already clear: that of

the neo-conservative dream of creating a military ally that could serve as a long-term base for American troops in the campaign to transform and democratize the Middle East. Three elections have produced some degree of legitimacy for the Shia-dominated Iraqi government, but without a sense of community and effective institutions, elections merely create a tyranny of the majority. That may be better than Saddam Hussein's tyranny of the minority, but it is hardly modern democracy.

Bush compares his goal in Iraq to the democratization of Japan after World War II. But Japan was a totally conquered, ethnically homogeneous

country with no insurgency, a large middle class, and previous experience of political openness. Even then, success took seven years.

Instead, Bush should plan on a two-year window to give the Iraqi government as strong a chance as possible before the Americans leave, while emphasizing that Iraqis will thereafter be responsible for their own security and political salvation.

*Joseph S. Nye is a professor at Harvard's Kennedy School of Government and author of Soft Power: The Means to Success in World Politics.*

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# The end of the Russia-China debate

By: Dominique Moisi

Ten years ago, comparing the reform processes in China and Russia was an intellectual fashion. Was it preferable to start with economics – try and get rich, quick, but don't rock the boat politically – in the manner of the Chinese? Or was it better to start with politics – recover liberty and prosperity may follow – which seemed to be Russia's path under Mikhail Gorbachev and Boris Yeltsin?

Today, a new comparative debate has started. This time the subject is no longer Russia versus China, because Russia has long ceased to be a point of comparison. Instead, the new comparative debate involves Asia's two new economic, demographic, and political giants, China and India. China's annual economic growth has been roughly 8-9% for the last 26 years; India has recorded similar rates for the last decade.

In the "flat world" of globalization – to borrow Thomas Friedman's powerful metaphor – it seems that Russia no longer has a place. Of course, Russia is still the second-largest nuclear power in the world, and, as one of the world's leading exporters of oil and gas, it benefits from today's high energy prices. But Russia's population is disappearing before our eyes. With average male life expectancy just 57 years, the country is losing close to 800,000 people annually. Indeed, Russia is more a fragile oil-producing state than a modernizing economic giant.

To put it bluntly, Russia is no longer in the same category as China. Whereas the "Middle Kingdom" is proudly regaining its former global status after centuries of decline, Russia is defiantly trying to resurrect its former imperial status, but in a manner that appears doomed to fail.

Russia has clearly taken giant steps in the wrong direction, at a time when China has taken steps, however small, in the right direction. When you meet today's "new Russian Nomenklatura," you experience a sudden feeling of being 20 years younger, awash as they are in nostalgia for Cold War posturing.

By contrast, seen from afar, in their

new suits, you might think that Chinese economic elites are Japanese. Where Russia represents a return to the past, one sees in China an opening, however ambiguous, to the future.

Of course, some bias is involved here. As a European, I and people like me almost instinctively expect more from Russia. It is, after all, a European nation in cultural, if not political terms, whereas progress in China will not be measured by the introduction of Western-style democracy, but eventually, one hopes, by Singapore-style rule of law.

The diverse paths followed by Russia and China may be explained in part by how the two peoples perceive themselves. The Chinese are comforted in their self-image by the world's combination of admiration for their dynamism, greed for the market they constitute, and apprehension for the competition they represent. Russians, by contrast, seem to be animated by a dark form of narcissism. They do not find anything to be proud of in the eyes of others. They are respected for what they control – the Soviet legacy of nuclear arms and "Christian energy resources," to quote Vladimir Putin's bizarre remark on his first official trip to Paris – but not for their economic performance or their essence.

China and Russia tend to relate to their respective pasts and futures in very different ways – with self-confidence in China's case, with self-diffidence in the case of Russia. Chinese elites are convinced that time is working in their favor, and that it is only natural that China should regain its rank amongst the world leading powers, perhaps even emerging on top one day.

Indeed, their serene patience stands in stark contrast to the anxious reticence of Russian leaders, who have yet to surmount the humiliation that Russia suffered as a result of the Soviet Union's disintegration at the end of the Cold War. Russia may be experiencing a global "restoration" phase, but in politics and economics, and also with respect to its empire, restoration is headed in the wrong direction.

With Putin's current clampdown on civil society, re-nationalization of key

segments of the economy, failure to develop any political approach to resolving the conflict in Chechnya, and cultivation of imperial nostalgia, Russia is killing its only chance to matter in the future.

Yet there is no reason for China to declare victory. The gap between the

respective qualities of China's economic and scientific elites, on the one hand, and its ruling political elites, on the other, is simply too monumental – and still growing – for stability to be taken for granted. One senses in China the birth pangs of civil society, making the introduction

of the rule of law increasingly urgent. Without political reforms, China's confidence in herself will quickly turn into disillusion, or even delusion. If that happens, the Russia-China debate might be revived, this time as a comparison of competitive decadence.

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## Future Youth

Voices of tomorrow delivered today!!

### A special letter

By: Abdurrahman R. Squires  
Email: [meremuslim@mereislam.com](mailto:meremuslim@mereislam.com)  
Website: <http://www.mereislam.info/>

Greetings from Florida! I'm an American convert to Islam that just happened to visit the Yemen Times website today. Maa sha'llah, I think that's great that a woman is the Editor-in-chief of a newspaper in Yemen! I pray that you continue to be successful in your profession and other ventures!

I read your "Tragedy of an honest Yemeni judge" with great interest, and I can only say that I feel sad whenever I hear of such a state of affairs in a Muslim country. One thing that you said that I take issue with is your claim that the "Media plays a vital role in educating people," since I don't feel that anything that comes across the television or the radio, even in the U.S., could properly be called "education". True education takes place both at home, at quality universities or at the feet of enlightened scholars, while most of what the media puts out is just information from a particular point-of-view -- if not outright propaganda. Likewise, an independent media is much more difficult to maintain these days since, even though they might be independent from government influence, now they're

under corporate influence. This produces a desire for high ratings so they can make more money off of advertising, thus in order to do this they tend to tell the masses what they want to hear rather than the painful truth. This has been very much in evidence in the U.S. since 9/11, since due to the desire to seem "Patriotic" many news outlets are afraid to openly criticize the Bush administration. So in essence this has produced a new type of censorship in which a desire to be popular and to maintain high ratings forces the media not to speak the truth. The old days when the media had an adversarial relationship with the government in order to keep the citizens informed of what the government was doing, as they did during the Vietnam War, seem to be all but over in the United States -- with very few exceptions.

I realize that you've got a lot more to worry about in Yemen than the problems like I mentioned above, since from what I've read on your website you can't even criticize your government without getting thrown in jail! Insha'llah, one day you'll see the fruits of your labor and live in a more open society. Not that I necessarily advocate going to the extremes of free speech that we have in the U.S., but being able to speak one's mind is obviously essential to a healthy political environment.

Going back to the subject of educa-

tion...I guess I'd say that one can get valuable information from the media, but I still wouldn't call this an "education". One reason for this is that your average person just listens to the news program that they already agree with and then believe most of what they hear. Thus critical thinking and analysis doesn't play much of a role in the process -- and these are key elements of a true education. Most people are either too intellectually lazy to go out and investigate matters, or they are too insecure to reflect on another point of view. I always tell fellow Muslims that seemingly only want to see one side of a story that if I had used this methodology, I'd still be sitting in a church somewhere since I never would even have given Islam a chance!

