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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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[The Middle East Just Gets Worse: A 2009 Retrospective / Rami G. Khouri](#)

The view of the Middle East is frightening. An end-of-year glance around the region suggests that political conditions have deteriorated to a large extent in many parts of our region, with very few countervailing improvements to be noted. While existing conflicts or tensions continue to plague many countries and ripple out to neighbors, I have no doubt that the single most troublesome new development during the past year has been the escalating fighting in Yemen.

Source: **The Daily Star (Beirut), December 30, 2009**

[Gaza Drivers, Rumours and Egypt's Steel Wall / Ramzy Baroud](#)

News of an enormous metal wall that Egypt is erecting at its border with Gaza has come to the fore. The Egyptian decision is both politically and financially loaded. Considering that the US – spurred on by Israel – has strived to develop ways to completely choke Gaza, one can safely conclude that the decision has not come solely from Egypt, though as a sovereign country the latter must still be held fully accountable.

Source: **Ma'an News Agency (Bethlehem), December 31, 2009**

[Fruitless Demands / Tariq Alhomayed](#)



Everything that undermines the Arab state, and even the concept of the Arab state, finds supporters amongst our people, otherwise how else can we read into the intense campaign being waged against Egypt for the construction of the security wall? Some countries or intellectuals are only asking for the Gaza tunnels to remain open, as if these tunnels are a solution to the suffering of the people of Gaza.

Source: **Al-Sharq Al-Awsat (London), January 4, 2010**

[Pressing Need for Change in Iraq / Mohammad Akef Jamal](#)

Democracy in Iraq is still in its infancy. Conducting parliamentary elections does not mean that whoever sits under parliament's dome will be a true representative of the voters. The upcoming Iraqi elections are going to take place with the absence of two important factors: the parties' law and the population census. These two factors are essential conditions for the legitimacy of the elections, and the lack of them is an aberration.

Source: **Gulf News (Dubai), January 3, 2010**

[An Issue of Identity / Gihan Shahine](#)

A wave of religiosity has swept Egyptian society since the 1967 setback in particular, when people resorted to religion as an outlet for their political frustrations. "That was the time when Sufism boomed in Egypt," said Fahmy Howeidy, an expert on Islamic affairs. An Islamic revival ensued, and in Howeidy's view this "occurred as a natural evolution in the course of history and is an issue that is too complicated to be attributed to any one single reason."

Source: **Al-Ahram Weekly (Cairo), Issue No 979, 31 December 2009 - 6 January 2010**

[Violence Against Women Is Not a Tenet of the Muslim Religion / Naazish YarKhan](#)

Listening to the radio one day, I was shocked to hear the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights (OHCHR) report on widespread occurrence of rape in Afghanistan. As a Muslim who knows that the core of her religion is about justice and mercy, I asked myself how the perpetrators of these acts could have strayed so far from the Muslim faith and from basic humane principles.

Source: **The Daily Star (Beirut), January 4, 2010**

[Iran As a Global Issue / Beril Dedeoğlu](#)

Iran will continue to be a controversial country in 2010. President Mahmoud Ahmedinejad's authoritarianism, the growing political pressure and the government's oppressive methods make the Iranian opposition more determined every passing day.

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