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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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[Time to Engage Hamas / Dina Khanat](#)

A look one year after the war in Gaza shows that despite imposing a siege on the city in an effort to pressure Hamas, Israel failed to achieve its main objective of crushing the movement. Given that the use of force to crush the movement has failed, Egypt's plans to build a "wall of steel" are also likely to fail. Perhaps it's time for a shift in policy from building walls, to breaking barriers – it is time to seriously engage Hamas.

Source: **Gulf News (Dubai), December 28, 2009**

[Trumped by Hope / Michael Karam](#)

We all understand the realities of living with Hezbollah and know that sooner or later the issue of their weapons will have to be addressed. Indeed, we all made up at Doha after that "glorious" day, but it doesn't mean we can't remind Nasrallah that his concept of sovereignty is an aberration of the conventional definition. He can't seriously talk about sovereignty when, on a day-to-day basis, we see that there is one set of rules for Hezbollah and another for the rest of us.

Source: **Now Lebanon (Beirut), December 29, 2009**

[Iran, the Hard-Liners, and the Most Hard-Line / Tariq Alhomayed](#)



It is clear that the most hard-line trend in Iran does not hesitate in moving forward to achieve its interests, the most prominent of which is removing all of those that stand in their way internally. This is something that increases Tehran's vulnerability, and everybody is expecting a dangerous event to take place as a result of this.

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

[Trying Times / Editorial](#)

If you're not Arab or Muslim, you can get away with murder. Look at Israel, a country that has been stockpiling weapons of mass destruction since its creation. Is it under international investigation for doing so? Of course it is not. But Iran is. Any Arab or Islamic country accused of trying to obtain such weapons is threatened with everything in the book, from sanctions to blockade and military intervention. How hypocritical can you get?

Source: **Al-Ahram Weekly (Cairo), Issue No 978, 24 - 30 December 2009**

[Why Women Choose to Wear The Burqa/Niqab / Nehad Ismail](#)

One girl admitted that she felt the odd one out by not wearing the Hijab, as most women around her wore the Hijab and she felt obliged to go along. By wearing the Hijab, Jordanian Muslim girls avoided being ostracized by their neighbours and relatives. I still believe that Jordan is still a free and tolerant society. Let us hope it stays that way. Nobody wants the Taliban ethos to be forced on women in Jordan or anywhere in the Arab world.

Source: **Jordan Times (Amman), December 20, 2009**

[Turkey Sets an Example / Marwan Al Kabalan](#)

There are several structural factors that have helped Turkey move fairly quickly towards democracy. Yet, Turkish democracy owes most of its success to a single man, who armed himself and equipped his project with the blessing of his people. In fact, under the leadership of PM Recep Tayyip Erdoğan, Turkey has entered a period of astonishing change. Since he took office in 2004, Turkey has moved further along the road to democracy than ever before.

Source: **Gulf News (Dubai), December 25, 2009**

[2010: A Tough Year for the AK Party, Turkey / İhsan Yılmaz](#)

2010 will be a year of war between pro-coup and anti-coup forces. There are two sides to this. First, the pro-coup coalition knows very well that in the medium run they will evaporate in a fully democratic Turkey if they do not stage a coup - which will definitely be very bloody as the army may split into a few factions - as soon as possible. Second, the Justice and Development Party (AK Party) is showing signs of fatigue and is not managing events skillfully.

Source: **Today's Zaman (Istanbul), December 27, 2009**