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Drug Dealers vs. Drug Businessmen

Dr. Ahlam Saleh Bin Breik:

## “I decided to study medicine the day my younger sister died because of diarrhea in front of my eyes.”

SANA'A, Jan. 1 — Every year, Yemen Times selects one person whose efforts in making Yemen a better place are commendable and deserve praise. YT person of the year 2006 is a lady from Hadramout. She is a role model in dedication and commitment to bettering the society. Dr. Ahlam Saleh Bin Breik is a physician and a nutrition specialist based in Al-Mukala., where she as born in 1958. Although coming from a conservative society in Hadramout, Dr. Bin Breik did the unusual and traveled to Aden to avail her M.B.Ch.B from the University of Aden in 1983. She then continued her pursue of knowledge and got an M.Sc. degree in Applied Nutrition from the



**Dr. Ahlam Bin Breik**  
**Yemen Times Person of the Year 2007**

National Institute of Nutrition in Hyderabad, India in 1988. Then in 2005 she availed a fellowship from the Sudan Medical Specialization Board.

Why we chose Dr. Ahlam Bin Breik this year was because of her endless giving to her society and her commitment to helping people. Through her work, and even through other activities she has helped enhancing her community's awareness regarding reproductive health, nutrition and medical issues.

When Ahlam was 12 years old she found a new dream about her future. It was a time where there were no female doctors in Hadramout, and a time where health awareness was very low. Her younger sister had died in front of her because of diarrhea, and

her mother was admitted to the hospital because of reproductive health problems relating to her pregnancy.

Reflecting on her first day in college she said:

“I remember the first day when I joined the college of medicine. During my meeting with the dean, Prof. Abdullah Hattab, he asked me why you want to study medicine? I told him I wanted to treat patients. He asked again: Only to treat patient? I said yes. He insisted, what else? I could not answer. So he told me: I hope that you think about preventing spread of diseases in the society.

From that moment I kept it in my mind, and with the course of time I realized that prevention and treatment can not separated. This is why, along with my profession as a physician, I became active in many social and awareness activities.”

Read full interview next issue.

## Yemenis' emails and calls monitored, report says

By: Mohammed Al-Jabri

SANA'A, Jan. 1 — The Yemeni government still monopolizes internet services, censors and blocks web sites and violates its citizens' privacy, the Arabic Network for Human Rights Information has reported.

Entitled, “Implacable Adversaries: Arab Governments and the Internet,” the report examines policies and tactics adopted by 18 Arab nations in dealing with the internet, criticizing such Arab governments for blocking web sites and arresting online activists. It added that Arab governments traditionally restrict freedom of expression, but with the “War on Terror” as a ready-made excuse, they've imposed even further restrictions.

### Government cyber-terrorism

The report points out that the Yemeni Constitution prohibits interference in private life, but in practice, this prohibition is ignored in numerous situations. “Political security forces and the Ministry of Interior routinely search homes and private offices, monitor telephone calls and read emails.

“Additionally, there's widespread interference in numerous other personal matters, all of which allegedly are based on security intelligence. It's important to note that such practices are implemented without legal orders, nor are they done with judicial supervision,” the report remarks.

The report clarifies that the Yemeni government censors and blocks those web sites regarding sensitive political issues or those that contradict it [the government]. “Unlike many other Arab countries, the [Yemeni] government doesn't impose general blocking of web sites; it only prohibits access to certain web sites.” But this, according to the report, leads to problems suffered by users in Yemen.

Another way it monopolizes internet services is by increasing prices for the service, which many people can't afford. Both the number of users and the growth rate of the internet in Yemen are much lower than in other countries in the region, the report notes, regretting that Yemen's social and economic situations don't allow massive increases in the number of customers.

Continued on page 2

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## Unprecedented gas crisis in Yemen

By: Ismail Al-Ghabiri

SANA'A, Jan. 1 — A gas crisis recently has renewed across the nation, two months ahead of Eid Al-Adha. Yemenis in numerous cities and rural areas complain of the difficulty in obtaining gas during the eid.

Citizens now can only purchase it from vendors, who roam the streets with gas cylinders on pushcarts, because gas agents are monopolizing it at their outlets, thus increasing gas prices from YR 420 to YR 1,000 per cylinder.

Citizens believe that the Yemeni Gas Company policy followed in various governorates has failed. Despite decla-

rations by the firm and its leadership that it will flood local markets with gas before Eid Al-Adha, nothing has happened up until now.

Attempts were made to contact the General Gas Corporation for further clarification about the crisis, but no answer was received from such officials.

Yemen's Socotra Island also is facing an unprecedented gas crisis while its island inhabitants find nowhere to get firewood. Additionally, densely-populated Taiz governorate is experiencing a similar crisis, despite the fact that the gas corporation said it flooded the market with 30,000 gas cylinders.

Continued on page 2



Gas cylinder vendors queue in front of a closed gas cylinder shop awaiting the uncertain opening so that they can start earning their living. YT Photo by Saddam Al-Ashmouri

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ش التحرير ٢٥٣١٧٩، الشيخ عثمان-مركز عدن الدولي ٣٨٩٢٩٧،  
صنعاء: الزبيري ٤٠٣٣٩، الجديدة: شارع صنعاء ٢٠٢٥٤،  
المكلا: شارع خور المكلا-موقف بلقيس ت ٣١٦٣٧٣،  
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**Libya - Critic detained**

(Libyan TV)

Idrees Mohamed Boufayed, a doctor who lives in Switzerland has been detained by Libya's Internal Security Agency since November 5 during a visit to Libya. His family and Libyan organizations abroad reported they have not seen or heard from him since. Boufayed returned to Libya for a visit on September 30 after 16 years in exile in Switzerland.

According to Boufayed, security agents at the airport interrogated him upon arrival. They kept his passport without providing a receipt and instructed him to report back in one week. Boufayed traveled to his family in Gheryan, south of Tripoli.

On November 2, internal security agents ordered him to report to the Gheryan office of the Internal Security Agency the following day. He was questioned and told to report to the Tripoli office on November 5. Before heading for Tripoli, Boufayed sent a letter to opposition websites in which he publicized his interactions with the security agency and announced his intention to report to their Tripoli office. Boufayed traveled to Tripoli on November 5 and has not been seen since.

In recent years, al-Qadhafi and top government officials have publicly promised that government critics could safely return. Boufayed graduated from medical school and was sent in 1987 to serve as a physician for Libyan forces in the war with Chad. He was captured by Chadian forces and held as a prisoner of war.

Reportedly angry that al-Qadhafi failed to take steps on behalf of Libyan prisoners of war in Chad, Boufayed joined the opposition National Front for the Salvation of Libya, which had an armed wing. He was released from Chadian prison in 1990 and received political asylum in Switzerland, where he lived ever since. He runs a small Libyan opposition group called the National Union for Reform. In writings Boufayed has advocated peaceful change to promote the rule of law and respect for human rights.

**Iraq - Journalists killed, two TV stations closed**

On December 12 cameraman Aswan Ahmed Lutfallah was shot by insurgents in Mosul. Eight days prior Nabil Ibrahim al-Dulaimi was gunned down as he was leaving his home in the Baghdad neighborhood of al-Was hash. Also several TV stations have been closed.

Associated Press had employed Lutfallah, 35, since 2005. He was having his car repaired in an industrial area when insurgents and police began fighting nearby and he rushed to cover the clash. Lutfallah had not reported any prior threats against him.

On December 4 Nabil Ibrahim al-

Dulaimi was gunned down as he was leaving his home in Baghdad. He was a news editor for the privately owned Radio Dijla, a broadcaster founded in 2003. On November 3, Al Sharkiya journalist Ahmed Al Rashid was killed in his car as he was leaving the station. In October two policemen have attacked journalists in Najaf. Amir Al-Akaishi, a correspondent of the newspaper Al-Mada , was attacked for writing about the local population's difficulties. Saadun Al-Jabairi of the satellite TV station Al-Nahrain was prevented from filming religious festivities marking the death of Imam Ali Bin Abi Talib.

At the beginning of November the Iraqi government decided to close down two privately-owned TV stations Al-Zaura and Salah-Eddin for "inciting violence and murder" by screening footage of protests against former president Saddam Hussein's death sentence. The main daily newspapers have also been suspended for three days, beginning November 5, under a curfew decreed prior to the verdict.

Reporters Without Borders fears that the Iraqi authorities are exploiting the public's concern about the bombings and sectarian violence in order to restrict press freedom more and more. Both Iraqi and foreign journalists should be able to freely report the Iraqi people's reactions."

**Syria - Extra charges for writer Michel Kilo**

Press freedom organisation Reporters Without Borders has accused Syria's judicial authorities of bringing new, trumped-up charges against detained writer and journalist Michel Kilo in order to keep him in prison and avoid having to execute the provisional release order issued by a judge on October 19.

"Michel Kilo was already facing life imprisonment," the press freedom organisation said. In Syria, the prosecutor general defends the regime's interests at the law's expense. The security apparatus' meddling in judicial decision-making is part of the ruling Baath Party's modus operandi. But this travesty of justice has gone on too long. We call for Kilo's release and the withdrawal of all the charges against him."



Kilo was not freed although his release was announced on October 19 and the bail was paid. The prosecutor general held up the release order long enough for an investigating judge to bring new charges against him. On October 23, Kilo was accused of 'inciting civil rebellion' and a 'serious attack on the dignity of the state, exposing the country to the threat of aggressive acts'. This provided the grounds for keeping him in pre-trial

detention.

A contributor to several Arabic-language newspapers, Kilo is known for advocating democratic reforms in Syria. He also heads the Damascus-based Hurriyat Centre for Press Freedom and Free Expression, founded last year. He was arrested on May 14 after signing a joint statement by intellectuals from Syria and Lebanon entitled, Beirut-Damascus, Damascus-Beirut , which called for a change in the relations between the two countries.

**Morocco -Journalist questioned/ cartoonist's family harassed**

On November 7 Assahifa Al Maghribiya reporter Jamal Ouahbi was arrested by plain-clothes police while photographing three detainees being escorted from a court in the northern city of Tétouan. Ouahbi, who believed the detainees could be terrorist suspects, was questioned by the city prosecutor and representatives of two intelligence agencies before being released.



"We welcome efforts to open up broadcasting to the private sector and the provision of state funds to help the print media, but journalists should be able to do their job without repeatedly running up against members of the police or intelligence services," Reporters without Borders said.

Ouahbi, who also works for the Journal Hebdomadaire and two

Spanish dailies, El Mundo and El Faro de Ceuta , was taken to the office of Tétouan State Prosecutor, where he was questioned at length about internal matters at his newspaper and his work for the foreign media. His press card and camera were taken from him.



He went back to the court several times in an attempt to recover his camera and even offered to delete the photos he had taken, but it was retained "for analysis."

Also the Moroccan gendarmerie has been harassing the family of cartoonist Khalid Gueddar, who currently lives in France. Gendarmes visited his family outside Rabat five times on November 2, requesting information about his activities. Gueddar draws cartoons for such media as the Madrid-based El Mundo newspaper and the satirical website Bakchich ..

The gendarmerie's attempts at intimidation were apparently prompted by a cartoon in the October 19 issue of the weekly Courrier International that accompanied an article by journalist Ali Lmrabet questioning the political will of the Moroccan authorities to stamp out drug trafficking. Gueddar is well known in Morocco for his satirical cartoons. He used to be the cartoonist of the Moroccan weekly Demain Magazine until it was banned and its editor, Lmrabet, was sentenced to three years in prison in June 2003.

**Tunisia - Obstructing Algerian journalist and family detainees**

Meddi Adlène, of the Algerian daily El Watan , has been questioned, searched and followed by intelligence agents ever since he arrived in Tunisia on November 1. He

aimed to write a series of reports and to interview Moncef Marzouki, the head of the Tunisian League of Human Rights.



"Journalists in Tunisia are closely watched and controlled by the authorities. Foreign journalists are not usually subjected to physical reprisals. Christophe Boltanski, a journalist working for the French daily Libération , was attacked and stabbed on November 11, 2005 near his hotel while policemen looked on without taking action. And many local human rights activists and lawyers, and their families, are subjected to all-out harassment," says Reporters without Borders.

Adlène has been constantly followed by a group of six plain-clothes policemen since his arrival in Tunisia, while police have been deployed around his hotel. His smallest actions and words are spied on, and his movements are monitored by policemen in cars and on motorcycles. Their aim is not to go unnoticed. "We are used to having problems in Tunisia but this is really going too far," Al Watan editor Fayçal Métaoui said.