This past year, I've posted two articles about On my "Mere Islam" website, which is actually a weblog, about Judge Hamoud Al-Hitar, which can be found here:

"Wisdom is Yemeni, Faith is Yemeni" - Using Islam to Fight Terrorism  
<http://www.mereislam.info/2005/03/wisdom-is-yemeni-faith-is-yemeni-using.html>

Using the Koran to Fight Terrorism  
<http://www.mereislam.info/2005/02/using-koran-to-fight-terrorism.html>

I was wondering, what's your view of this program? Is Judge Hamoud Al-Hitar still actively doing this? Is it really considered to be successful or is it just a farce as the U.S. government claims? Please let me know if you have the time. I firmly believe that moderate and mainstream Muslims need to become more intellectually engaged in order to defeat the plague of militant extremism that has engulfed our Ummah...and my website is dedicated to that.

By the way, I lived in Kuwait for four years (1993-1997) and from an editorial writing perspective, those were some of the best years of my life. That's because almost no one wrote letters to the editor in the two English language newspapers there, thus when I started sending them in they'd sometimes give me an entire page! For a year or so I gained somewhat of a celebrity status since I essentially had a large column in the Kuwait Times once or twice a week. Here in the U.S., one is lucky to get one out of twenty editorial letters published -- even in a local paper -- and then it's usually only a selective sentence or two.

Anyway, I just wanted to say "Salam" and to encourage you to keep up the good work!

I pray that all is well with you and your family! Jazakum Allah khayr wa salam!

# Technical apparatus to supervise infrastructure projects

By: Mahyoub Al-Kamali

In the upcoming period, the Yemeni government will create an independent institution to supervise contracts and tenders pertaining to implementing infrastructure and service projects. At its Dec. 15-19 general conference in Aden, Yemen's ruling party approved establishing this organization, stating the aim is to affect development in infrastructure and service sectors and create qualitative transfer between them.

This question of tenders has impeded the flow of much assistance and grants to Yemen; nevertheless, the country seems to be more in need of realizing advancements in air, sea and overland transport. These necessary advancements come in response to the need to link remote Yemeni areas by building a developed domestic and international network of roads, thereby promoting Yemen's policy of openness pursued since the early 1990s. For this reason, Yemeni president Ali Abdullah Saleh proposed at the 7<sup>th</sup> general conference of the People's General Congress establishing an independent technical apparatus to supervise such projects with the objective to activate performance in economic activity. Throughout the 1990s and until 2004, Yemen spent more than YR50 billion to modernize the transportation sector, especially its infrastructure, to be more efficient and guarantee safety for passengers and security of shipped goods. Despite positive results in air freight in the past five years due to a government project known as the National Plan for Civil Aviation, in which the government used large investments to rehabilitate its airports to conform to international standards and specifications, this sector still requires much advancement due to Yemen's vital significance in linking trade movement with the world. The importance of continued efforts in this sector follows establishment of Sana'a Aviation Region, approved by the navigational committee for the Middle East, which includes



Yemeni seaports and Aden container terminal are planned to be modernized to meet increasing navigation activity

Yemeni political borders, the Arabian Sea region and the Indian Ocean until 60 degrees east.

In order to meet regional aviation requirements, Yemen still is in dire need of moving ahead in qualifying its international airports and building more airports in major cities. Presently, Yemen's airports total 14, six of which are international and located in Sana'a, Aden, Taiz, Al-Rayan, Mukalla and Hudeidah, and eight local airports in the cities of Sayoun, Ataq, Al-Ghaidha, Mareb, Al-Baqa, Al-Baydha, Saada and Socotra. Nowadays, several projects are being directed to implement development and modernization. One such project is modernizing Sana'a International Airport, which seeks to transfer the airport from its present location away from construction to an area spacious enough to allow building modern airport facilities in conformity with international specifications. Meanwhile, efforts continue to qualify Aden International Airport and renovate its buildings to improve services and organize passenger movement. The work includes rehabilitating the airport terminal to accommodate one and a half million passengers annually, as done at Taiz and Hudeidah airports. Efforts in this sector include the government's building of the high-quality Socotra International Airport to receive all types of large airplanes. Although

the government has spent approximately YR60 billion to modernize its air fleet, it must comprehensively rebuild its national air fleet enabling Yemenia Airways planes to meet international terms, as the fleet's planes cannot fly in European and American airspace.

As for sea transportation, Yemen's status as a sea state doubles as its coasts extend for more than 2,500km with seaports spread throughout. Owing to this significance, Yemen is seeking to increase investments in this field. In 1999, Yemen inaugurated the Aden port project, which included building a new port for gigantic containers in an effort to regain the port's distinguished position in international maritime navigation. A new port opened at Salif in 1997 to receive large vessels and help ease traffic in Hudeidah port. A causeway was built on Socotra Island to facilitate conveying foodstuffs and consumer goods to island inhabitants until completion of a modern and complete port. However, due to an increasing number of private local and foreign companies working in navigational agencies, transporting goods and supplying ships, a need emerges to organize this sector and attract specialized local and foreign firms to manage sea transport activity and repair and maintain ships. In this regard, agreements were signed with a

number of Arab and friendly countries to study establishing joint companies for sea transport.

Rehabilitating existing ports and adopting an open policy in sea transport has led to increased growth in maritime movement. The number of ships and oil tankers anchoring in Yemeni ports has increased steadily in recent years.

On the other hand, overland transport is severely backward and needs rehabilitating as it hinders internal marketing. After witnessing infrastructure development, the government recently moved toward building a developed land network under a new open economic policy implemented through the 1995 structural reform program. The new system liberated overland goods transport from the policy of monopoly, leading to the emergence of 22 land transport companies thereby increasing employment and decreasing fees for goods transport by an average of 40 percent. These measures also contributed to encouraging the private sector and achieving a tangible change reflected in the increase of transport vehicles. Overland transport activity also enables Yemen to combine agreements regarding transit transport and the unified Arab traffic book. The two agreements facilitate and organize goods transfer and travel of individuals. They also enhance the volume of trade cooperation and exchange between Yemen and other Arab countries.

There are major prospects for infrastructure development in these fields, especially following approval for establishing an independent technical apparatus to follow up progress in implementing development and service projects. These projects often are exposed to plunder and confiscation by certain types of mafia specialized in stealing and plundering people's property and the public sector. The proposed new apparatus would be composed of the private sector, representatives of independent personalities and organizations with power to follow up projects and fight corruption.

## Corruption deprives Yemen of advantages of donations

By: Mahyoub Al-Kamali

President Ali Abdullah Saleh lashed out at those he described as corrupt and threatened to hold them accountable before the 7<sup>th</sup> general conference of the People's General Congress, Yemen's ruling party. The president pledged forming a committee composed of specialized authorities, public and private sectors and civic organizations in an effort to prevent and uproot corruption. He also strongly threatened those who talk about corruption yet practice it themselves.

