



TEL AVIV UNIVERSITY
אוניברסיטת תל-אביב

Middle East News & Views

מרכז משה דיין ללימודי המזרח התיכון ואפריקה
The Moshe Dayan Center for Middle Eastern and African Studies
מركز موشيه ديان لدراسات الشرق الأوسط وإفريقيا

Editor: Bruce Maddy-Weitzman
Editorial Board: Amir Kulick, Michael Barak and Idan Barir

No 025
July 30, 2009

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

To see full article, click on title.

[The Haj and the Swine Flu Challenge / Abdul Rahman Al-Rashed](#)

It was a necessary preventive step when the Saudi Health Ministry advised that the young, old, and the sick should refrain from performing the minor pilgrimage and the main pilgrimage this season in view of the spread of the swine flu everywhere in the world. It is a precautionary step that makes it easier to contain the problem.

Source: **Al-Sharq Al-Awsat (London), July 26, 2009**

[The Seven Pillars of Arab Fragility / Rami G. Khouri](#)

It's bad enough for ordinary Arabs to sense large gaps in their personal quality of life and widespread dysfunction in the public management of their societies. It is much more painful – though always useful – for such self-awareness to be documented in a credible report by knowledgeable and honest Arab analysts. This is the case with the publishing this week by the United Nations Development Program (UNDP) of a painful new report on the condition of the Arab world.

Source: **The Daily Star (Beirut), July 25, 2009**

[Reconciliation in Iraq / Musa Keilani](#)

National reconciliation. These are the catchwords today in Iraq as the country prepares itself for the departure of the US military by 2011. This was also one of the central themes of discussions US President Barack Obama held with Iraqi Prime Minister Nouri Al Maliki last week. It was indeed reassuring to hear Maliki agreeing with Obama on the need for national reconciliation.

Source: **The Jordan Times (Amman), July 26, 2009**

[Saudi Arabia's Push for Religious Dialogue / Fahad Alhomoudi](#)

Many see Saudi Arabia as a closed society, with little religious diversity. In recent years, however, King Abdullah's immense interfaith dialogue efforts have begun to change this view. His three interfaith initiatives last year – the Mecca Appeal for Interfaith Dialogue, the Madrid World Conference on Dialogue and the Interfaith Conference at the United Nations in New York – set a strong precedent for the country internationally as well as domestically.

Source: **Common Ground News Service (Washington), July 21, 2009**

[The Mirage of Syrian Importance is Evaporating / Tony Badran](#)

For the longest time, Syria has tried to convince the world, and particularly the United States, that nothing could be done in Lebanon, Iraq or Palestine without Syrian help. However, all the signs are that Syria's regional relevance is on the decline, so that at a time when the Obama administration is re-engaging Damascus, the reality is that the Assad regime comes to the table with a weak hand.

Source: **Now Lebanon (Beirut), July 22, 2009**

[In Praise of Coalition / Galal Nassar](#)

It is natural to differ. Human beings differ in language, race, culture, customs and traditions. This is why we have diverse societies and nationalities, and international organizations to help them work together. This diversity is at the heart of nature's beauty and abundance. Having a different opinion should not be a crime punishable by death. Unfortunately, not everyone subscribes to this principle.

Source: **Al-Ahram Weekly (Cairo), Issue No 957, 23 - 29 July 2009**

[The Headaches Facing the Appointed President / Saeed Razavi Faghih](#)

Mr. Ahmadinejad has in the past been a source of headache for the Islamic republic and his own conservative faction, but with the new crises evolving in the country, it is clear that he will be dealing with even more serious challenges stemming from his own conservative colleagues and even supporters. And now, he must also respond to the serious issues that have been created for the regime as a whole in recent weeks.

Source: **Rooz Online (Paris), July 24, 2009**