In the past year the government several times did harass family of detained lawyer Abbou to prevent them from visiting him in prison. The last time was on December 7 when Samia Abbou and opposition politician Moncef Marzouki, journalist Slim Boukhdar and lawyer Samir Ben Ammar where stopped

three times at roadblocks and obstructed to prevent them from arriving at the prison.

Mohammed Abbou has been detained since March 1, 2005. His offences included posting an article on a website that compared the torture of political prisoners in Tunisia to that perpetrated by US soldiers at Abu Ghraib prison in Iraq.

**New media excellence awards**

New media excellence awards for the entire Arab world have been launched by the organizers of the fourth Arab Media Forum (AMF). They are to be given annually to prominent Arab journalists for their achievements and role in supporting and developing Arab media. The awards will include five categories: television, radio, print, online and advertising. A winner in each category will be honored at the AMF, which is to be held in Beirut in April 2007.

**Palestine - New media NGO**

A new media training organization "Journalism Without Borders" has been launched with the goal of creating and developing a new generation of professional journalists in Palestine. Its goals are to monitor press freedom violations, to advocate the reform of Palestinian media laws, to improve the journalist-citizen relationship and to organize journalist exchange programs.

**Sudan - Harassment of media continues**

The Sudanese authorities in Khartoum have stepped up their harassment of Sudanese journalists and newspapers.

The harassment is symptomatic of Khartoum's fear of mounting popular dissent and frustration at government policies and actions. The Sudanese government is engaged in an increasingly blatant effort to muzzle and intimidate Sudan's independent press, according to Human Rights Watch.

*Continued from page 1*

**Yemenis' emails and calls monitored, report says**

At the beginning of 2006, there were 110,000 internet subscriptions, of which less than 2,000 were ADSL subscribers, while the majority use a lower service such as dial-up or ISDN. "In October 2005, the state raised tariffs on telephone land lines and internet services by 50 percent. Such a price increase contradicts official government statements claiming to be promoting the spread of communication means in order to power Yemen's economic growth," the report notes.

State-owned Yemeni internet service providers TeleYemen and Yemen Net announced their web site blocking policy, which is to block whatever contradicts beliefs and traditions or national dominance. However, the report observes, "This statement clearly is open to an overwhelming number of definitions and may be used to include thousands of different web sites."

Additionally, the report cites several examples of web sites that have been blocked or censored, which

runs counter to government's insistence that it doesn't censor or block web sites.

According to the report, Open Net Initiative mentioned in a special report (<http://www.openarab.net/en/reports/net2006/yemen.shtml>) that Yemen's two internet service providers use a U.S. blocking technique called "Websense" and that Yemen Net holds only 10,000 licenses for the technique, although it has 65,000 subscribers. Therefore, blocking is applied to the first 10,000 web sites accessing the internet simultaneously. Any additional user who accesses at the same moment is exempt from the blocking mechanism.

The report voiced concern over the practices of security authorities against internet cafés. Since this past March, security forces have issued general instructions to internet café owners, urging them to note the data of those who browse the internet, those who call them by phone and those who send faxes via such cafés, the report alleges.

It cited one example wherein Hodeidah governorate security authorities launched a wide-ranging campaign on internet cafés early last May, arresting large numbers of internet café and telecommunication shop owners. The official reason for the crackdown was the owners' failure to comply with the minute instructions of registering their customers' names and identification card numbers.

The report concludes that the state makes numerous provisions to

regulate the inner workings of internet cafés to limit users' freedoms, including banning side barriers separating users, thereby ensuring that all computer screens are visible from various positions.

"Applying such conditions violates internet users' privacy. Many internet café owners consider such actions and provisions as interference into their customers' personal lives and that users feel censored in internet cafés, even when browsing or writing personal email," the report concluded.

**Unprecedented gas crisis in Yemen**

According to media reports, a gas truck arriving daily in Taiz governorate drove toward Taiz and Ibb loaded with 2,000 gas cylinders to meet citizen demands in both governorates.

On a field visit to various zones in the capital, the Yemen Times learned that citizens face difficulties in finding gas, whereas gas agents said they don't know the causes of the crisis. However, citizens insist that the gas corporation and local council officials are accountable for it.

Gas agents complained that citi-

zens accuse them of hiding gas in order to raise its price, when it's gas corporation officials who should be held accountable for the crisis because they don't distribute gas fairly among the governorates.

Some densely-populated areas in the capital don't receive the deserved quantity of gas, which sharpens the crisis.

Yemenis complain about skyrocketing prices, which add much misery to their poor economic conditions and from which they lack any legal protections



Released by the American Bureau of Democracy, Human Rights, and Labor

# International Religious Freedom Report 2006 on Yemen

**The constitution provides for freedom of religion, and the Government generally respected this right in practice; however, there were some restrictions. The constitution declares that Islam is the state religion, and that Shari'a (Islamic law) is the source of all legislation.**

**There was no change in the status of respect for religious freedom during the reporting period, and government policy continued to contribute to the generally free practice of religion. Muslims and followers of religious groups other than Islam are free to worship according to their beliefs; however, the Government prohibits conversion from Islam and proselytization of Muslims.**

**Although relations among religious groups remained generally amicable and continued to contribute to religious freedom, there were some attacks on Jews. Government actions lessened political, tribal, and religious tension caused after it took action against armed insurrections by the "Shabab al-Moumineen," or "Believing Youth" movement, which the Government believes is linked to Twelver Shi'ism of Iran.**

**The U.S. government discusses religious freedom issues with the Government as part of its overall policy to promote human rights.**

## Section I. Religious Demography

The country has an area of approximately 328,080 square miles, and its population is approximately 20 million. Virtually all citizens were Muslims, belonging either to the Zaydi order of Shi'a Islam or to the Shafa'i order of Sunni Islam, representing approximately 30 percent and 70 percent of the total population, respectively. There were a few thousand Ismaili Muslims who reside mainly in the north.

Nearly all of the country's once-sizeable Jewish population has emigrated. Less than 500 Jews were scattered in the northern part of the country, primarily in the vicinity of Raida and Saada.

There were approximately 3,000 Christians throughout the country, most of whom were refugees or temporary foreign residents. There were approximately 40 Hindus, who traced their origins to India, living in Aden. There were four churches in Aden, three Roman Catholic and one Anglican. Aden also had one Hindu temple. There were three known functioning synagogues in the north of the country.

Although there were some non-Muslim public places of worship known to exist in the area of the former North Yemen, they were discreetly located so as not to draw attention. No officially recognized non-Muslim public place of worship existed in areas of the former North Yemen. This was largely because it had no history of a large, resident foreign community such as existed in the south.

Christian missionaries and non-governmental organizations (NGOs) affiliated with missionary groups operated in the country, and most restricted their activities to the provision of medical services; others were employed in teaching and social services. Invited by the Government, the Sisters of Charity ran homes for the poor and persons with disabilities in Sana'a, Taiz, Hodeida, and Aden. The Government issues residence visas to priests so that they may provide for the community's religious needs. The Swedish Free Mission (SFM), financed by the Government of Sweden and churches in Sweden, ran a technical school for the disabled and poor in Taiz. There was also a Dutch Christian medical mission in Saada. An American Baptist congregation affiliated with the Southern Baptist Convention maintained an affiliation with a hospital in Jibla, which it ran for more than thirty years before transferring management to the Government in 2003. The Anglican Church ran two charitable clinics in Aden.

The generally amicable relationship among religious groups in society contributed to religious freedom. During the reporting period, the Government began efforts to ease religious tension between it and some members of the Zaydi-Shi'a establishment. This tension began as a result of government action against the "Shabab al-Moumineen's" (The Believing Youth) armed insurrection that erupted in the summer of 2004 and again in April 2005. The Government maintains that the Shabab are adherents of Twelver Shi'ism, a variant of Shi'ism which differs from that of the country's predominant Zaydi-Shi'as. The Shabab follow the

teachings of rebel cleric Hussein Badr Eddine al-Houthi, who was killed during a ten-week rebellion that he led in June 2004 against the Government in Saada. The Government's actions against the group in 2005 were politically, not religiously, motivated.

Among religious minorities, approximately 1,000 Christians and most Jews actively participated in some form of formal religious service or ritual, although not always in a public place of worship.

## Section II. Status of Religious Freedom

### Legal/Policy Framework

The constitution provides for freedom of religion, and the Government generally respected this right in practice; however, there were some restrictions. The constitution declares that Islam is the state religion and that Shari'a is the source of all legislation. Followers of religious groups other than Islam are free to worship according to their beliefs and to wear religiously distinctive ornaments or dress; however,

***The generally amicable relationship among religious groups in society contributed to religious freedom.***

Shari'a forbids conversion and prohibits non-Muslims from proselytizing, and the Government enforced this prohibition. The Government requires permission for the construction of new places of worship and prohibits non-Muslims from holding elected office. The Muslim holy days of Eid al-Adha, Muharram, and Eid al-Fitr are public holidays. Other religious groups in the country are not negatively affected by their celebration.

The Government does not keep track of an individual's religious identity, and there is no law that requires religious groups to register with the state. After the ruling party tried to put forward a Jewish parliamentary candidate, the General Election Committee adopted a policy barring all non-Muslims from running for Parliament. Chapter 2, Article 106 of the constitution further notes that the president of the republic must "practice his Islamic duties."

Public schools provide instruction in Islam but not in other religions; however, Muslim citizens can attend private schools that do not teach Islam. Almost all non-Muslim students in the country are foreigners and attend private schools.

### Restrictions on Religious Freedom

Government policy and practice contributed to the generally free practice of religion; however, there were some restrictions.

Government actions to counter the increase in political violence restricted some practice of religion. In January 2006, for the second year, the Government banned the celebration of Ghadeer Day (a holiday celebrated by Shi'a Muslims) in parts of the Saada Governorate. During the reporting period, the Government reportedly also intensified its efforts to stop the proliferation of Houthism by limiting the

hours that mosques were permitted to be open to the public, closing down what the Government believed to be extremist or Twelver-based Zaydi religious institutes, reassigning Imams who were thought to espouse radical doctrine, and increasing surveillance of mosque sermons.

The Government prohibits the proselytization of Muslims. During the period covered by this report, there were reports of persons being temporarily detained for possession of religious materials with the intent to proselytize.

The Government did not allow the building of new public places of worship without previous authorization. At the end of the reporting period, Catholic officials were still waiting for a decision from the Government on whether it would allow an officially recognized Catholic establishment to be built in Sana'a. Church officials did not attribute government action to discrimination.

Weekly services for Catholic, Protestant, and Ethiopian Christians were held throughout Sana'a, Aden and other cities without government interference. Throughout the country, Christian church and Jewish synagogue services were held regularly in private homes or facilities, such as schools, without harassment, and such facilities appeared adequate to accommodate the small numbers involved.

The country maintains regular diplomatic relations with the Vatican. In December 2005 Archbishop Vladimir Goydiv of the Russian Orthodox Church visited in an effort to promote Islamic-Christian dialogue. During his visit, Goydiv met with Vice President Hadi Abd Rabo Mansour, as well as other Government officials and scholars. Public schools provide instruction in Islam but not in other religions; however, Muslim citizens can attend private schools that do not teach Islam.

The ruling General People's Congress (GPC) and the Islah opposition party both drew on Islam as a basis for law in their platforms. The ruling GPC did not exclude members of any religion from its membership. Islah required that a member must be "committed" to Islamic teachings. There were other minor political parties that are Islamic in nature, although it was not clear if they restricted their membership to Muslims.

During the previous reporting period, the Government significantly increased its efforts to prevent the politicization of mosques and schools in an attempt to curb extremism and increase tolerance. Efforts concentrated on monitoring mosques for sermons that incite violence or other political statements that it considers harmful to public security. Private Islamic organizations may maintain ties to international Islamic organizations; however, the Government sporadically monitored their activities through the police and intelligence authorities.

During the reporting period, the Government also continued efforts to close unlicensed schools and religious centers. By the end of the period covered by this report, more than 3,000 unlicensed religious schools had been closed. The Government expressed concern that these schools deviated

from formal educational requirements and promoted militant ideology. The Government also deported foreign students found studying in unlicensed religious schools. Private and national schools are prohibited from teaching courses outside of the officially approved curriculum. The purpose of these actions was to curb ideological and religious extremism in schools.

There were reports that both the Ministry of Culture and the Political Security Office (PSO) monitored and sometimes pulled books that espoused Zaydi-Shiite Islamic doctrine from store shelves after publication. There were also credible reports that authorities banned the publishing of some materials that promoted Zaydi-Shiite Islam. The Government denied that the media was subject to censorship by any security apparatus.