Yemen loses a large amount of external assistance and grants due to spreading corruption. The World Bank recently reduced assistance to Yemen by 34 percent, from its present \$420 million to \$280 million in coming years. The WB ascribed this measure to the Yemeni government's failure to achieve indicators of speed in realizing reforms, improving the investment environment and fighting corruption. The WB demanded the Yemeni government give priority to fighting corruption, especially in preparing the investment environment, the state's budget usage and dealing with it transparently.

It should be noted that the term corruption was not created by the opposition, practiced by opposition forces or concealed by authorities. Its exaggerated spread has created urgency in facing it by authorities, opposition and foreign donors. However, much talk of corruption has resulted in its increased dissemination, giving the impression that the president's speeches and threats of holding the corrupt accountable are just for consumption and an assurance to those responsible for corruption to maintain what they are doing.

The WB described Yemen's performance last year and the first half of this year as not what it wanted, affirming that it will be difficult for Yemen to achieve scheduled millennium goals, as is the case with many other countries. It demanded Yemen accomplish quicker growth, attaining eight percent, in order to overcome the population growth

problem that devours the proportion of growth the Yemeni economy presently achieves. The WB deputy spelled out these estimates in his last visit to Yemen. He mentioned that Yemen is among a few countries where population growth is 3.2 percent, adding that with such an existing rate, Yemen's economy will realize no progress. He demanded Yemen's government, civic organizations and journalists fight corruption, noting the country's performance indicators will improve if efforts are exerted. He added that the best solution is if the government can combat corruption itself, doing so with or without help from the WB. As for the negative impression Yemenis have about WB policies endeavoring to harm the world's poor, the WB vice president said this is not correct, noting that 90 percent of WB activity supports the poor.

Official and international reports warned of the danger of increasing accounting disorders in the Finance Ministry, which is entrusted to carry out financial and administrative reform. The Finance Ministry described all such reports as unrealistic. But a report prepared by a joint team from the WB, the Dutch government and donors, in agreement with and participation by the Yemeni government, to evaluate financial questions in the Finance Ministry proved the accuracy of previous reports, disclosing many financial and accounting disorders and revealing much fear about the position of public resources citizens have entrusted to their government. The report stressed that the government's executive apparatus must guarantee sound and proper use of resources via a reliable organizational and legal framework that encourages exercising wise financial judgment in both the economy's private and public sectors. This framework is to be within general financial accountability. A condition is that this system provides enough confirmation to concerned parties, donors and supporters that financial operations are conducted in proper form and revenues accurately managed and protected against cheating and misuse.



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Head of Public Relations – Reference No. 37

The Yemen LNG project involves the construction and operation of a gas pipeline, a harbour and a liquid natural gas processing plant at Balhaf which will export 6.7 million tones of LNG per annum. The company headquarters are in Sana'a and the project has an anticipated lifespan of over 20 years. Yemen LNG Company is now recruiting the temporary and permanent staff who will participate in the development and management of the project.

Candidates applying for this post must be Yemeni Nationals fluent in written and spoken English and Arabic.

Reporting directly to the General Manager, the Head of Public Relations will have a wide-ranging and challenging remit within Yemen LNG Company.

Duties will include the development of the company's relationships with government authorities, community representatives, media, NGOs etc. and the presentation of a true and accurate account of company activities, business ethics, challenges and strategies to all stakeholders.

Working with partner external relations personnel and with PR consultancies, the job holder will manage local social and promotional events and will supervise the preparation of company publications and materials such as website information, newsletters and audio-visual material.

The incumbent will assist management and staff to act as ambassadors of the company and to communicate its strategy accurately and consistently in support of long-term corporate objectives. He or she will also work with HR staff to develop and review company internal communication strategies and assist with the communication of information between management and staff.

Candidate should hold a degree in Public Affairs studies (or similar) and should have a minimum 10 years' experience in Public Relations and Communications. The ideal candidate will be a highly capable and autonomous individual with excellent interpersonal skills and extensive contacts within industry, local and national government and the media.

Applicants should send their CV in English with a short covering letter explaining why they believe they are qualified for the post to:

The Human Resources Department  
Yemen LNG Company  
P.O. Box 15347  
Sana'a, Yemen

Candidates may apply by e-mail to: HR@YEMENLNG.COM.YE  
Closing Date: 5th January, 2006

Candidates selected for interview will be contacted by Yemen LNG.

WWW.YEMENLNG.COM

## In a serious move to break the isolation of plastic arts Murals meet common people

By: Nashwan Mohsen Dammaj

**I**bb, the city shrouded in grass. It is its summer that seems not to have forsaken it yet despite the fact that we are well in winter. It is so: the ecstasy of color that bestows on the place a special flavor and taste. "These are murals that were his eyes," if Shakespeare could forgive the manipulation. The murals are butterflies flying out of the Art House, hovering "by guess and hope and hopelessness" to perch on the walls of the old city, adding their magical touch to the already magic-charged air.

You see them when you delve for the first time you step into that realm where you can contemplate old houses, souqs (old markets) with ancient small shops and people almost jammed into the place. In the old city of Ibb, one is faced with buildings with unique architectural characteristics although a few concrete habitats can be discerned here and there. It is now noontime or a little bit afternoon. This is a narrow alley overcrowded showing the magnitude of the peak hour. With little effort you can know that it is lunchtime. Nearby restaurants are full. You need no sign to recognize restaurants in Ibb, as they all look the same. Actually, when one has a specific destination, despite lack of knowledge of its specific location, he/she would not pay any attention to insignificant observations on the quest such as the day to day images of people and places.

However, what appears to be important is the gathering of people in small scattered groups gazing at things they deem are worth pausing for a while. They contemplate them voicing comments that sometimes are homogenous and others heterogeneous. Nevertheless, what matters much is that all of them do experience "astonishment". Some twelve murals lead you to their makers all of whom stated that this artistic project is one of the fruits of the Ibb-based Art House. This house represented for these artists the nucleus, which nourished and realized their dreams color-by-color, step-by-step until they culminated into this dream.

Long time ago, the Art House was just a small dream flattering the imagination of some plastic artists in the city of Ibb. They kept cherishing this dream until it was realized on the "Cultural Days of Ibb Province", an event that was associated with Sana'a being the Arab Culture Capital of 2004. Some of these artists met the Minister of Culture and Tourism, Mr. Khaled Al-Rowaishan. They forwarded their proposition to establish a house in the city of Ibb as an umbrella for provincial plastic artists.

The Minister admirably hailed the idea directing the concerned authority to support the project fully calling it "The Art House."

Mr. Walid Dammaj, former Executive Manager of Sana'a the Arab Culture



A long wall in the old city of Ibb further beautified by fascinating art.

Capital 2004, stated to Yemen Times that the Art House was established pursuant to the Minister's directives and was formally inaugurated in December 2004. At that time, the building used to be rented before it was purchased in July 2005.

