



BRIEFINGS

July 6th, 2008

The Man Who Represented the Egyptian Left is Dead

Egyptian thinker *Abdelwahab Al-Massiri* died this past Wednesday at the age of 70 after a long battle with cancer. Several Palestinian and Arab writers eulogized this extraordinary man who studied English and comparative literature and earned a Masters from Colombia and a PhD from Rutgers. Although he taught English literature in several Egyptian Universities, *Al-Massiri's* passion was politics and culture. He earned international acclaim for his encyclopedic eight-volume work, "The Jews, Judaism and Zionism", which was published in 1999. *Al-Massiri* was a steadfast critic of Western cultures and warned Muslims against adopting the West's materialistic habit of consumerism. A strong proponent of democracy throughout his life, he remained part of the leftist movement in Egypt and a strong defender of Palestinian rights. Last year, he also became head of the "KEFAYA" (Enough) movement which was established in 2004 to bring about democratic reform in Egypt.



Source: Al-Jazeera July 5th, 2008 reporter: 'Atef Daghlas

<http://www.aljazeera.net/NR/exeres/53E0DBFF-C340-4F65-81FE-77913AD58074.htm>

The Saudi Minister of Education Declares Curriculums Have Contributed to the Hatching of Terrorists



Following the arrest of more than 520 alleged terrorists in Saudi Arabia, the Saudi minister of education, *Abdallah Al-'Ubayd*, acknowledged in an interview with *Al-Jazeera* that the Kingdom's curriculum is contributing to the fostering of terrorism. In particular, the minister blamed the *Salafi* doctrine of <Al-Wala' wal Bara'>¹ (allegiance and repudiation) for being instrumental in the development of the Jihadi ideology that has contributed to terrorism. The minister's blunt criticism seems to be part of an orchestrated campaign by the Kingdom to combat extremism. The minister's statements came one day after a similar announcement by the Saudi grand Mufti, *Abdelaziz Al-Shaykh*, warning Muslims not to harbor members of the "straying sect" [a reference to *Al-Qaeda* supporters]. In an extremely unusual move by a staunch defender of the faith, *Al-Shaykh* proclaimed that "the mosques must also fulfill their duty to ward off sedition... and should not remain silent or harbor transgressors." These remarks by Saudi officials may be, in part at least, an effort to fend off criticism that could be directed at the King when he chairs the interfaith dialogue in Spain later this month.

Source: Islam Online July 5th, 2008 – Reporter: Mahmud Hussein

URL: http://www.islamonline.net/servlet/Satellite?c=ArticleA_C&cid=1213871581788&pagename=Zone-Arabic-News/NWALayout

¹ Constituting as part of the declaration of faith by Salafis, it basically commands Muslims at **loving** those who believe in Islam [considered a form of **allegiance**] and at **hating** all those who do not [considered a form of **rejection** and **enmity**]

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