Following the unification of North and South Yemen in 1990, owners of property previously expropriated by the communist government of the former People's Democratic Republic of Yemen were invited to seek restitution of their property. However, implementation has been extremely limited, and very few properties have been returned to previous owners. In exchange for its confiscated property, the Catholic Church requested from the Government a small plot of land in Sanaa on which it would build a Catholic establishment. It was awaiting action on the request at the end of the period covered by this report.

The constitution declares that Islamic Shari'a is the source of all legislation. Some local customs, believed to be part of Shari'a as practiced in the country, are codified in various laws and policies. Some of these laws discriminate against women and persons of other religious groups.

According to the Government's interpretation of Shari'a, Muslim women are not permitted to marry outside of Islam. Under 1992 Personal Status Law No. 20, men are permitted to marry as many as four wives, although very few do so. The law also forbids men from marrying non-Muslims (except for Jews and Christians) or apostates (those who have renounced Islam).

### Abuses of Religious Freedom

Government policy does not prohibit or provide punishment for the possession of non-Islamic religious literature; however, on occasion there were credible reports that persons were harassed by members of the PSO, an organization which reports directly to the President's Office, and by police for possessing such literature (see Restrictions on Religious Freedom). There were also reports that some

***Government actions to counter the increase in political violence restricted some practice of religion. In January 2006, for the second year, the Government banned the celebration of Ghadeer Day (a holiday celebrated by Shi'a Muslims) in parts of the Saada Governorate.***

members of the PSO monitored, harassed, and occasionally censored the mail of missionary groups and those associated with them, ostensibly to prevent proselytizing.

During the reporting period, security officials arbitrarily arrested, detained, and tortured some individuals suspected of proselytizing. There were also credible reports that security officials harassed and detained Muslims affiliated with missionary elements in the Ibb and Jibla areas. Unconfirmed reports attributed such incidents to followers of conservative Salafi Islamic doctrine within the security apparatus.

Under Shari'a as applied in the coun-

try, the conversion of a Muslim to another religion is considered apostasy, which the Government interprets as a crime punishable by death. During the period covered by this report, there were no reported cases in which persons were charged with apostasy or prosecuted for it by government authorities.

During the reporting period, most detained Shabab were reportedly released, but police and security forces continued to detain suspected members of radical Islamist groups. Since 2001 the Government has detained several hundred Islamists who returned to Yemen from Afghanistan and/or Iraq "for questioning." Although most per-

Muslim. Apart from a small but under-terminated number of Christians and Hindus of South Asian origin in Aden, Jews are the only indigenous religious minority. Religious minorities generally lived in harmony with their Muslim neighbors. On April 23, 2006, President Saleh met with a delegation of Yemeni Jews from the Amran governorate to discuss their concerns. According to official media, President Saleh also ordered "concerned bodies" to help ease their plight.

Isolated attacks in recent years by anti-Jewish extremists have convinced most of the country's Jews to relocate to the town of Raida for safety and to sustain their community. The Jewish popula-

***Nearly all of the country's once-sizeable Jewish population has emigrated. Less than 500 Jews were scattered in the northern part of the country, primarily in the vicinity of Raida and Saada.***

***There were approximately 3,000 Christians throughout the country, most of whom were refugees or temporary foreign residents. There were approximately 40 Hindus, who traced their origins to India, living in Aden. There were four churches in Aden, three Roman Catholic and one Anglican. Aden also had one Hindu temple. There were three known functioning synagogues in the north of the country.***

sons were released within days, some reportedly continued to be detained beyond the maximum detention period as terrorist or security suspects.

In May 2006 President Saleh pardoned two imams, Yahia Hussein al-Dailami, sentenced to death, and Muhammed Ahmad Miftah, sentenced to eight years' imprisonment. The two were originally convicted of establishing contacts with Iran for the purpose of harming the country. The two men publicly opposed the Government's action in Saada and formed the Sana'a Youth Organization, a Zaydi religious-based group that supported Houthism. Both men maintained that they only advocated peaceful dissent against government action in Saada.

During the same month, the Government released more than 200 Houthi rebel detainees. It was unclear how many of those detained participated in the renewed March 2005 rebellion against the Government. Although some of those detained were held for their affiliation with Houthi's religious teachings, the arrests appeared to have been politically, not religiously, motivated. All released detainees pledged not to participate in any future rebellion. The release followed a September 2005 general amnesty and promise of compensation for all detainees held as a result of the Saada conflict. In March 2006 state-run media announced the release of 630 Houthi supporters after 80 members of Parliament had visited the war-affected areas in Saada.

Throughout the reporting period, the Government continued to sponsor a dialogue with the Shabab and Islamist detainees. The dialogues were led by Islamic scholars in an attempt to arrive at an understanding by which detainees are released in exchange for repentance of past extremism; denunciation of terrorism; and commitments to obey the laws and government, respect non-Muslims, and refrain from attacking foreign interests. The program has had limited success.

### Forced Religious Conversion

There were no reports of forced religious conversion, including of minor U.S. citizens who had been abducted or illegally removed from the United States, or of the refusal to allow such citizens to be returned to the United States.

### Section III. Societal Abuses and Discrimination

The generally amicable relationship among religious groups in society contributed to religious freedom.

The country is predominantly

tion has diminished significantly over the last fifty years from tens of thousands to a few hundred due to voluntary emigration.

There were no reported incidents of violence or discrimination between the adherents of Zaydi and Shafa'i Islam, the two main orders of Islam practiced in the country. There has been a decrease in tensions between the Government and mostly Zaydi population after fighting subsided in the northern governorate of Saada. The Government also made attempts to reconcile with the citizens of Saada through reconstruction efforts and dialogue. Religiously motivated violence was neither incited nor tolerated by the Islamic clergy, except for a small, politically motivated clerical minority, often with ties to foreign extremist elements.

During the reporting period, there were sporadic reports of violence initiated by Salafi elements who were attempting to take control of moderate and Sufi mosques around the country. In September 2005 an unidentified German citizen living in the Hadramaut Governorate was accused of proselytizing and had his home and car set on fire. There were also unconfirmed reports that followers of Ismaili Islamic teachings were occasionally harassed and forbidden entry to mosques affiliated with Salafi followers.

As part of its campaign against religious extremism, the Government also took action to improve conditions that affected societal attitudes on religious freedom. In May 2006 the Ministry of Endowment and Guidance conducted a six-day training course for 500 imams to promote principles of moderation and religious tolerance.

Christian clergy, who ministered to the foreign community, were employed in teaching, social services, and health care.

### Section IV. U.S. Government Policy

The U.S. government discusses religious freedom issues with the Government as part of its overall policy to promote human rights. The U.S. embassy maintained an active dialogue on human rights concerns with the Government, NGOs, and others. Embassy officers, including the ambassador, met periodically with representatives of the Jewish and Christian communities during the reporting period. During the year, the U.S. government also sponsored a prominent judge involved with religious dialogue to participate in a program in the United States on promoting interfaith dialogue.



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# Students with special needs lag behind

By: Taiz Bureau

Educational officials should work toward setting plans and strategies that can enhance the educational process and achieve the development goals. Incorporating deaf and mute students into schools has not served the interest of these students.

Three years ago, in the governorate of Taiz, it was decided that deaf and mute students should join public schools. But this decision was a failure as the students' basic needs were not met, and their educational level didn't improve since then, according to education workers. Lack of qualified teachers, classrooms, audible means and funding are the main problems for this group of students.

Afrah Mughales, principal of Senah Educational Complex, said incorporating the deaf and mute into Taiz's schools is still insufficient, although incorporating these students into schools has psychological and social benefits. "Atop the needs of this group of people are qualified teachers, appropriate curriculums, special teaching means, and audible tools, along with making these needs sufficiently available," she added.

Mughales pointed out that there should be a teacher for every eight

people in this group. "The more students there are, the more the situation becomes difficult for their teacher, and so the desired [educational] results can't be achieved."

Mughales said that the lack of transportation for deaf and mute students, who come from various localities, adds to the hardship of the parents.

Female students [both deaf and mute] study at Senah Educational Complex, while the boys go to another school known as Al-Shaab. These two schools can't help these students receive education adequately, Al-Mughales said, adding that the solution to this problem is to set national plans and make all resources available, including funding, for deaf and mute schools.

According to Mughales, the Education Office has made efforts to encourage families to educate their children with special needs. "But still it is insufficient support. Charitable associations, whether local or foreign, don't support public schools, but rather, deal with and support the fund of the disabled, which in turn deals only with those associations that are independent, thus excluding public schools."

## Ignored group

There are families that complain about the miserable situation in



They can't speak, but the students welcomed YT reporter with friendly gestures of their hands.

which their children live. Mohammed Salem Al-Shameri, a parent with five disabled children, is not satisfied with the current situation of his children, who he says suffer terribly. Two sons and three daughters are all deaf and mute. Al-Shameri recalls that three years ago all students with special needs studied in a special institute, supervised by Hael Saeed Anam Group of Companies, and their educational level was perfect. "But the governor and assistant secretary general of the local councils issued a

decision, whereby these students are to join public schools. These students with special needs have become lost since then as their educational level is not as perfect as it was before," he added.

Rehab Muhsen's mother explains her daughter faces difficulties reaching Senah Educational Complex because she doesn't live in the same village. "On her way to school, she is teased and harassed, which leads her to leave school."

Education workers, meanwhile,



confirm the mute and deaf students lack appropriate facilities that would help them continue their education. They say even audible means are not available, warning of a deteriorated educational level for these students if the situation is to remain the same.

Amerah Al-Badani, who is a supervisor at Senah Educational Complex, says the education workers as well as students with special needs suffer from lack of sufficient teachers and classrooms.

"That is why the situation remains

deficient. Students' learning and performance is weak, which adds to the burden of teachers." Al-Badani affirms that in the absence of basic needs, a lot of activities for deaf and mute students will be cancelled.

Manal Al-Ashwal, who trains deaf and mute students, agrees that basic requirements are not available for these students. Her efforts were made in vain as she kept asking the Education Office and civil society organizations to make funds available.

# Camel racing continues to be child free

ABU DHABI, 24 Dec 2006 (IRIN) - From a distance, a small boy-like shape can be seen bobbing up and down frantically on the back of a camel. On closer inspection, that strange object is, in fact, a robot and not a child.

Until last year, hundreds of children were recruited into the centuries-old Arab sport of camel racing because of their low weight and height, which meant the camels could run faster.

Many children suffered injuries such as broken legs and hands from falling off camels, which can run at up to 30km per hour.

The Worst Forms of Child Labour Convention, which was passed in 1999, considers as a worst form of child labour "work which, by its nature or the circumstances in which it is carried out, is likely to harm the health, safety or morals of children."

There are seven main human rights treaties, which have several Articles on children's rights but the UAE has signed (on February 1997) and with some reservations, only the Convention on the Rights of the Child. It has not signed two very important treaties which have Articles on children's rights. These are the Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights and the Covenant on Civil and Political Rights, which are both bound by international law.

However, in June 2005 the UAE

issued a law banning the use of children under the age of 18 from racing camels. Violators face jail terms of up to three years and/or a fine of 50,000 dirhams (US \$13,670). To date, 1,077 child jockeys have been repatriated, mainly to Pakistan. Other source countries for camel jockeys in the UAE included Bangladesh, Mauritania and Sudan.

In May 2005, the United Nations children's agency UNICEF signed an agreement with the UAE to repatriate children formerly involved in camel racing and ensure that they are rehabilitated into their societies. This involves giving the children access to basics such as education and family life, which they were previously denied.

The UAE government has now allocated US \$9 million to help in this rehabilitation process.

"I see this decision as a real opportunity for all the former jockeys to get back some hope that will help them to reintegrate into their communities and benefit from educational and vocational training programs that will advance their future," Rima Salah, UNICEF Deputy Executive Director, said on Tuesday.

UNICEF has been monitoring camel racing in the UAE since the ban last year.

"We are now done with phase one of the project which is full

repatriation, and we have achieved a 97 percent success rate of re-uniting the children with their families," said Omar Shehadeh, Regional Donor Relations Officer for UNICEF in Dubai.

"Phase two is monitoring race tracks in case we come across any more children. But overall, the UAE did its utmost and we are very happy with the results so far."

Locally made robot jockeys are now the in thing.

"The robot is cheaper. It costs between 500 and 2,000 dirhams [US



\$136 to \$545] and there are no other costs like salary, food and clothes," said Abdullah Moubarek al-Muhairi, head of the camel racing association at Watbah, the main camel racing track in the capital, Abu Dhabi.