Yasser Al-'Ansi, one of the artists and the Manager of the Art House, expressed

Names of artists participating in painting the murals:

- Yasser Al-'Ansi
- Nabil Al-Kahsah
- Salah Radman
- Raja' Fare'
- Ejlal Al-Buraihi
- Ejlal Shamsan
- Ahmed Nasser
- Hana' Al-Muhtadi
- Walid Al-Bahri
- Adel Al-Naqeeb
- Hamid Al-'Attab
- Khalil Al-Nasri
- Faris Al-Jahrani
- Mahmoud Al-Ba'dani

his sentiments. "Having become a palpable reality unbelievably touched by every artist, the Art House is a place which has brought into Ibb indescribable meanings most importantly is the spirit that constantly indicates that the place is haunted by a memory almost like clouds." He continued: "By virtue of this house, many artists have been attracted so they came with their brushes dreaming of colors under the roof of this house. Being united under one ceiling, they fly with wings in the skies of creativity and imagination."

With its old style, the Art House consists of three floors, the first floor is a small passage leading directly up to the second floors which contains three rooms: a hall for displaying artists' paintings, and a library featuring the Ministry of Culture's publications and plastic art-oriented books. The third room is maqial (sitting room for chewing qat). The third floor consists of three drawing rooms for

the plastic artists, one of these rooms is designated for females. The three drawing rooms are equipped with almost complete sets for drawing and they sometimes serve as workshops.

Concerning the nature of work at the Art House, Nabil Al-Kahsah, an artist as well as the financial and administrative manager at the Art House, said, "Many workshops involving professional and amateur plastic artists were organized over here in coordination with the Art Education Department at the Faculty of Education, Ibb University." He revealed that starting from this year, a YR 100-thousand prize will be granted annually for a creative artist in Ibb.

Many plastic artists we met believe that the Art House has served them much. It has given them faith and confidence that "Tomorrow begins today." Their footsteps have grown more confident and stable as they head in one direction and towards one destination.

This house has enabled many artists to display their works and introduce them to a wider public. Moreover, it will make them more able to burnish their talents and skills by means of creating a suitable atmosphere seldom found in other places and by providing the instruments for practicing plastic arts with the artist choosing the time convenient for him/her. For the artist, this house represents the bridge over which they salvaged their dreams into broader spaces, painting them into murals exuding colorfulness and hope.

### Murals: the experience of dreaming

"It was the idea of Vice President," said Yasser Al-'Ansi. "He conveyed it to the Minister of Culture who, in turn, proposed them during the activities of the Third Ibb Tourist Festival." The Minister put the suggestion in an interrogative form: "Why can't these artists' works be translated into murals set on the walls of their old city?" he suggestively exclaimed. He pledged also full

support for the project, which is considered to be the first unique experience in Yemen.

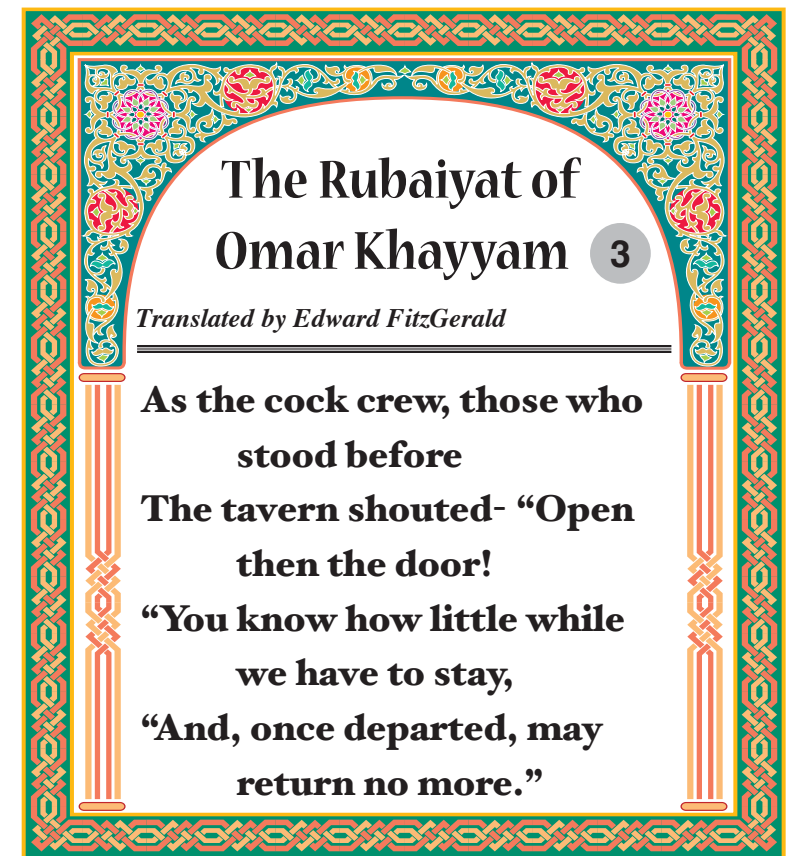
Al-'Ansi went on describing, "As artists, the idea was seen as highly plausible. We expressed our readiness to take up the task and to plunge into this experience from which we were surely to learn a lot. We consulted each other discussing the proposition of the Minister, which focused on two main aspects: type of murals and consideration of the taste and understanding of the common people. The drawings were to be abstract but relatively tangible, resembling things in nature." A dozen murals were to be drawn by some fourteen artists.

Work continued for two days during which the artists succeeded in painting their dreams as they appeared to them and in the manner accessible to them.

It was the first experience for these artists and for this dreamy city. Ahmed Nasser, a doorman of the Art House,



The apparent old portion of the house contrasts with the colorful mural painted on its wall



### The Rubaiyat of Omar Khayyam 3

Translated by Edward FitzGerald

As the cock crew, those who stood before  
The tavern shouted- "Open then the door!  
"You know how little while we have to stay,  
"And, once departed, may return no more."

said: "The murals gave the Art House and the plastic artists reputation and publicity conquering even the realm of uninterested public. The House has become one of the attractions of Ibb-visiting tourists as well as the ordinary people."

"With its success story, this house has encouraged the Ministry and the Heritage Fund to establish and found other art houses in several provinces. One of them was later opened in Dhamar and others are still under construction in Sana'a, Aden, Hodeidah, and Taiz, stated the Manager of the Heritage Fund.

### Murals and artists' experiences

Artist Yasser Al-'Ansi thinks that the murals are an experience that disproved the allegation that the fans of plastic arts come from the elite. "This experience has brought the artist to face a larger public and a wider space, making him able to overcome the inconvenience of letting others observe a work before it is completed. Because the work was collective, the artist could subdue his fears, having the heart to continue along with his colleagues and disdain failure."

Artist Nabil Al-Kahsah said, "The participation in the mural-project, as a first experience of the kind, helped me overcome many hurdles I used to face such as the fear of face-to-face contact with the public. The spectators could see the work from beginning to end. This experience has taught me that I can draw in the manner I like and not only in the conventional method of drawing: confining oneself between four walls and dealing with small-sized papers."

Female artists Ejlal Al-Buraihi and Ejlal Shamsan both confirmed that the mural experience is a victory for them as females and a challenge to their capabilities as artists who succeeded in defeating phobias that previously beset them. "We have come out into the spotlight and left behind the narrow dark

dimensions of the home. Now we are in the space of light and spaciousness. Each of us feels happiness as she realizes that she has become an open book for people's eyes to read.

