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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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[Fatah: A New Beginning Or an Imminent End? / Ramzy Baroud](#)

Fatah has changed over the years: It started as a resistance movement of well-intended members, mostly students in the 1950's and 60's. Over the years, Fatah grew into a melting pot encompassing romantic revolutionaries and poets, wealthy elites and shifty politicians. But following Yasser Arafat's signing of the Oslo Accord with Israel in 1993, the millionaires and their dubious politician allies won, turning Fatah into a company, feeding on the empty peace rhetoric. Source: **Ma'an News Agency (Bethlehem), August 14, 2009**

[The Normalization of Fatah / Daoud Kuttab](#)

Fatah, the leading guerrilla movement within the Palestine Liberation Organization (PLO), has moved one step closer to becoming a normal political party. Its just concluded sixth congress was held for the first time in the occupied territories, a congress that succeeded, it appears, in reuniting and reinvigorating the movement, which has suffered since the death of its founder and long-time leader, Yasser Arafat. Source: **Daily News Egypt (Cairo), August 14, 2009**

[Sex, Marriage and Mideast Peacemaking / Ezzedine Choukri Fishere](#)

Pushing Arabs and Israelis towards peace is comparable to concluding a marriage between two hostile families. Instead of working on finalizing the terms of the marriage contract, the mediators waste everyone's time on fine-tuning the terms of these confidence-building measures. Naturally, neither the groom nor the bride derives any pleasure from their halfway intimacies, and they are busy quarrelling over each other's compliance with the terms of the deal. Source: **Al-Ahram Weekly (Cairo), Issue No 960, 13 - 19 August 2009**

[Hamis: Extremism Breeds Extremism / Tariq Alhomayed](#)



The extremist language used by the new Salafist Jihadist group *Jund Ansar Allah* in Gaza is no different than the language used by Hamas against the Fatah movement, from inflammatory language to putting forward accusations of treason. What happened is therefore normal because extremism breeds extremism, and division only brings further division and underdevelopment. Source: **Al-Sharq Al-Awsat (London), August 16, 2009**

[Throwing Ahmadinejad a Lifeline / Hossein Askari and Trita Parsi](#)

In an effort to squeeze Iran into submission over its nuclear policy, Congress and the White House are edging toward a gasoline embargo. In fact, Ahmadinejad is desperately in need of such a threat to help consolidate his conservative base and lend credibility to accusations of conspiracy against his moderate opposition. Imposing a gasoline embargo could be his last, best hope. The American administration should think well before throwing a lifeline to Iran's vote-robbers. Source: **Khaleej Times Online (UAE), August 17, 2009**

[Syria's Comeback / Hanin Ghaddar](#)

Even today, Syria continues to exert influence over Lebanon through its local proxies, has put off demarcating borders and has not redressed unfair bilateral agreements skewed in its favor. The Syrian regime might cooperate with the US in Iraq, and maybe Palestine, but it is Iran in the end that has the real say in how far cooperation goes. In Lebanon, the story is different. Syria wants to maintain its power here on its own, without going through the usual Iranian channels, Source: **Now Lebanon (Beirut), August 17, 2009**

[Turkey's Mesopotamian Vision / Gürkan Zengin](#)

Given the fact that the likelihood of an armed conflict between Turkey and Iraq was considerable in 2007, it is really surprising to see this perfect harmony in relations attained in the hot summer days of 2009. Not only was successful crisis management implemented by Turkey, but also the good-intentioned and cool-headed approach adopted by the Maliki government in Baghdad was effective in the transition from crisis to vision. Source: **Today's Zaman (Istanbul), August 15, 2009**