



מרכז משה דיין ללימודי המזרח התיכון ואפריקה
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Middle East News & Views

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A weekly sample of news and opinions on current events from around the Middle East collected and brought to you by the Dayan Center.

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[Washington is from Mars, Damascus is from Venus / Hussain Abdul-Hussain](#)

There are no areas of common interest between Washington and Damascus, and American-Syrian engagement is destined to go nowhere, no matter how many meetings Assistant Secretary of State for Near Eastern Affairs Jeffrey Feltman and the National Security Council's Daniel Shapiro hold in Damascus.

Source: **Now Lebanon (Beirut), May 15, 2009**

[Obama...The Lost Treasure is in Syria / Tariq Alhomayed](#)



If Washington is aware of this and strives towards Syrian-Israeli peace, it will see that the lost treasure lies in Syria and not in dialogue with Iran or in wasting time wooing Khaled Mishaal who, at that point, will find himself facing two options; either to reside in Tehran or to return once again under the Palestinian umbrella and this of course is the pursued goal.

Source: **Al-Sharq Al-Awsat (London), May 15, 2009**

[Towards Muslim-Christian Harmony / Saleem H. Ali and Hiba Zeino](#)

The Pope's symbolic visit to Al-Aqsa mosque and the kind reception he received from its imam must be reinforced with a specific renunciation of negative narratives on both sides. Both faith traditions share the blame of abusing historical incidents as a means of propagating a sense of alienation from each other. In an increasingly globalized world, we must strive to learn from history but not let the past hamper our progress towards mutually advantageous human relations.

Source: **Daily News Egypt (Cairo), May 15, 2009**

[The Frenzy to Secure Votes Shows What's Wrong with Lebanon's Political System / Editorial](#)

In a functioning political system, instead of "reaching out" to voters in the weeks before an election, politicians would have used the state and its institutions to get this support to the public during their tenure in government. Their failure to help people when they were in office - and both sides have been represented in the Cabinet and the bureaucracy - is why they're rushing to do so now.

Source: **The Daily Star (Beirut), May 15, 2009**

[The First Station of the Solution to the Kurdish Problem / Kerim Balci](#)

President Abdullah Gül started a new discussion about not missing the opportunity for a solution to the Kurdish problem. The prime minister declined to reply to questions on whether there is a plan on which the top of the Turkish administration has reached consensus.

Source: **Today's Zaman (Istanbul), May 14, 2009**

[What Does the Army Do in Turkey? / Mehmet Kamis](#)

Unfortunately, Turkey is a country with weird facts peculiar to itself. It is possible to come across unusual events that are unlikely to happen in most European countries. For example, the army might issue a memorandum out of the blue or it might share its views on an issue it has no business being involved in.

Source: **Today's Zaman (Istanbul), May 16, 2009**

[Is Mahmoud Ahmadinejad Really Just a 'Self-Hating Jew'? / Rasool Nafisi](#)

No matter what the motive, many Iranian analysts believe their president's uncontrollable rage and hatred expressed in public are helping rather than hurting Israel; the Durban II conference just provided another piece of evidence. These days, a saying attributed to an Israeli general is making the rounds among Iranians: "If Ahmadinejad is not on the Israeli payroll, he should be."

Source: **The Daily Star (Beirut), May 15, 2009**