"This experience is a success despite all the difficulties we met, and in spite of the prescribed nature of the mural subjects and methodology which restricted the artists' abilities to select subjects closer to their artistic inclinations. Our works and paintings are no longer the prerogative of our families or the eyes of our relatives. The relation now has become the direct contact between our paintings and the public."

The female artist added: "the relation between the public and the murals has grown intensely. The constant presence breeds familiarity."

These are the murals. However, careless you are, you cannot help pausing before them, tracing a torrent of brilliant colors that was a mural but melted into a new mural, then another, etc. The last mural overlooks you from its window. You can discern a girl looking at you, a girl that adorns you with her eyes or thus you think. You would turn your face around in a confused manner, may be blushed, while a front of giant houses surround you and overwhelms you with their shadow. You might yourself whether there is still enough space and time to indulge into a new whim, and throw oneself into the arms of a new maiden called "Ibb."

You would end where you began; loaded with feelings you wish they would not abandon you. These sentiments would boil down to a smile, like that you earlier saw on the faces of the groups of common people standing before the murals.

It is noteworthy that the sponsors of the project suggested that the murals should be painted in an abstract way so as not to provoke religious groups that still see that art as a violation of religion, according to the sponsors' point of view.

## Colossal stone inscription uncovers Sabaen military exploits

**A** 10-member German expedition led by Dr. Iris Gerlach, Director of the Sana'a-based German Archeological Institute, discovered a colossal stone inscription at Almaqah Temple in Sirwah, 40km west of the city of Marib.

The inscription dates to the ancient Sabaen state, dating back to pre-Islamic ages. It narrates the military exploits of Sabaen kings stating that King Yasa' Amar Watar, son of Yakrub Malik who ruled Yemen in the fourth century B.C., waged several military raids such as those carried out earlier by his predecessor, Karb Ayl Watar, son of Thamar Ali.

The colossal rock records details of battles, victories and military raids that took place under the reign of the Sabaen king.

The inscription specifies attacked areas such as Qataban, Radman, Dahsam and certain regions in Al-Jawf, including the towns of Kutal and Kimmah.

The inscription is engraved in an immense rock measuring 7.24m in length, 72cm in height, and 51cm in thickness. It weighs some 7 tons. The rock is believed to come from quarries five kilometers away.

The inscription mentions that during the attacks, thousands were killed and many others displaced.



The stone inscription reveals exploits of an ancient Yemeni king. Saba News photo

According to archeologists, the expedition is probably a glorification of a Sabaen king's exploits in the first half of the first millennium B.C.

This inscription is considered the second most important Yemeni inscription after the Victory inscription discovered in the 19th century by an Austrian archeologist, which revealed many facts about Sabaen civilization.

Gerlach described the discovery as "important." The newly discovered inscription contains seven lines, the first describing lands and territories conquered by King Yasa' Amar Watar, son of

Yakrub Malik. The second part of the inscription mentions lands reclaimed and cultivated by him.

Certain places mentioned in the inscription still exist, although with different names. For example, the town of Kutal, which was attacked by King Yasa' Amar Watar, is now called Khirbat Mas'oud in Raghwan district.

The German expedition held a noon press conference Monday at the temple.

It is noteworthy that the German mission began its current archeological season November 12, 2005, and expects to end mid-January 2006.

The German Archeological Institute is conducting the excavations in collaboration with the Public Antiquities Authority.

The inscription, in the form of a big stone plate, is standing on a one-meter high platform and lies in the center of Almaqah Temple. It is believed to have played a significant role in Sabaen religious life.

Almaqah Temple is among the key archeological discoveries in Sirwah. It has a fence 16m high.

Inscriptions found at the site mention that Almaqah Temple was founded in the seventh century B.C.

Sirwah is one of the most important Yemeni towns in ancient history. It was very famous during the Sabaen period. Some people claim Sirwah was the first capital of the Sabaen state before moving its seat to Marib.

The Sirwah discoveries are not limited to this inscription. Current activities have revealed one end of a vast graveyard near Almaqah Temple.

Gerlach says, "Work will continue until the site is eventually equipped and prepared to be a key archeological and tourist destination."

The German team's activities, which span more than 25 years, are focused on clearing the temple's yard and highlighting the varied inscriptions present in it.

## Field Activities of Population Education Project

The population education project with the support of UNFPA conducted 3 days enlightenment workshop during the period from 13-15 December 2005 for district education office, school administration, sample of teachers, school health supervisors and school activities supervisors. [40] participants from Amran city and Al-Sawdah district attended the workshop.

### The workshop aimed at:

- Raising awareness of the participants towards Reproductive Health, Family Planning, HIV/AIDS, STDS and Gender Issues.
- Providing the participants with different teaching techniques and procedures in order to help them convey the population education issues to students in general education and enhance the students' participation in awareness raising activities within their communities.

Dr. Welaya Qaid has shown that the continuity of UNFPA support will enable the project team, teachers and students implement population education activities in the remaining targeted schools in Amran city and Al-Sawdah district.

The population education project aims to implement population education activities in [7] districts Hadramout, Taiz and Lahej governorates in 2005 and 2006.

Population Education Project Coordinator  
Dr. Welaya Abdu Qaid

# The relative unimportance of global warming

By: Bjørn Lomborg

Global warming has become the preeminent concern of our time. Many governments and most campaigners meeting in Montreal now through December 9 tell us that dealing with global warming should be our first priority. Negotiating a follow-up treaty to the Kyoto Protocol, they argue, requires that we seek even deeper cuts in the pollution that causes global warming.

But they are wrong about our priorities, and they are advocating an inefficient remedy. As a result, we risk losing sight of tackling the world's most important problems first, as well as missing the best long-term approach to global warming.

To be sure, global warming is real, and it is caused by CO<sub>2</sub>. The trouble is that today's best climate models show that immediate action will do little good. The Kyoto Protocol will cut CO<sub>2</sub> emissions from industrialized countries by 30% below what it would have been in 2010 and by 50% in 2050. Yet, even if everyone (including the United States) lived up to the protocol's rules, and stuck to it throughout the century, the change would be almost immeasurable, postponing warming for just six years in 2100.

Likewise, the economic models tell us that the cost would be substantial — at least \$150 billion a year. In comparison, the United Nations estimates that half that amount could permanently solve all of the world's major problems: it could ensure clean drinking water, sanitation, basic health care, and education for every single person in the world, now.

Global warming will mainly harm developing countries, because they are poorer and therefore more vulnerable to the effects of climate change. However, even the most pessimistic forecasts from the UN project that by 2100 the average person in developing countries will be richer than the average person in developed countries is now.

So early action on global warming is



Bjørn Lomborg

basically a costly way of doing very little for much richer people far in the future. We need to ask ourselves if this should, in fact, be our first priority.

Of course, in the best of all worlds, we would not need to prioritize. We could do all good things. We would have enough resources to win the war against hunger, end conflicts, stop communicable diseases, provide clean drinking water, broaden educational access, and halt climate change. But we don't. So we have to ask the hard question: if we can't do it all, what should we do first?

Some of the world's top economists — including four Nobel laureates — answered this question at the Copenhagen Consensus in 2004, listing all major policies for improving the world according to priority. They found that dealing with HIV/AIDS, hunger, free trade, and malaria were the world's top priorities. This was where we could do the most good for our money.