"There is also no danger. Before, some of the children used to fall off and injure themselves, but now we don't have this worry," al-Muhairi told IRIN at the track.

There were once more than 200 children working on this track and farm, which is home to some 100 camels, according to officials.

Former child jockeys used to reside in farms attached to the race track, where they would tend to the camels when not racing them.

The children's days would be spent feeding and cleaning the animals rather than getting an education and they were told to keep their weight down so the camels could run faster when they raced.

On average, said UNICEF's Shehadeh, a child camel jockey could earn between US \$200 and \$400 a month net income, with most of their earnings sent back to their families.

"The whole problem is the poverty in the original countries," said



Camel races at Suwaihan. Source: UAE Staff Photo Competition/04.

Shehadeh. "They have large families so parents send one child away who can make money for the family."

The children are recruited by traffickers in the countries they come from and sent to the UAE.

An important part of UNICEF's project is to promote vocational training in the communities from which the former child jockeys came.

"We want to bring these children back to education because if they want to earn more than \$300, they need a proper education to get a much higher salary in a less risky job in the future," said Shehadeh.

Now, instead of a flailing child, camels in the UAE are ridden by small robots which are tied onto camels by hand. The robot jockey has a whip attached, which is run by a drill motor and can be activated by a remote control device - similar in size and shape to a car alarm activator.

Weighing approximately three kilos, specialists say the robot is a good substitute for a child as it will never be too heavy for the animal to carry and it does not greatly affect the camel's performance in a race.

"The whip is only used towards the end of the track," al-Muhairi said.



A camel race in Doha, Qatar July 2005 for the first time featured robots at the reins. Nationalgeographic.com

اجمل التهاني والتبريكات نزفها للشباب /  
فبأمر عبد الله البشير  
بمناسبة دخولة القفص الذهبي  
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# The reality of education, authority and opposition stances

By: Abdullah Muslih

Education in Yemen is supererogatory among interests of the regime and society too. Despite verbal recognition regarding its importance and necessity, education is lowest on the scale of priorities as we actually place it last.

Education comes after politics, the army, the economy, etc., as a cut supplement or an uncompleted addition and we do this without comprehending that education is the key to all of those fields. Ignorant politics is like cutting firewood at night, an illiterate economy is like fortunetelling and an ignorant army actually is a recipe for collective suicide. As long as we place education at the lower scale of fields, we'll remain behind other nations.

The authority considers education a heavy burden upon its shoulders, while the opposition views such educational shortcomings and failures as rich material for criticism. The media deal with the education issue as a teacher deals with the seventh hour of his work, parents use the education card as a fig leaf to cover their parental defects and students swear that the classroom is the first step in organized ignorance.

Education is a social issue all must consider, beginning with the authority, represented by the Ministry of Education, through to the opposition with its educational offices and ending with education unions.

In considering the Ministry of

Education's efforts, we can see schools spread throughout Yemen's governorates and districts, but not all over villages, as officially claimed. Despite millions of dollars and billions of riyals, such schools remain insufficient and unable to accommodate the masses of students.

Yemeni schools also suffer numerous deficiencies at the human and material levels, including deep shortages in practical education supplies because there are unsuitable buildings or classrooms to contain the number of students, rare curricula similar to rarity of historical manuscripts, and insufficient and unqualified teachers and headmasters.

In addition to unused laboratories – even in the memories of science teachers – some complain about such laboratories' non-existence, while others complain about inability to deal with existing instruments and gases, which have become puzzles for them. Most 'fortunate' school laboratories contain nothing but tiles and water taps.

Added to this are non-existent libraries, technological means and computer workshops, not to mention social experts, playgrounds, medical clinics, sports fields and the internet. So many requirements remain as dreams listed in anticipated education plans for 2020.

Students enrolled in colleges of education are those who received low grades in secondary school; thus, their outputs undoubtedly and mostly are lower than the minimum efficiency and the love of a profession they've

chosen without any desire. If a teacher is cross-eyed, he'll surely produce blind pupils, especially given the lack of qualifying and training courses, despite numerous statements, agreements and conferences of so-called joint cooperation with several countries.

Since its establishment, the Ministry of Education has been unable to commit itself to the school calendar it prepares; thus, it changes it more than four times a year due to national holidays and those regarding political and religious occasions. That's the role of the Ministry of Education run by the ruling party.

As for opposition parties' role in education, it's even feeble than the authority's strand. If the authority possesses only a thin strand, then the opposition possesses imaginary strands in this regard. For example, education offices don't exist in 99 percent of such opposition parties.

In the best instance, the education issue will be locked in the drawers of those parties with individual visions and electoral programs simply for propaganda and not released until such parties come to power under the pretext that education office tasks aren't implementable without possessing the means of authority.

Some claim that the common denominator between educational leadership and opposition leadership is investing in private education and that the two parties have struck an economic deal.

Source: NewsYemen.net

## Eradicating illiteracy reduces development costs

By: Mohammed Al-Ariqi

Illiteracy remains a major impediment to Yemen's development plans and programs and a shame against all official and civilian forces and activities, each intellectual and every individual realizing this plague's dangers. Many problems and aspects of social backwardness reproduce and spread because illiteracy has taken root among large sectors of society.

In searching for causes leading to negative practices and numerous aspects of life, we find that illiteracy, deteriorating education and poverty play great and major roles. However, illiteracy plays the greater role in slowing the effect of plans, programs and policies aimed at improving situations and general life in society.

Yemen has formulated plans, strategies and policies in numerous areas, including family planning, reproductive health, water rationing, combating pollution and preventing infectious diseases. However, the goals of such strategies mostly conflict with loss of awareness and illiteracy's domination over a large proportion of its population, especially in the countryside.

An annual book by the Higher Education Council regarding 2004-2005 education indicators in Yemen

revealed that total illiteracy among those aged 15 and up amounted to 5,484,114, with women comprising 3,678,516, and existing mainly in the countryside.

What doubles the illiteracy proportion is the Yemeni education system's inability to accommodate all of those children ages 6-14 who are at the age for basic education, let alone tangible increases in school truancy at this basic level, which degrades what little they've received due to insufficient experience and those few skills gained in the process of eradicating their illiteracy, besides the low quality of what they've learned.

Such education hasn't been of a standard that would help such school truants not return to their illiteracy. This situation represents a tributary adding to the illiteracy proportion, coupled with the low level of parental awareness.

However, the report didn't overlook improvement in efforts to fight illiteracy by increasing the number of illiteracy eradication centers during 2004-2005 to 913, as compared to 2001-2002, as well as increasing the number of classes for that purpose.

Despite appreciation for and consideration of all of these efforts, the battle to fight illiteracy didn't seem to affect it strongly, as its proportion remains high,

especially among women, who must receive ample attention and sincere efforts because they comprise half of society, as well as being an essential axis in the process of change for the better.

Advanced societies have begun fighting illiteracy of another type of illiteracy, i.e., illiteracy in using communication means in both education and modern professions, whereas we're now demanded to hasten ending illiteracy in reading and writing via innovative and effective ways and methods instead of traditional methods.

I heard from a colleague the idea of "a village without illiteracy," which one Yemeni governorate has implemented. The idea is based on adopting an initiative wherein the efforts of the area's sons are directed toward conducting an illiteracy eradication program for adult villagers, including women who've been deprived of educational opportunities in the past. Such people won't leave the village, but once they complete their task, the initiative will be taken to another village and so on.

Before us are many ways and means that we could direct seriously so as to uproot illiteracy in the shortest time. The mechanism to implement this only requires that the social administration translate words into action.

Source: Al-Thori newspaper

### Letters to the Editor

#### My wish for the year 2007

Locally, I wish from Allah, Most Gracious Most Merciful to protect our land, people and president from vicious men, vampires, vandalize men, corrupters and corruptive men as well as, I hope from our big-hearted H.E. Ali Abdullah Saleh, the pioneer of the modern wake of Yemen and the maker of achievement to put end to the injustice, oppression, lack of security, discrimination, unsecured pay, low wages, unequal opportunities, witlings and damaged medical, social, educational and economical situations.

All the nations know that the great men command all respect and you are the commander of these people, which you can correct the above mentioned points by:

1. Put the able men and women in the right positions instead of out positions
2. To give the important posts according to the scientific bases to help and promote the rising generation according to modern scientific bases and modern technology
3. Rebuild our damaged medical, dental conditions suffering from strange customs, Gresham's law.

Frankly, we need well-qualified men and women in the important posts who are deeply involved in people's lives and problems. We need physicians who attempt to return the human right message to render a great service and to fight forcefully against "know-it-all in one week" medical delegations from abroad either for operations or for teaching. And old curricula and teaching programs in our universities which become unique education in either developed or developing countries as well as fighting for:

1. Revision committees to review and monitor license and govern the national certifying board for special area of medical and dental practice
2. Selecting a head to any specialist groups in every governorate (Head physician)
3. Presidencies (Chairmanships) medical and dental committees to all specialist groups
4. Advisory committee compose of representations of various branches (more than 34)
5. Compulsory registration centers in the all governorate
6. Rehabilitation centers (regional)
7. Compulsory vocational training, refreshment training and periodic courses

8. Foundation universities for medical and dental hospitals
9. Only specialists in the private sector could be granted license
10. Annual monitoring, control activities for the Yemeni Drugs Fund and authorities

With the forenamed, in my opinion and in good faith, we will remain in the bondage of backwardness, ignorance, superstitions, outside time and history.

Regionally, I hope from all Arabic leaders to attempt and attend to their conscience to rescue the glory of this great nation and benefit from the history, which usually repeats itself.

On the international, my wish is that all countries will help each other to raise their standard of living and make full use of their raw materials, while maintaining the right to become independent according to the UN charter. I also hope the UN to become the one place where all countries can discuss all their problems instead of the White House and its Vito power. Imperialism and evil should be ended and all countries must help each other to get rid of foreign control. I wish from strong countries to respect the freedom of other countries and not interfere in its national affairs.

Mohsen Alemad  
dralimad@hotmail.com

#### Yemeni British Relations: Horizons and Dimensions

Some people might think about England negatively because of the near history precisely when United Kingdom Government was given the delegation right by the United Nations in order to occupy Aden in 1839. They are not realistic enough to be able to grasp that it was in the past and buried and we live today life with their own private circumstances.

I have to say to those that the direction of Britain politics towards Yemen has been completely changed and you should go out of the empty circle which had been created during long time since 1948. We can find these changes obviously in the daily physical moments. For instance, the key role which was played by the British Embassy in arranging and hosting the Donors Conference which the president Ali Abdullah Salih attended on 13 November. This achievement reflects the wise diplomacy of the British Embassy in hastening one new step in considering Yemen of Gulf Council. In addition, we cannot ignore the financial and moral participation of the

British Council, the cultural attaché of British Embassy, in collaboration with Yemeni Ministry of Education programme of setting up English Language to be an obligatory subject in primary schools and in many awareness projects such as the climate change. Besides, the Embassy organises a yearly reception for members of the BYS, British Yemeni Society in London, opening up the opportunity of getting them together with members of the YBFA, Yemeni British Friendship Association in Sana'a. Consequently, one direct or in direct outcome of these efforts invites Yemeni and British businessmen for investment in Yemen. For example, Faiza AlBreriki is one businesswoman who is lately came from England and investing huge sum in qualifying youths and many other important issues. I really wonder from those who are still in that empty circle of enmity conception; however these above mentioned examples are obvious. A rational person must look attentively and focus on these enormous attitudes from the British part, and I am sure that he is going to confirm the sense of the obligation of exchanging them with similar horizons and dimensions that could be back to our homeland benefits. Finally, I would like to address this message particularly to youths who are against the idea of dealing with the west in general and the UK in particular. I invite these brothers to discuss this issue somewhere in Sana'a University or wherever.

Sami Sallam  
sallamsami@yahoo.com

#### Journalism

Writing for a newspaper would be a wonderful job because you write about everything around you: people's problems, needs, wishes and views. Such writings are messages to responsible individuals.

However, it has a negative side if you write something and your readers cheer you, but your deeds don't live up to your words. Your readers then change 100 percent and you'll be alone and find that no one likes you or knows you.

It's a really nice job, but you must be very honest with your readers, not like most who write to highlight some or congratulate others. Thus, they forget the nation and the readers who are waiting to read solutions, about which they've hoped for several years, or about project openings – but tangible projects, not just foundation stones.

