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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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[Iran – Is Theocracy Falling Apart? / Ishtiaq Ali Mehkri](#)

Iran is in a peculiar crisis. The post-1979 power decorum, based on the dictum of Vilayat-e-Faqih — whereby Islamic jurists were presumed to have divinely ordained powers to rule — is being questioned outright. To Supreme Leader Ayatollah Syed Ali Khamenei's dismay, at least eight leading ayatollahs (Marja-e-Taqleed) have voiced their dissent by now. They had no qualms in even speaking up for the first time against the charlatans of the Guardian Council.

Source: **Khaleej Times Online (Dubai), July 15, 2009**

[The Foreign Factor in Destabilizing Iran / Abdul Rahman Al-Rashed](#)

The Iranian regime is extremely confused about how to deal with the serious developments taking place. Perhaps it still hasn't realized that the accusation of foreign interference might not just be a scare tactic to frighten the opposition, but may become a reality. Foreign powers are capable of destabilizing the regime if they choose to include this in their political agenda to weaken the Iranian regime in its negotiations and to end its interference in the region.

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

[Paris 1968 to Tehran 2009 / Turki al-Hamad](#)

Both France and Iran have a revolutionary atmosphere that is not found in any other countries, even countries that have experienced famous revolutions like Russia, Germany, and China. What distinguishes France and Iran is that their "revolutionary moments" have been shaped by a public that has experience in fermenting revolution, whereas the revolutions that take place in other countries are cases of the elite taking advantage of a particular set of circumstances.

Source: **Al-Sharq Al-Awsat (London), July 20, 2009**

[None But Us to Blame / Hussain Abdul-Hussain](#)

Blaming America, Britain and domestic leaders will not cut it for Arab development. After all, Arab leaders are only the product of their own societies and are its reflection. When society is fixed, Arab states will get leaders who match their aspirations. Until then, free spirited debate is the best path towards finding proper answers to the new and old question, "What went wrong?"

Source: **Al-Ahram Weekly (Cairo), Issue No 956, 16 - 22 July 2009**

[Abbas Faces a Crisis of Credibility / Sami Moubayed](#)

The world is abuzz with the accusations made by senior Fatah member Farouk Kaddoumi, against Palestinian President Mahmoud Abbas and former security minister Mohammad Dahlan for having allegedly conspired with former Israeli PM Ariel Sharon to get rid of Yasser Arafat in 2004. Although these allegations will not necessarily lead to Abbas's impeachment, his record may lie tainted, especially with many of his opponents more willing to believe Kaddoumi.

Source: **Gulf News (Dubai), July 20, 2009**

[The Importance of East Turkistan / Fikret Ertan](#)

China's Xinjiang Uighur Autonomous Region, or East Turkistan, is also a strategically important region. One look at the world map is enough to see this fact. In terms of geopolitics, the region, which consists of about one-sixth of the total area of China, is a gateway to Central Asia and the Indian subcontinent. It is also a well-known fact that the region holds enormous amounts of oil, gas, coal and many types of precious metals, including large deposits of uranium.

Source: **Today's Zaman (Istanbul), July 19, 2009**

[The 'Holy Alliance' of the Status Quo / İhsan Dağı](#)

No doubt a struggle is being fought out in Turkey. It is a struggle between the forces of change and those of the status quo. The outcome will determine whether Turkey will be a democracy ruled by the people and respectful of human rights or an autocracy ruled by bureaucratic elites unaccountable to its people and the world.

Source: **Today's Zaman (Istanbul), July 20, 2009**