On the other hand, the experts rated immediate responses to climate change at the bottom of the world's priorities. Indeed, the panel called these ventures — including the Kyoto Protocol — “bad projects,” simply because they cost more than the good that they do.

The Copenhagen Consensus gives us great hope because it shows us that there are so many good things that we can do. For \$27 billion, we could prevent 28 million people from getting HIV. For \$12 billion we could cut malaria cases by more than a billion a year. Instead of helping richer people inefficiently far into the future, we can do immense good right now.

This does not mean losing sight of the need to tackle climate change. But the Kyoto approach focuses on early cuts, which are expensive and do little good. Instead, we should be concentrating on investments in making energy without CO<sub>2</sub> emissions viable for our descendants. This would be much cheaper and ultimately much more

effective in dealing with global warming. The US and Britain have begun to tout this message.

The parties in Montreal should rule out more Kyoto-style immediate cuts, which would be prohibitively expensive, do little good, and cause many nations to abandon the entire process. Rather, they should suggest a treaty binding every nation to spend, say, 0.1% of GDP on research and development of non-carbon-emitting energy technologies.

This approach would be five times cheaper than Kyoto and many more times cheaper than a Kyoto II. It would involve all nations, with richer nations naturally paying the larger share, and perhaps developing nations being phased in. It would let each country focus on its own future vision of energy needs, whether that means concentrating on renewable sources, nuclear energy, fusion, carbon storage, or searching for new and more exotic opportunities.

Such a massive global research effort would also have potentially huge innovation spin-offs. In the long run, such actions are likely to make a much greater impact on global warming than Kyoto-style responses.

In a world with limited resources, where we struggle to solve just some of the challenges that we face, caring more about some issues means caring less about others. We have a moral obligation to do the most good that we possibly can with what we spend, so we must focus our resources where we can accomplish the most first.

By this standard, global warming doesn't come close. Rather than investing hundreds of billions of dollars in short-term, ineffective cuts in CO<sub>2</sub> emissions, we should be investing tens of billions in research, leaving our children and grandchildren with cheaper and cleaner energy.

Bjørn Lomborg is the organizer of Copenhagen Consensus, adjunct professor at the Copenhagen Business School, and author of *Global Crises, Global Solutions* and *The Skeptical Environmentalist*.

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Continued from Back page

# Working together for children

## Who are the Invisible?

Millions of children navigate life without protection from deliberate harm. These children become invisible when they suffer abuse and exploitation in hidden situations and go uncounted in statistics. Even children we see every day can become 'invisible' to us when they are neglected or ignored.

## Children without a formal identity

**Birth registration**  
Children who are not registered at birth are not counted in statistics or formally recognized as members of society. Without a formal identity, children may not have access to essential services including education, healthcare and social security, and cannot protect themselves in dangerous situations where they may not be treated as children.

- Every year, 55 per cent of all births in the developing world (excluding China) go unregistered: over 50 million children beginning life with no identity.
- In South Asia alone, 24 million children are not registered at birth, the region with the highest number of unregistered births.
- In sub-Saharan Africa, 18 million births are unregistered.

## Children without parental care

**Orphans**  
Children who suffer the death of their parents are denied their first line of protection. Burdened by sudden responsibilities or forced to fend for themselves, many become less visible in their communities because they drop out of school or fall victim to exploitation.

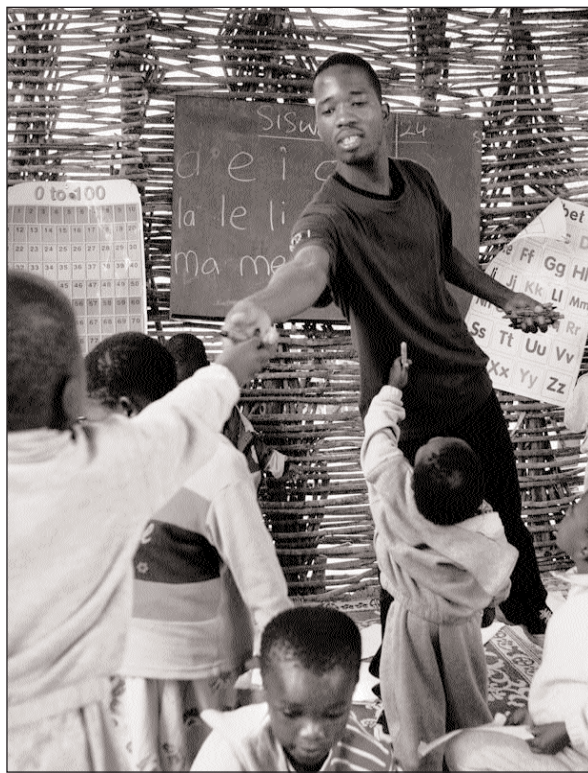
- 143 million children in the developing world - 1 in every 13 - are orphans.
- More than 16 million children were orphaned in 2003 alone.
- 15 million children have already been orphaned by AIDS.

## Children on the streets

Tens of millions of children live on the streets in plain sight, but paradoxically are among the most invisible, their plight ignored and their needs neglected. Street children are vulnerable to all forms of exploitation and abuse.



Invisible children



Including children

## Children in detention

There is scarce data on children who are detained, but current estimates put the figure at more than 1 million children globally. Their access to healthcare, education and protection is far from guaranteed. Many of these children are no longer treated as children and suffer physical and sexual violence. UNICEF firmly believes that detention should be a last resort and only a temporary measure for children.

## Children prematurely in adult roles

**Conflict**  
Hundreds of thousands of children are

caught up in armed conflict as combatants, messengers, porters, cooks and sex slaves for armed forces and groups. While under the control of armed forces, children are forced to participate in and endure horrific atrocities. It is estimated that over 250,000 children are currently serving as child soldiers in armed conflicts worldwide.

## Early marriage

Early marriage can put an end to all education opportunities and is all too often the gateway to a lifetime of domestic and sexual subservience. It can also lead to early death for young brides who become pregnant prematurely: girls under 15 are five times more likely to die in childbirth than girls in their twenties. Their children are also less likely to survive.

- 1 in every 3 girls in the developing world is married before 18.
- In the poorest countries, the ratio rises to 1 in every 2 girls.

## Hazardous labour

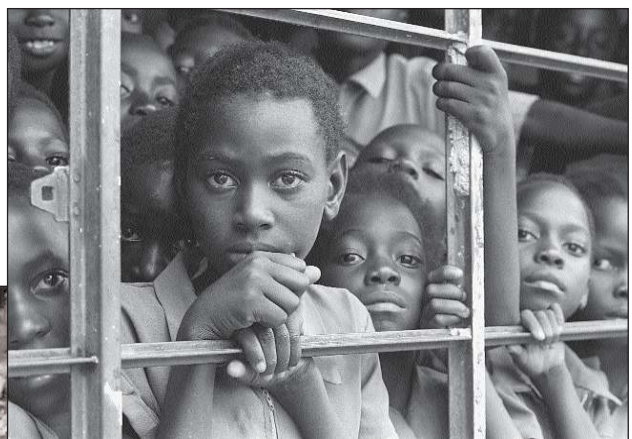
An estimated 171 million children - of which 73 million are under 10 years old - are working in hazardous situations or conditions, including work with chemicals and pesticides in agriculture, with dangerous machinery or in mines. These children face serious risks of injury, illness and death, and many are missing out on education.