Do'a Al-Tuhamy



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E-mail: editor@yementimes.com

Advertisement: ads@yementimes.com

Letters: letters@yementimes.com

Publisher & Editor-in-Chief  
Nadia Abdulaziz Al-Saqqaf

Head of News Dept.  
Mohamed bin Sallam

Head of Design Dept.  
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Khidhr, Mohammed  
Shadad, Nisreen

#### Copy Editor

Dana Patterson

#### Interns

Al-Harazi, Mahmoud Goffin, Glyn

#### Offices

Aden Bureau:  
Ridhwan Alawi Ahmed  
Tel: +967 (2) 347-057, 346596  
Fax: +967 (2) 347056  
Email: ytaden@y.net.ye

Hadramout Correspondent:  
Saeed Al-Batati  
Mobile (+967) 77383733  
Email: albatati88@yahoo.com  
Fax: +967 (05) 360303

Taiz Bureau:  
Imad Ahmed Abdullah  
Tel: +967 (4) 217-156,  
Telefax: +967 (4) 217157  
P.O.Box: 5086, Taiz  
Email: yttaz@y.net.ye

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Jawdat Said

# Islam as a violence-free religion

**Philosopher Jawdat Said, little known in the West, has been propagating a vision of Islam free of violence for the past 40 years. His books have been widely read and discussed by Islamic activists in the Arab world.**

Published in 1966, the book "The Doctrine of the First Son of Adam: The Problem of Violence in the Islamic World" was the first publication in the modern Islamic movement to present a concept of non-violence. Now in its fifth edition, the book is still available today.

It was written by Jawdat Said, born in Syria in 1931, who moved to Egypt at a young age to study the Arabic language at Azhar University. While there, he took an active part in the cultural life of Egypt. He was also closely connected to the Islamic movement of that period.

Even then, Said warned against the negative effects of the violence being carried out by the Islamic movement in Egypt, and wrote his book as a direct response to the writings of Sayyid Qutb, who died in 1966 and is considered the father of militant Islam.

Other intellectuals of the Islamic world also turned against Qutb at the time, including for example Hasan al-Hudaybi, the leader of the Egyptian Muslim Brotherhood.

In the early 1980s, the Muslim Brotherhood in Syria began – in spite of Said's warnings – to rebel against the government of Hafez al-Asad. However, the revolt was put down with much bloodshed, and ended in 1982 with a massacre in the city of Hama.

Following this defeat, the movement began seriously entertaining the idea of demilitarization. At the time, the writings of Jawdat Said became increasingly popular in Islamic activist circles.

**Said's concept of non-violence**

In the introduction to his book "The Doctrine of the First Son of Adam," Jawdat Said places himself in the tradition of Islamic reformers such as Abd al-Rahman al-Kawakibi (who died in 1902) and Muhammad Iqbal (who died in 1938), the mystic poet and philosopher from India.

Said also stressed the importance of the Algerian writer Malik bin-Nabi (who died in 1973) and his book, "The Conditions of Renaissance."

What these philosophers have in common is an emphasis on reformation within Islamic societies. They see the problems in their societies as the result more of unfortunate internal developments than of colonial intervention.

Said's works about non-violence are part of a series of writings that deal with personal and societal problems, and that serve as a guidepost for Islamic activists. They primarily address Islamic youth, and present an Islamic way of life that eschews violence.

**Non-violence as a divine commandment**

Said sees this approach as grounded in the Koran. In Sure 5, verses 27–31, one can read how the "God-fearing Abel" even declined to defend himself against his brother, although in the end, Cain murdered him.

Said sees this is a quest of mankind, to react "like Adam's firstborn son, who did not defend himself against the attacks of his brother." The non-violence exhibited by Adam's son represents, in Said's view, "a position to be aspired to by all mankind, and adhering to it is one of God's commandments."

In addition, Said refers to the stories

of the various different prophets in the Koran and points out that the only charges they were accused of was their belief in the one God of creation. None of them, however, attempted to spread his ideas by means of violence.

Said sees this is a clear indication that the practice of violence is incompatible with the core faith of the Koran. But how does Said explain the other verses of Koran that call the faithful to battle?

**Different interpretations of the Koran**

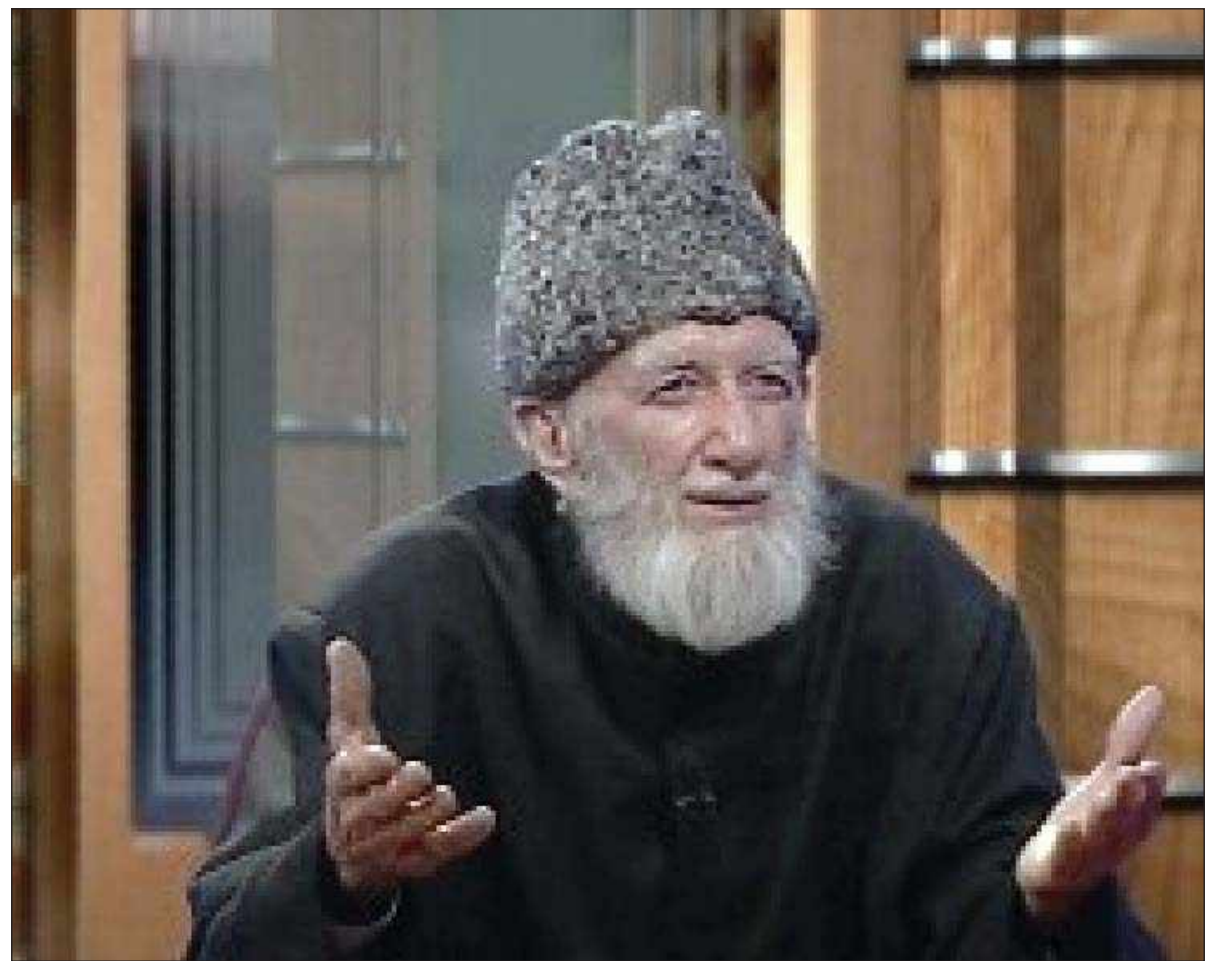
According to Said's view, the Koran specifies two prerequisites for a legitimate war. First, war may only be declared if the opponent defies the fundamental Koranic principle of "no coercion of religion," i.e. if the enemy violates the principle of "freedom of opinion."

Second, the nation that declares war must itself adhere to this principle.

In his 1988 book "Read! For The Lord Your God is Benevolent," Said supports his view of an Islam free of violence by developing an important approach to the interpretation of the Koran.

Said points out that the various different interpretations of the text of the Koran presented a challenge even for the early followers of the Prophet Mohammad.

He quotes the fourth Caliph, Ali ibn Abi Talib, who in a disagreement with his opponents (the Kharijites) demanded disregarding the texts because each group had its own way of interpreting them. Instead, practical aspects should be discussed in an effort to reach a satisfying conclusion. Said concludes from this that the Koran challenges people to search for truth in the real world and not in the texts of the Koran. The call to "wander the earth" is repeated 13 times in the Koran. Said thus concludes that this is a part of the divine revelation: to search for knowledge about the world, its history and its societies. Therein



**Jawdat Said challenges people to search for knowledge on earth, and not in the verses of the Koran.**

lies for him the "profound meaning and wonder of the Koran."

**New interpretations of the Koran**

The demand to "wander" is coupled with the demand to read. After all, "Read!" is the first word that was revealed to the prophet Muhammad. Said interprets this as a call to become familiar with the history of the human experience, which is primarily accessible through reading.

Supporting his view with approaches from the Islamic tradition, Said thus paves the way for a new interpretation of the Koran that no longer emphasizes the analysis of the

sacred texts but rather places human experience in the forefront.

For this reason, Said's interpretations were sharply attacked by conservative thinkers. One of them, Adel al-Tal, wrote a book in 1995 in which he accused Said of being a "materialist in an Islamic disguise."

**Conflict between science and violence**

But to this day, Said has remained true to the text of the Koran. He quotes the Koran often to support his view of non-violence.

The passage he quotes most often is

Sure 2, verses 30-33, in which the angels protest God's decision to put a successor on earth. Their argument: This representative will do nothing but create trouble and spill blood. In response, God teaches Adam "all things and their names."

Said understands this passage as a symbolic dispute between science and violence. In the language of the verses of the Koran, this means a dispute between "naming names" and "creating trouble and spilling blood."

Mankind, Said concludes, should and can use its God-given ability to reason to achieve peace on earth.

Source: Qantara.de

## Game over

Former president Jimmy Carter's new book, Palestine: Peace Not Apartheid, represents a qualitative leap in the way the Palestinian cause and the Arab-Israeli conflict is approached in the US. In the 265 pages of his book, Carter offers an impartial perspective on the history of the Arab-Israeli conflict, relating the truth about peace negotiations that first began during his tenure in 1978.

In chapter 16, entitled "The Wall as Prison", Carter asks whether the status quo, enforced by Israel with US support, encourages Israelis to strive for peace or propose unilateral solutions. He concludes the latter. Through the wall that Israel is building on occupied Palestinian territory, Israel is creating Palestinian ghettos much like those created by the apartheid regime in South Africa. Carter rejects the Israeli claim that the objective of the wall is security, saying that if it were indeed aimed to prevent Palestinians from executing attacks in Israel, it would have been constructed on the Green Line. The fact is that the wall divides Palestinian villages, tears apart families, and deprives many thousands of Palestinians of their farms and orchards.

Carter doesn't stop at a blanket condemnation: he delves into the detail. The prison-like wall, he notes, cut off one third of the water resources of Qalqiliya, home to 45,000 Palestinians. The same is true of Bethlehem, with its population of 170,000. Carter notes that the American judge on the International Court of Justice (ICJ) – the only judge to vote against the court's ruling that the wall was illegal – reiterated the right of Palestinians to self-determination, as a people under



**By: Ibrahim Nafie**

occupation. Carter adds that while the ICJ recognised Israel's right to build checkpoints to protect its population, it stipulated that they should be on Israeli territory or on a recognised border. Under international humanitarian law, and on multiple counts, the court ruled the wall illegal.

According to Carter, not only is Israel's wall illegal, it is a racist act that is an obstacle to political efforts towards a just, comprehensive, permanent settlement in the Middle East. Indeed, the very existence of the wall pushes the Israeli government towards unilateral solutions, which have nothing to do with peace.

Carter's book also addresses Israel's destructive war, waged with US support, on Lebanon in July and August. Carter believes that Israel's war, allegedly launched as a response to Hizbullah's capture of two of its soldiers, did not target that organisation so much as all of Lebanon, killing some 1,000 innocent civilians and leaving 1.4 million homeless. Despite the pleas of Lebanese Prime Minister Fouad Al-Siniora, Washington supported Israel's aggression on Lebanon, intentionally blocking all international efforts to produce a UN Security Council resolution for a ceasefire. Carter believes that the unjustified war only

increased the influence of Hizbullah around the Arab and Islamic world -- indeed, even among Lebanese Christians.

Carter also condemns how Israel exploited international concern with the war in Lebanon to wage a campaign of destruction and death in the Gaza Strip. During the 33 days of the Lebanon war, 200 Palestinians were killed, among them 44 children. Carter concludes that Israel's war on Lebanon and its simultaneous campaign in Gaza weakened pro-peace forces on the Arab side and allowed militant forces to gain new ground and wider public support. Carter holds the Bush administration responsible for Israel's war and for weakening peace forces in the region, as well as for increasing hatred of the US in the Arab and Islamic worlds.

Carter later elucidates what he sees as the basic conditions for a political settlement in the region that can lead to a permanent peace. He includes guarantees of Israel's security through Arab recognition of Israel's right to exist in secure, recognised borders. In turn, Israel must settle on defining its limits within pre-June 1967 borders; any change in these borders must be made through negotiations and in line with the principle of equity. Finally, it is necessary to respect the sovereignty of the region's countries within their recognised borders.

What Carter expects from Arab countries is already enshrined in the initiative proposed at the Beirut summit in 2002. All that remains is for the US administration to heed Carter's counsel and defer to his experience.

Ibrahim Nafie is a journalist and perivous editor in chief of al-Ahram weekly.

source: weekly.ahram.org.eg

## Negotiate with Assad

The Americans believe that they are blockading the Syrian government politically by preventing Israel from negotiating with it. This is the completely wrong way of thinking and in fact, the opposite is closer to the truth.

Damascus continued to boast that it would not negotiate or accept any peace with Israel, at least verbally on the Arab stage, and therefore built a political axis for many decades, an axis of rejection that magnetically attracted fundamentalist and leftist groups and gave the Syrian regime some kind of legitimacy built on pan-Arab claims.

Accordingly, when the Syrian president announces openly that he is willing to negotiate with Israel directly, he is in fact making an important and serious "concession" in his country's political calculations and the region in general.

It may be the case that President Bashar al-Assad is not serious in his offer of negotiations and peace but rather only seeks to buy time and frustrate the American political plan against his country, which he may have just started to realize will be applied to him sooner or later under the banner of the international tribunal, the fight against terror, or the undermining of the Iranian alliance.

Perhaps the president sought to stop the train that he has realized is heading towards danger (perhaps it is not too late), and offered a package of concessions that included cooperating to stop the terrorists who are used to passing through the Saudi borders and opening an embassy in Baghdad, going a step further than other countries such as Saudi Arabia which refuses to reopen its embassy there.

Finally, he also announced that he



**By: Abdul Rahman Al-Rashed**

is willing to negotiate with the Israeli enemy.

Whether the president wants to stop the sudden arrival of the train or whether it is a political awakening and a change towards normality and the abandoning of radicalism, the matter should be taken seriously.

In my opinion, the Americans made the mistake from day one when they opposed negotiations three years ago and prevented Israel from developing a small channel of communication that began between the son of a Syrian minister and Omri Sharon, the son of the former Israeli prime minister. Washington was opposed to what it considered rewarding Damascus, its opponent.

The catastrophic mistake here is the belief that negotiation is reward rather than a huge risk on Syria's part. The Americans ought to have continued their disagreements with the Syrian regime over Iraq, Lebanon, Iran, and others but should have allowed Israel to begin negotiations with Damascus.

Had the negotiations succeeded, which in itself is not easy politically, then this would have meant a serious turnaround in the notion of the political region. Peace with Assad will be more important than Arafat's agreement in Oslo and just as important as Camp David.

If it succeeds, it will eliminate the most important factor of tension in the Palestinian issue, the source of which is Syria. Therefore it is wrong that the United States confuses its disagreement with Syria over Iraq on one hand and Syria's desire to establish peace on the other.

It is not even an exaggeration to say that the long conflict with Israel is the cause of Syrian political frustration. The Israeli withdrawal from south Lebanon caused major embarrassment for the Syrians and was considered proof that violence is the best policy in the region.

The Syrians believe that their compliance with the truce since the disengagement-agreement with Israel on the Golan Heights for more than 30 years has produced nothing but neglect for the Syrians, whilst those who fought Israel with forces like Hezbollah in the south were given back almost all of their territories and became heroes.

Any Syrian would ask the logical question: Why should we respect the peace since forceful confrontation achieves better results?

Though we disagree with Damascus over its dangerous alliance with Iran against other Arab countries in the region, its support for the chaos in Lebanon, and its major responsibility in the terror that afflicts Iraq, we must help Syria solve its main issue by liberating the occupied territories in the Golan Heights rather than the Shebaa Farms.

*Abdul Rahman Al-Rashed is the general manager of Al-Arabiya television. Mr. Al Rashed is also the former editor-in-chief of Asharq Al-Awsat, and the leading Arabic weekly magazine, Al Majalla*

Source: www.aawsat.com.



# Drug Dealers vs. Drug Businessmen

By: **Raidan A. Al-Saqqaf**  
*alsaqqaf@gmail.com*  
 and **Mahyub Al-Kamali**

**H**ealth is a basic objective of development, and access to healthcare is a fundamental human right. Therefore state subsidy of healthcare services and the investing in healthcare infrastructure is essential to realizing human development on any level, regardless of the per-capita purchasing parity, size of the economy or political development for the purpose of the wellbeing of the society. Economic theory indicates that providing better healthcare services is a prerequisite for increases in productivity, therefore investing in health services is a vital component for growth and development.

Yemeni people suffer from poor living conditions in general, with poverty, gender inequality; poor health and environmental pollution are all factors that attribute to this suffering. One of the prime examples is the availability and pricing of drugs and pharmaceuticals that many people depend on in order to

improve their health and wellbeing. Surveys have indicated that Yemeni patients have a high level of morbidity, with patients suffering from diseases and undesired medical complications in spite of the advanced in drug research and development to produce cures to chronic illnesses.

Yemen Times has surveyed on the subject, and in the process met with Mr. Hassan Abdu who described pharmacists as businessmen above the law, he says “people working in this profession should be humans before being capitalists... indicating that the drugs are not available through the official channels and have to be smuggled into the country through what is known as suitcase businessmen” those are pharmacists who travel aboard Yemen to shop for medicines and then sell them in Yemen with huge margins and no government monitoring.

Mr. Abdullatif Ahmed said, while rushing to exist out of one of the public hospitals, “see how many prescriptions I have, I go to different pharmacies in different locations, each one giving me a different quotation for the drugs and also names and prices of other less-

expensive drugs which can substitute for the drugs listed” he also adds “this gives you the feeling that the drugs you buy are not the cure, they are simply medicines on which you try to get a good bargain on and perhaps buy them at heavy discounts or sudden price hikes attached to the claim that the authorized importer have increased the prices.”

Other opinions point to the notion that decision makers, government officials and wealthy people do not care about the average citizen, monitoring is weak and inefficient, therefore freedom is given to pharmacists to take advantage of the situation and hijack the patients in search of the drug. Najeeb, a pharmacy owner, says it has become a lucrative business, says that if a pharmacy has to support its business by relying on the regulated trade of retailing drugs from manufacturers and authorized importers it would barely cover its expenses. He says that drug smuggling have become such an organized and integral part of the pharmaceutical business to the extent that many pharmacies contract people traveling abroad to buy the medicines, he even said that there is a pharmacy in Frankfurt that

is willing to deliver the drugs requested all the way to Frankfurt airport and sell them to customers who pay cash-on-delivery.

Another source indicated that several drug retailers import what is known as ‘fake drugs’, which are copycat drugs looking very similar to the original brands with a minor difference but having a considerable price difference, making the price-sensitive Yemeni consumer opt for the fake version of the drug under the eyes of government agencies and through us, we as pharmacists find it highly unethical to be involved in such transactions, however, the sale margins are lucrative while having the authorities looking the other way makes us more or less addicted to this sort of business.

There are good sides and bad sides to the health situation in Yemen, on the one hand, the amount of health infrastructure have increased while the nature of services have improved, most tangibly thanks to intensive vaccination programs. Overall progress has been made, however, cretins parts of the ‘healing cycle’ have to be seriously reformed, especially when it comes to the trade in drugs and pharmaceuticals.



Drug smuggling is a lucrative business among pharmacists.

# A new era for Islamic science?

By: **H. T. Goranson**

**F**or a few hundred years, when science and mathematics enjoyed a period of great invention, one region of the world stood out. Masters of these disciplines were revered there, medicine advanced quickly and the average person was curious about how nature worked. Not surprisingly, this region was globally respected.

In the other half of the known planet, scientists were punished and even killed. Mathematics was outlawed as irreligious and alien and later made subservient to religion. The standard of living was low. The prosperous region was the Islamic Middle East, while an ignorant Europe remained poor. Both regions were governed religiously (historians differ about the role and natures of the religions in this

context), but science flourished only in one of them. Now, of course, the roles of the Islamic Middle East and the West are reversed.

Since World War II, the United States has been the world’s undisputed leader in science. Throughout this period, the brightest students were drawn away from their native lands, attracted by superior research universities and opportunities. Until recently, more than half of all mathematics, science and engineering graduate students in the U.S. were foreign-born. Many of these talents stayed after graduation and both industry and government took advantage of this.

Meanwhile, Islamic cultures entered a historical phase in which science was equated with Western influence and eschewed. Even in countries where oil revenues could fuel a significant amount of research, Arab rulers didn’t encourage such investment, with the result that their societies haven’t prospered as much

as they might have.

Recently, a desire for greater political respect has spurred Islamic nations to invest in technology, most visible in Pakistani and Iranian nuclear ambitions. But while such weapons carry political weight, the science behind them is old and mundane. More meaningful is the respect that comes from incubating insights, rather than the products of past discoveries. Imagine the influence that would be generated by a Pakistani institute that was the world leader in cancer research. Would the political rhetoric shift if researchers in Oman discovered a key to suppressing AIDS?

This is one unclaimed opportunity, but another exists and not just for Islamic societies. The U.S. recently has made profound missteps. “Matters of faith” have been substituted for science across government, from the president down. Top researchers have had their reports changed by political

operatives when the facts contradicted official belief. Encouraged by a religiously influenced administration, school systems are shifting their focus from science to “values.”

Since the Sept. 11 2001 terrorist attacks, entry visas are fewer and more difficult to obtain, stanching the flow of young talent into U.S. universities. Major scientific organizations have protested, but without result. At the same time, tax laws have been revised to make investors wealthier in the near term, thus discouraging long-term investment in research. Half a trillion dollars was committed to the war in Iraq, an amount roughly equal to the sponsorship of all basic research in the last thousand years. Even if the U.S. avoids a fundamentalist dark age, it clearly risks losing its global research dominance.

Japan recognized the link between political clout and science in the

1980s. Its chief industrialist, Sony Chairman Akio Morita, and right-wing politician Shintaro Ishihara gave a series of speeches collected and published in a 1986 book, “The Japan That Can Say No,” outlining a national strategy wherein world influence was understood to flow from scientific leadership. The key idea was that military power could be made obsolete if other nations controlled the “food chain” of military technologies. The book’s title refers to Japan’s plan to “say no” to U.S. military influence once Japan controlled key military technologies.

Building a knowledge-based economy using oil wealth clearly is possible. For example, like most southern U.S. states, Texas once was economically poor and declining. Although it had oil revenue, by itself, the flow of dollars into an economy doesn’t boost prosperity as much as one might think. So Texas decided to devote its oil money to an

educational endowment.

Today, that endowment is roughly equal to that of Harvard University and spread among 15 universities. The effect has been staggering, for example, aerospace manufacturing nearly has disappeared from California but is booming in Texas and telecom research centers and consortia have flocked to Texas, even from Canadian telecommunications giant Nortel. Although manufacturing in the U.S. is in crisis, Texas has one of the strongest manufacturing economies in the world.

There’s no reason that the same outcome couldn’t be achieved in the Middle East. First, however, the Islamic world must rediscover and embrace its proud heritage.

*H. T. Goranson is lead scientist of Sirius-Beta Corp and was a senior scientist with the U.S. Defense Advanced Research Projects Agency. Copyright: Project Syndicate, 2006.*

# Will the Dam break in 2007?

By: **Joseph E. Stiglitz**

**T**he world survived 2006 without a major economic catastrophe, despite sky-high oil prices and a Middle East spiraling out of control. But the year produced abundant lessons for the global economy, as well as warning signs concerning its future performance.

Unsurprisingly, 2006 brought another resounding rejection of fundamentalist neo-liberal policies, this time by voters in Nicaragua and Ecuador. Meanwhile, in neighboring Venezuela, Hugo Chávez won an overwhelming electoral: at least he had brought some education and healthcare to the poor barrios, which previously had received little of the benefits of the country’s enormous oil wealth.