## Children who are exploited

**Trafficking**  
Children who are trafficked disappear into underground and illegal worlds, most often forced into commercial sex work, hazardous labour or domestic service. They are almost entirely invisible in statistics. The best available estimate is that 1.2 million children are trafficked every year.

## Forced labour

An estimated 8.4 million children work under horrific circumstances: forced into debt bondage or other forms of slavery, prostitution, pornography, armed conflict or other illicit activities. Forced labour is largely a hidden problem, with little offi-



Our commitment to children



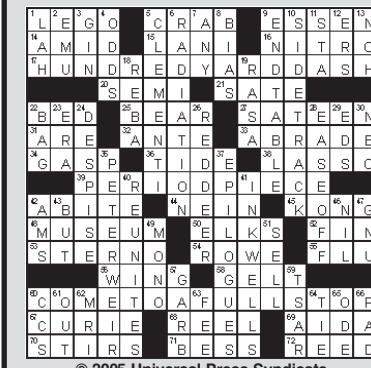
The root causes of exclusion

## Universal Crossword

Edited by Timothy E. Parker

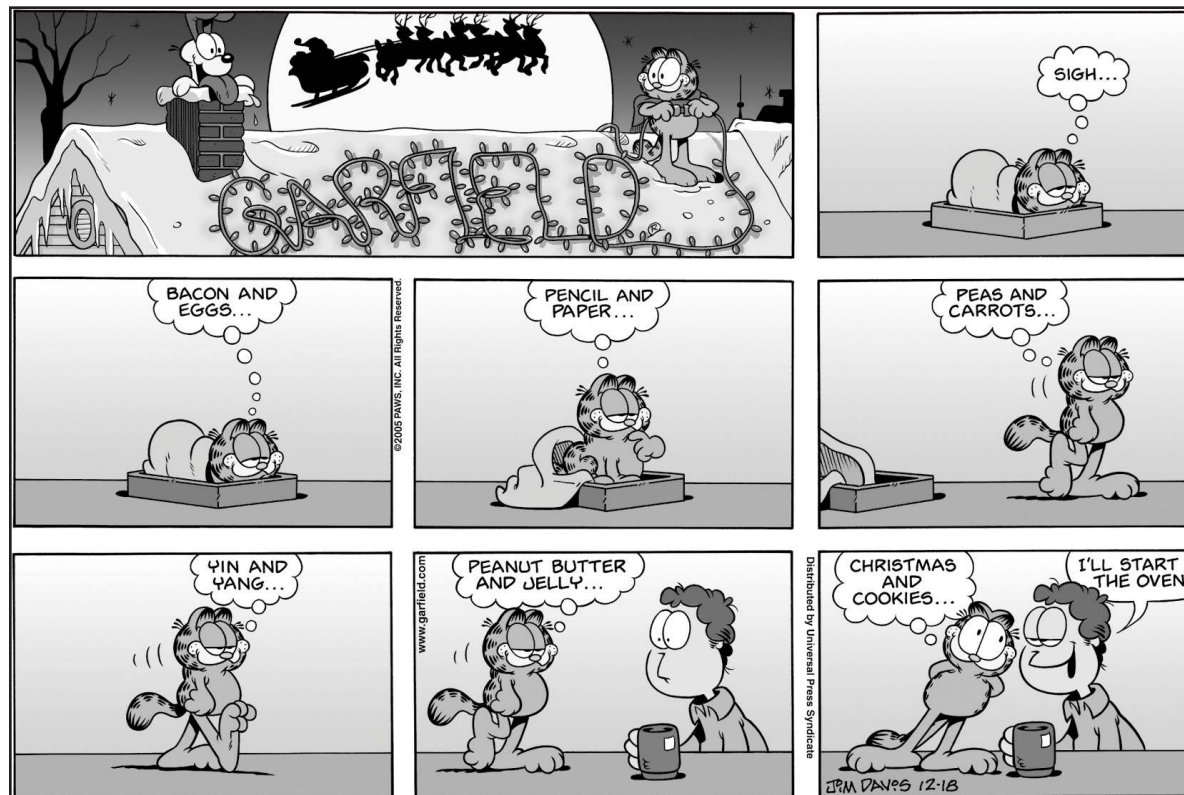
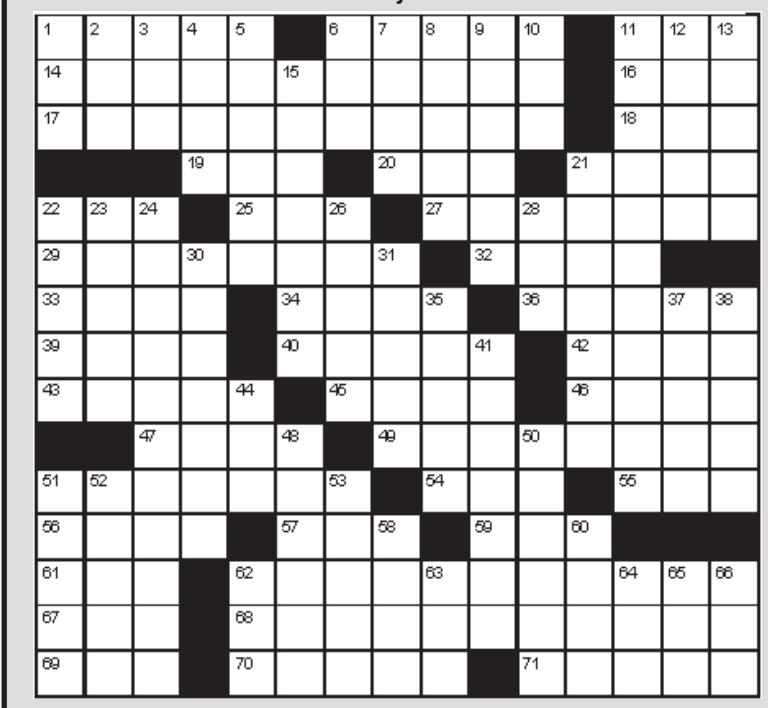
- ACROSS**
- 1 Hardly the gregarious type
  - 6 Bat eyelashes, perhaps
  - 11 Home of the Mustangs, initially
  - 14 Steps within a computer program
  - 16 Proof letters
  - 17 Kind of terrapin
  - 18 German link
  - 19 Andrews, in Md.
  - 20 -cone
  - 21 Raconteur's offering
  - 22 Plus additional things
  - 25 -ings of good feelings
  - 27 Kind of butterfly
  - 29 Weight charge
  - 32 Straw unit
  - 33 Concerning, in legalese
  - 34 Low-lying islands
  - 36 Fords
  - 39 Splunker hang-out
  - 40 Duck with soft down
  - 42 \_\_\_ fide (in bad faith)
  - 43 They can take you downhill quickly
  - 45 What a stitch in time saves
  - 46 "Members \_\_\_"
  - 47 Troubles or woes
  - 49 Perfumes
  - 51 Popular brand at the grocery store
  - 54 Pollution-control gp.
  - 55 Flock producer Brian
  - 56 Does a hatchet job on?
  - 57 Shapely leg, in slang
  - 59 Paul Anka's "\_\_\_ Beso (That Kiss!)"
  - 61 "Are you a man \_\_\_ mouse?"
  - 62 Small but influential group
  - 67 Title for Arthur Conan Doyle
  - 68 Interrogation aid
  - 69 Make hay
  - 70 Wrapped up
  - 71 Abrasive files
  - 13 Fresh milk container?
  - 15 Remove shoring
  - 21 Father of Ajax and Teucer
  - 22 They usually have many extras
  - 23 Describing pitch
  - 24 Emulate a boomerang
  - 26 Request from one not yet satisfied
  - 28 Foot in the forest
  - 30 Seasonal debris
  - 31 Singer Gorme
  - 35 Have a hunch
  - 37 Comedienne
  - DeGeneres
  - 38 Authority to decide
  - 41 Song title spelled out in its lyrics
  - 44 Certain camera, initially
  - 48 Make one's attendance official, in a way
  - 50 Not as tough
  - 51 Straub's "\_\_\_ Story"
  - 52 Chilling, in a way
  - 53 Switch-hit, Singapore-style?
  - 58 Early Iranian
  - 60 Cockamamie
  - 62 Duct extension?
  - 63 Bloodshot
  - 64 Dol. fractions
  - 65 Cut off from a whole
  - 66 Hosp. trauma centers