Perhaps most importantly for the world, voters in the United States gave a vote of no confidence to President George W. Bush, who will now be held in check by a Democratic Congress.

When Bush assumed the presidency in 2001, many hoped that he would govern competently from the center. More pessimistic critics consoled themselves by questioning how much harm a president can do in a few years. We now know the answer: a great deal.

Never has America’s standing in the world’s eyes been lower. Basic

values that Americans regard as central to their identity have been subverted. The unthinkable has occurred: an American president defending the use of torture, using technicalities in interpreting the Geneva Conventions and ignoring the Convention on Torture, which forbids it under any circumstances. Likewise, whereas Bush was hailed as the first “MBA president,” corruption and incompetence have reigned under his administration, from the botched response to Hurricane Katrina to its conduct of the wars in Afghanistan and Iraq.

In fact, we should be careful not to read too much into the 2006 vote: Americans do not like being on the losing side of any war. It was this failure, and the quagmire into which America had once again so confidently stepped, that led voters to reject Bush. But the Middle East chaos wrought by the Bush years also represents a central risk to the global economy. Since the Iraq war began in the 2003, oil output from the Middle East, the world’s lowest-cost producer, has not grown as expected to meet rising world demand. Although most forecasts suggest that oil prices will remain at or slightly below their current level, this is largely due to a perceived moderation of growth in demand, led by a slowing US economy.

Of course, a slowing US economy constitutes another major global risk. At the root of America’s economic

problem are measures adopted early in Bush’s first term. In particular, the administration pushed through a tax cut that largely failed to stimulate the economy, because it was designed to benefit mainly the wealthiest taxpayers. The burden of stimulation was placed on the Fed, which lowered interest rates to unprecedented levels. While cheap money had little impact on business investment, it fueled a real estate bubble, which is now bursting, jeopardizing households that borrowed against rising home values to sustain consumption.

This economic strategy was not sustainable. Household savings became negative for the first time since the Great Depression, with the country borrowing \$3 billion a day from foreigners. But households could continue to take money out of their houses only as long as prices continued to rise and interest rates remained low. Thus, higher interest rates and falling house prices does not bode well for the American economy. Indeed, according to some estimates, roughly 80% of the increase in employment and almost two-thirds of the increase in GDP in recent years stemmed directly or indirectly from real estate.

Making matters worse, unrestrained government spending further buoyed the economy during the Bush years, with fiscal deficits reaching new heights, making it difficult for the government to step in

now to shore up economic growth as households curtail consumption. Indeed, many Democrats, having campaigned on a promise to return to fiscal sanity, are likely to demand a reduction in the deficit, which would further dampen growth.

Meanwhile, persistent global imbalances will continue to produce anxiety, especially for those whose lives depend on exchange rates. Though Bush has long sought to blame others, it is clear that America’s unbridled consumption and inability to live within its means is the major cause of these imbalances. Unless that changes, global imbalances will continue to be a source of global instability, regardless of what China or Europe do.

In light of all of these uncertainties, the mystery is how risk premiums can remain as low as they are. Especially with the dramatic reduction in the growth of global liquidity as central banks have successively raised interest rates, the prospect of risk premiums returning to more normal levels is itself one of the major risks the world faces today.

*Joseph E. Stiglitz, a Nobel laureate in economics, is Professor of Economics at Columbia University and was Chairman of the Council of Economic Advisers to President Clinton and Chief Economist and Senior Vice President at the World Bank. Copyright: Project Syndicate, 2006.*

## OPINION

## The 2007 price hike

By: **Raidan A. Al-Saqqaf**  
*alsaqqaf@gmail.com*

2006 was a good year, the YemenTimes won three international awards, Yemen demonstrated that it has become a high-development democracy, the donors’ conference met its targets and reforms on almost every level were undergone. 2006 made me more optimistic about my 2007 resolution; perhaps I can achieve more on my personal level as well as advance my career even further.

I am an economist by training; undergoing my PhD in Economic development with the University of Nottingham, I am also a journalist by profession, I was mentored into this profession by my late father, Prof. Abdulaziz Al-Saqqaf, and more than six years down that road I find my self standing today, with a prediction that the next six years will be lucky for me as I start reaping the fruits of my academic hard work and built-up experience.

For Yemen, however, 2007 is predicted to be less lucky. Tensions between the government and the privet sector on the issue of sales tax which the government aims at imposing from January 1st, while the privet sector and the business community insists that the new tax regulation be delayed until the

mattered is settled. Mahfoudh Shammakh, director of the Sana’a Chamber of commerce has indicated that unless the government negotiated with the business community the mechanism to renegotiate the disputed legislation and the mechanism of enforcing it then a total freeze of business operations in protest. He emphasized that the objection isn’t on the theory of the legislation, but the objection is on the mechanism of enforcement.

The law was initially passed in 2001, however, it continues to be stalled, discussed and negotiated seemingly towards the stand-off of today, it’s either the government will stall the legislation for another year to disuses its implementation even further with the business community or another price hike, this time to compensate for the new sales tax.

President Saleh got time and again involved with the issue, ordering the delay of the execution of the legislation in 2005 in order to be restudied and further discussed with the privet sector to get their consent, however, the prime minister looks like if he has made up his mind that the execution will take place and the business community have made it clear that any increases will directly come out of consumers’ pockets. What a way to begin the year.



## Hadramout hosts, wins gold medals at bodybuilding championship

By: Sa'eed Al-Batati

HADRAMOUT, Dec. 26 – From Dec. 19 – 21, Hadramout's Balfaqih Center hosted the seventh individual championship of bodybuilding. Hadramout was not only successful in organizing the event, but also won a number of gold medals and awards.

Hadrami Champions Azi Othman Al-Hadeedi and Mahdi Bazomah, of over and below 80 kg managed to win the gold medals, increasing the total gold medals the governorate received since 2000 to 20.

The championship activities were concluded with a distinct celebration. It was initiated by verses from the Holy Quran and included a show of the bodybuilding sport's skills performed by all governorates' champions, numbering 44. It also included Hadrami singing and dance.

The celebration also witnessed a huge attendance, and the center's offi-



cials were forced to close the door to more fans due to a lack of space.

Abdullah Maghribi, chairman of the General Yemeni Union for Wrestling and Bodybuilding, delivered a speech in which he thanked all of Hadramout's officials, youths and athletes for the hospitality and good preparation.

Maghribi said his union decided to make Hadramout annually host this championship from the Hadramis' interest in the sport.



His union's 2007 activities include six local championships, Hadramout's elite championship and five wrestling championships together with participation in many international, Arab and Asian events.

For his part, Ibrahim Al-Hibshi, Hadramout's Youth and Sport Office General Manager, welcomed the participants from across Yemen, considering the hosting as an award for the governorate and its people and a recognition of the great developments the game witnesses there.

He also felt sorry for those who were unable to watch the celebration, declaring that next year's championship will be conducted in the Hadramout University's Great Hall in order to let all watch the different activities.

### Honoring

At the end of the celebration, the top guests honored the champions, outstanding athletes, judges and media representatives with gold, silver and bronze medals together with money and merit certificates.

## Asia Cup tournament drawings for youth, under-16 teams

By: Ismail Al-Ghabri

The Asian Cup tournament draw for under age 16 teams was conducted end of last month, mating Yemen with Syria, Oman, Qatar, Kazakhstan and Nepal, while the third group consists of Lebanon, Iraq, Saudi Arabia, India, Sri Lanka and Bhutan.

The second group involves Jordan, Kuwait, Bahrain, Iran, Afghanistan and Nepal, while the third group consists of Lebanon, Iraq, Saudi Arabia, India, Sri Lanka and Bhutan.

The United Arab Emirates is mated with Palestine, Tajikistan, Uzbekistan, Turkmenistan and Bangladesh in group No. 4, while China is in the fifth group alongside Mongolia, Macao, Singapore, Guam and the Philippines.

Group No. 6 is formed of champions Japan, Hong Kong, Vietnam, Cambodia, Laos and Indonesia and

group No. 7 is made up of South Korea, Myanmar, Malaysia, East Timor, the Maldives and Australia, while the eighth group includes North Korea, Taiwan and Thailand.

As many as 45 teams applied to participate in the championship. Teams were divided into eight groups and six levels in light of their ranks and standings in previous competition.

The winning and second-place teams from each of the eight groups will qualify for the second round, while winners will qualify for the final group, which involves only three teams.

The draw for the Asian Cup tournament for youth (under age 19) teams was conducted the same day. The tournament is scheduled for 2008 in Saudi Arabia.

War-ravaged Iraq was placed in the

first group alongside the United Arab Emirates, Bangladesh, Sri Lanka and Mongolia, while Iran was mated with Lebanon, Bahrain, Oman, India and Pakistan in the second group.

The third group involves Syria, Qatar, Kazakhstan, Tajikistan, Turkmenistan and Bhutan and group No. 4 is composed of Jordan, Yemen, the Maldives, Thailand, Laos, Myanmar and China, while the fifth group comprises titleholders North Korea, China, Macao, Singapore, Malaysia and East Timor.

The sixth group consists of South Korea, Hong Kong, Vietnam, Indonesia, Guam and Australia.

Group winners and second-place teams will qualify for the second round, while Saudi Arabia automatically will qualify due to hosting the tournament.

## Wushu champion comes home to a hero's welcome but forgets medal

By: Ronilo L. Pamonag

A hero's welcome greeted Asian Games gold medalist Rene Catalan yesterday at the Iloilo Airport.

To his chagrin, however, the 28-year-old Wushu champion forgot the very reason for the welcome.

"I must have left it at my bed at the gym in Metro Manila," Catalan said of his gold medal. "I'm sorry I misplaced my medal," he said after rummaging through his baggage for about 10 minutes and before leaving the airport.

Before going out of the airport terminal building, he kept on apologizing to Sta. Barbara town vice mayor Arnold Delgado.

Catalan was one of the four Filipino gold medalists in the recently concluded 2006 Asian Games in Doha, Qatar.

He instead showed a certification of having bagged the gold in the Wushu event. It was signed by the event's organizing committee.

But that did not take away the smile from Catalan.

"I am very happy because this is my

first time," Catalan reacted to the reception he got at the airport. Hordes of reporters waited at the arrival area.

His mother, 56-year-old Loreta, also felt the same.

"I am happy that my son finally got the recognition he deserved," she said, while waiting for his son's arrival at the airport terminal building. "I've never been so happy before in my life." The 56-year-old sells native foods at the town market for a living. She has 13 siblings, of whom Rene is the 6th. "The only thing I ask of the government is to help my four younger children go to school."

"When I watch him fight on TV, I just sit back and relax," she said, adding that she had just suffered a mild stroke.

From the airport, the motorcade carrying the diminutive gold medalist went around the City. People got out of their houses to take a look at the new hometown hero.

Before proceeding to his hometown of Sta. Barbara, Catalan paid a courtesy call to Governor Niel Tupas, who waited for him at the Provincial Capitol.

At the lobby of the Capitol, Tupas and Board Member Cecilia Capadosa handed a certificate of recognition to Catalan.

"By winning the gold medal, you have brought honor to Iloilo," the governor said. Capadosa assured Catalan that the provincial government will be giving a financial incentive, but they have yet to decide on the amount.

"But for sure, there will be a financial incentive," she stressed.

Catalan, a father of two, confirmed that he was offered the coaching position for the Yemeni Wushu team.

He said that Yemeni sports officials offered him a car and a \$100 monthly allowance on top of a \$1,000 monthly salary.

But he declined the offer, in effect, avoiding what could have been a ridiculous situation where a Filipino-coached Yemeni Wushu team would be facing that of the Philippines.

"They told me that as long as I could fight, I should," Catalan said, quoting what his teammates told him.

Source: [www.thenewstoday.info](http://www.thenewstoday.info)

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# Which is the nightmare?

By: Salwa Yehia Aleryani  
Zolaykha2003@yahoo.com

It was one week since the beginning of this month. On that day I recieved my salary. Years ago I used to be quite satisfied and happy on days like that. Now it seems those were feelings we will no longer experience.

Events, reality and time passed coloring our lives with their dark inky feather. Salary days now make me feel like the end or middle of month with no real difference. I don't even remember when I last felt happy or pleased.

Life and time force you to feel depressed. In all times the money is not enough. In all times I haven't paid all my debts, but gain some more. In all times I aim but never get to reach. Responsibilities pile up on my head and no action is taking place. Now my salary is YR35,000 and I am much better than many other people who have families and earn only YR15,000 or 20,000. I am very thankful to Allah. Yet, I just can't make it anymore.

I live in an old, small flat for YR15,000 per month. I pay only 10,000 and delay all the 5,000 until another, definitely not coming, day. This happened after I became a friend of the owner of the building also my wife became a friend of his wife. She sometimes gives my wife flour, eggs, sugar, and butter and asks her to make cake when she has some friends coming to visit her. My wife makes wonderful cake. Certainly she makes one for us, her family, too from the same amount the lady brings.

Today I borrowed my neighbor's car, he is a taxi driver. I do that once every month, usually in the beginning of it. I give him YR1000 for it and he stays home with his family enjoying a weekend! I take the car all day to go and pay all my bills and the house rent and buy what we need for the month which lasts us only enough for two

weeks.

So I took that noisy car and drove it sighing and exhausted. Now after I paid my neighbor 1000YR I only have YR24,000. I still must pay the bills for the electricity, water and phone. I pay around 10,000YR for the whole. The rest of the amount of money in the bills I'll leave for another definitely not coming day.

Now I'll have about YR14,000 left from my salary until the end of the month. Also food is not all we need. My baby son has suffered fever and diarrhoea for a week now and he must be taken to a physician. The doctor will give us a prescription. The medicines should be bought and given to the child in order to recover. I imagine this entire event, transportation, doctor and medicines will take YR2,000. Also my daughters, the three of them, need new shoes.

Their old ones are cut and torn. This will cost around YR1,500. My eldest son is starting to be real fussy about being 14 years old now and not taking any pocket money. His demand is to give him daily YR70. He is a responsible young man and he deserves to take a daily pocket money but the problem is that this will be around YR2,000 monthly.

Also the rest of his brothers and sisters made a demonstration the other day and asked for the same money or at least YR30. My wife's scarf was torn and she found one that she loved but it was too expensive about YR700. I told her that I'll buy it for her another, definitely not coming, day.

I requested her to go out wearing the torn one. Yet if she does feel shy to go out with it then she should just stay at home until another, definitely not coming, day. My daughters wanted to go to Sabeen Park. I thought about it. I nearly allowed them to go. It is a free park and they'll have fun. Then I remembered that they must take something to eat and drink with them, also some money for the electrical

games. So I told them no again.

I told them to just forget about any parks because I can't send them to see people eating, drinking and playing football while they are only watching. They sighed and kept silent. Their mum then got involved with our discussion as usual when the kids sigh and some cry silently to tell them that maybe they'll grow up and marry a rich man who will take them in a tour around the world in another inshallah coming day.

The prices are raising and increasing simultaneously with our decreasing low spirits. I mean we people are no magicians. We are no longer living in the age of miracles. I suddenly noticed that I have driven to a further place far from the owner's house. It seems I was absent minded or, to be honest, I am continuously absent minded.

I turned to go back when I saw sitting beside me in the car President Ali Abdullah Saleh! I stopped the car in the middle of the street to rub my eyes. I looked around. No cars, no guards, nothing. It was him and I alone in the street. He laughed. My tongue was frozen. I couldn't speak but he smiled. I couldn't recognize exactly whether it was a dream or reality. I then decided it was reality because lately I noticed we don't dream anymore. We are busy struggling with life and dreams need peace and safety. I grabbed and collected my escaping concentration.

I told him, "Mr. President. Please allow me to cry." He moved his hand to refuse and asked innocently, "Why do you want to cry?"

To answer him was a long dramatic story, so I said, "Come with me and you'll know. I shall give you my salary and inform you what bills I have to pay. Also, please come with me to buy the monthly rice, oil, flour, sugar, vegetables and soap. I'll give you all my salary and you pay and see." He smiled. I didn't tell him that what I buy for the month is only for two weeks

and it is finished. I smiled too. To say the truth what we do to continue existing is extremely funny and hilarious.

"Mr. President I will only take away YR1,000 for daily bread. Show me how this salary I am given can be enough for my life. Mr. President I have no money left to go to the doctor or buy shoes or a scarf for my wife. I have no money to give my son pocket money. No money for any entertainment or even to buy a balloon. What do you think Mr. President is that fair?"

**He was no longer smiling.**

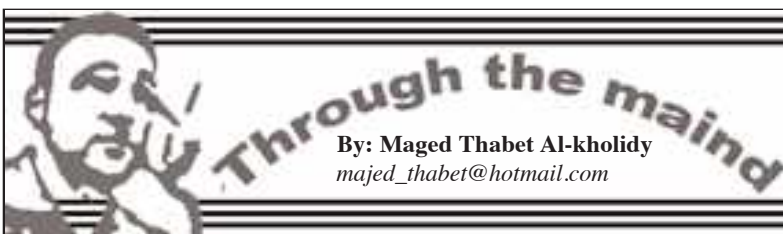
He looked at me and said, "You're a real magician. Actually your whole family are real magicians. How did you do that?" He laughed a little, I sighed a deep heard sigh. "How were you able to exist with that small amount of money?"

**Were we? I doubted it.**

"No, I will not accept to ignore my people and their essential needs in life. My people who have willingly or unwillingly chosen me shall from now on prosper and a live luxurious life." Yes!

Then suddenly wild flying beasts started attacking the car. I screamed. Are they bats? Are they flying tigers? I really don't know but they were very scary. Their teeth were dripping blood. I bent my head between my knees. Mr. President was trying to open the window to fight them. I woke up yelling and pleading him not to do that. Phew.

So it was a nightmare. Oh, thanks God it was. It was a dreadful nasty nightmare. I found myself in bed. It is 3:30 afternoon and I found my salary put on the table next to me with a paper consisting of a list of duties! Honestly I don't know which one is the nightmare was it the one I saw in my sleep or was it this very day I am starting now?



## Amid culture & education

To get educated, people join educational institutions like schools, universities, institutes etc. What to join, then, if people want to be cultured? Many people makes no distiction between culture and education, though they differ in terms of aims and methodology. Education is learnt with a limited scope to the field of study. Culture, on the other hand, is limitlessly acquired.

They; education and culture, may enhance each other. It is not necessary, however, that educated people are considered cultured or vice versa. Actually, it is expected to find uneducated and uncultured people. It is also not strange to find a large number of educated uncultured ones.

If old people might have mised the availability of different sources present nowadays, it is the role of youth to utilize such sources in a way that enriches thier knowledge in thier specializations and other cultural fields as well.

Since basic education, only knowledge related to curriculums is encourged with just few exceptions. Though the knowledge sources become unlimited, it is rare to find parents, for example, supply children with means that can enrich thier cultural acquaintance.

On this basis, children grow up, focusing mainly on materials related to study and no more. Frankly

speaking, it is the case of not only children, but it also proves common among people of higher education as well.

For such people, knowledge is sought as an obligatory task and memorized to be poured out in examination papers in order to obtain certificates or higher academic degrees. In many cases, if not all, they soon forget that knowledge, or replace it for, at most, new puposes.

The situation is really awful when such educated uncultured people contact with illiterate or uneducated people. In such a situation, they are awaken to announce a new approach towrds knowledge in a claim to be cultured. Really, it is a good decision, but would they be able to get sure of where to start? and how?

Never mind, it is a very easy task since "when there is a will, there is a way". "Culture" is culture. It has no beginning, or any end. It is not restricted to a group of people. Rich and poor, male and female, young and old,...etc have the same right to be cultured.

Even that obligatory educational knowledge, moreover, can be taken as a source of culture when seen as a source of knowledge not as a meanse of getting certificates. Study or educational duties never restrict anyone to a certian field of knowledge, but it is left for your own interests. This confirms the importance of culture in almost all aspects of life, advising all to look at its significance through the mind's eye.

## Universal Crossword

Edited by Timothy E. Parker

### ACROSS

- 1 Kobe country
- 6 The six for a TD
- 9 Tea additive, sometimes
- 14 Like \_\_\_ in the woods (unsuspecting)
- 15 Top-grossing movie of 1990
- 17 Perhaps
- 18 Some wise advice (Part 1)
- 19 Thespian's job
- 21 One-time Bruin star
- 22 Ever partner
- 23 Some wise advice (Part 2)
- 26 Trendy
- 27 VCR button
- 32 It has Java in it
- 36 Norwegian capital
- 39 Room with a view
- 40 Some wise advice (Part 3)
- 43 Celestial hunter
- 44 Diamond with records
- 45 Spanking spot

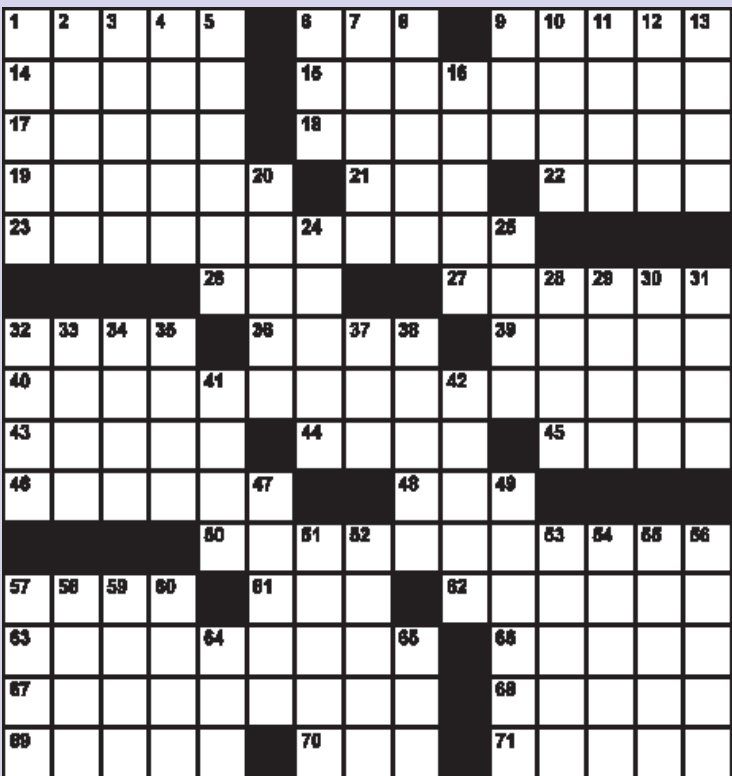
- 46 Like the preferred of two evils
- 48 Alley in a cave
- 50 Some wise advice (Part 4)
- 57 NBC host
- 61 Pin number?
- 62 Bronx Bomber
- 63 Some wise advice (Part 5)
- 66 "You can \_\_\_ horse to ..."
- 67 It helps level the playing field?
- 68 Microwave device
- 69 They get people into jams
- 70 Fed. benefit source
- 71 Station postings, briefly

### DOWN

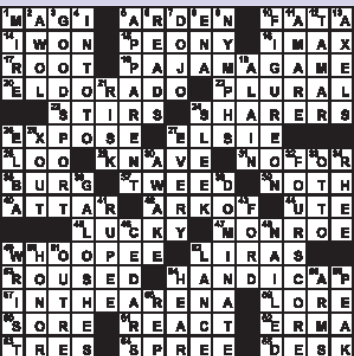
- 1 Malcolm-\_\_\_ Warner of "The Cosby Show"
- 2 Early calculators
- 3 One way to catch a movie
- 4 Activist Hoffman
- 5 City on Lake Winnebago
- 6 Fraternity letter, perhaps
- 7 Like a \_\_\_ bricks
- 8 Chocolate marshmallow snack

- 9 Sonny boy
- 10 Where Zeno pondered
- 11 Eve opposite
- 12 Aware of
- 13 Sign gas
- 16 Inaccuracy
- 20 What some prophets deal in
- 24 "\_\_\_ his kiss" (golden oldie lyric)
- 25 Chicken's emotion?
- 28 Approximate time between NFL games
- 29 Today's Persia
- 30 Longest river in the world
- 31 Expurgate, editorially
- 32 Military base truant
- 33 Father on the farm
- 34 Goddess of ancient Egypt
- 35 Shakespearean commotions
- 37 Size above med.
- 38 Cheese steak topper
- 41 Small bills
- 42 Major ending, often
- 47 Dustin role of 1969
- 49 The Bible's longest book
- 51 Hollering sounds
- 52 Laura of "ER"
- 53 Kind of peek
- 54 Czar's decree
- 55 Gave up
- 56 Is told of
- 57 Tra followers
- 58 Isaac's eldest
- 59 Food pkg. info
- 60 "This can't be!"
- 64 Some online chats, for short
- 65 Historical period

### "HEED THESE WORDS" by Victor Fleming



### PREVIOUS PUZZLE ANSWER



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