## PREVIOUS PUZZLE ANSWER



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## "SHAPE UP" by Patrick McCorville



## معهد الفاروق للغات والكمبيوتر

### Al-Farouk Institute Of Languages & Computer

**Contest No : 53**      **مسابقة رقم : 53**

**AL**

1	2	3	4	5	6
1	2	3	4	5	6
1	2	3	4	5	6
1	2	3	4	5	6
1	2	3	4	5	6
1	2	3	4	5	6

**FA**

1	2	3	4	5	6
1	2	3	4	5	6
1	2	3	4	5	6
1	2	3	4	5	6
1	2	3	4	5	6
1	2	3	4	5	6

**AW**

1	2	3	4	5	6
1	2	3	4	5	6
1	2	3	4	5	6
1	2	3	4	5	6
1	2	3	4	5	6
1	2	3	4	5	6

**(A) Keep on at**  
**(L) Stinky**  
**(F) overjoyed**  
**(A) Slim**  
**(R) way out**  
**(O) Scowl**  
**(K) Girl's shirt**  
**(U) Firmly**

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## Working together for children

Report by: Nadia Al-Sakkaf

To the shadows of darkness God said: "let there be light". And so, the creation was blessed with the ability to see and discover. With time, blinded by selfishness and greed, man ignored this blessing and darkness overwhelmed in spite of the light. Yet like there is universal evil, there is universal good represented by the people and organizations that have taken it upon their shoulders to make this world a better place.

This time the hope is dedicated towards children. Not just any children but the excluded and the invisible ones. UNICEF highlights this hope through "The State of the World's Children 2006: Excluded and Invisible". This report, which was launched around the

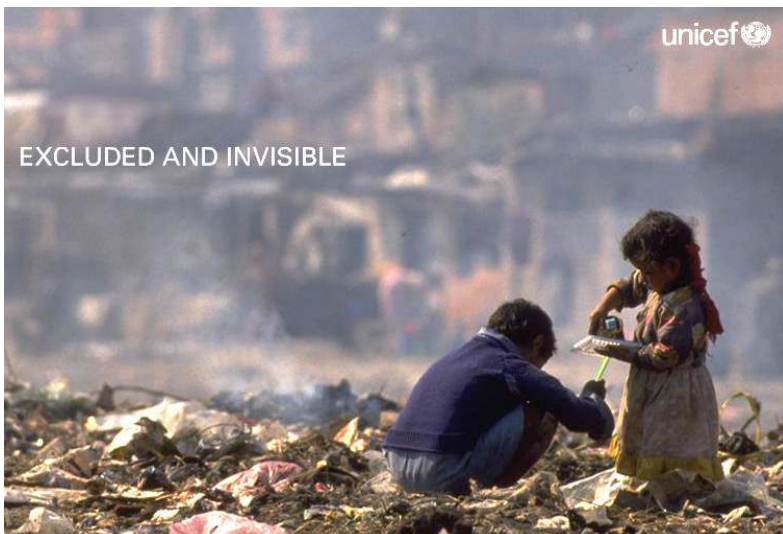
world last week, explores the causes of exclusion and the abuses children experience, and calls on all concerned people to take up serious measures in order to improve the situation.

According to UNICEF, millions of children disappear from view when trafficked or forced to work in domestic servitude. Other children, such as street children, live in plain sight but are excluded from fundamental services and protections. Not only do these children endure abuse, most are shut out from school, healthcare and other vital services they need to grow and thrive. Without focused attention, millions of children will remain trapped and forgotten in childhoods of neglect and abuse, with devastating consequences for their long-term well-being and the development of nations. The

report argues that any society with an interest in the welfare of its children and its own future must not allow this to happen.

### Children and the MDGs

Meeting the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) and the broader aims of the Millennium Declaration would transform the lives of millions of children, who would be spared illness and premature death, escape extreme poverty and malnutrition, gain access to safe water and decent sanitation facilities and complete primary schooling. Though some regions and countries have fallen behind on the goals, they can still be met. The Member States of the United Nations are committed to meeting the MDGs and have coalesced

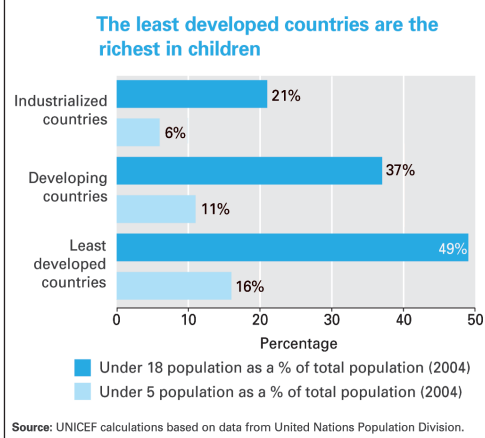


EXCLUDED AND INVISIBLE

"The State of the World's Children 2006: Excluded and Invisible"

around a set of key initiatives to accelerate progress. Putting these initiatives into practice will demand renewed commitment to the Millennium agenda and additional resources. It will also require a much stronger focus on reaching those children currently excluded from essential services and denied protection and participation.

Unless many more of these children are reached, several of the MDGs – particularly the goal on universal primary education – will simply not be met on time or in full. The children who are hardest to reach include those living in the poorest countries and most deprived communities within countries, and those facing discrimination on the basis of gender, ethnicity, disability or belonging to an indigenous group; children caught up in armed conflict or affected by HIV/AIDS; and children who lack a formal identity,



who suffer child protection abuses or who are not treated as children.

These children, the factors that exclude them and make them invisible, and the actions that those responsible for their well-being must take to safeguard and include them are the focus of The State of the World's Children 2006.

Read more on page 14



Working together for the sake of our children.



## Celebrating a New Year at the Mövenpick Hotel Sana'a

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