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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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[Palestine Must Be a Secular State / Hussein Ibbish](#)

As Palestinians press the international community to live up to its commitment to ensuring the establishment of an independent Palestine alongside Israel, conversation is intensifying about the character of this new state. In their own interest, Palestinians should buck the regional trend towards religious politics and ensure, from the outset, that it is firmly and irrevocably a secular state.

Source: **Common Ground News Service (Washington), January 28, 2010**

[Hamas is Threatening Who? / Tariq Alhomayed](#)



Following the assassination of Hamas leading figure Mahmoud al Mabhohu in his hotel room in Dubai, the leaders of Hamas came out threatening and promising to avenge his death. This is understandable and only expected due to the nature of the Palestinian-Israeli conflict; however what was not clear was whether Hamas was threatening revenge on Israel or was threatening to violate Arab territories.

Source: **Al-Sharq Al-Awsat (London), February 2, 2010**

[GCC Needs New Iran Strategy / Abdullah Al Shayji](#)

Iran continues on its track of meddling, enriching uranium and defying UN Security Council resolutions. It is well aware that the GCC states have repeatedly stated individually and collectively that they oppose any military strike against it and would not allow others to use their territory as launching pads for that purpose. Nevertheless, Speaker of the Iranian Parliament Ali Larijani issued a warning to the GCC states last week in Kuwait.

Source: **Gulf News (Dubai), February 1, 2010**

[Yemen Collapsing / Hamad Al-Majid](#)

Dangerous cracks have appeared in Yemen; there are cracks courtesy of the Huthi rebels, the Al Qaeda organization, and the southern separatist movement, not to mention the cracks of poverty, drugs, and corruption, as well as the proliferation of light and heavy arms. The recent London Conference attempted to put forward solutions to overcome these cracks and faults; however it seems that the Yemeni division has spread to the West.

Source: **Al-Sharq Al-Awsat (London), February 2, 2010**

[No Interference / Doaa El-Bey](#)

The Egyptian government, which habitually describes incidents on a sectarian background as individual criminal acts, insists it acted as quickly as possible in the Nagaa Hammadi massacre on Coptic Christmas Eve. Three suspects were detained a day after the shooting and have been referred to the State Security Court for trial. President Mubarak mentioned the attack twice last week in public appearances, warning that sectarian strife could threaten national unity.

Source: **Al-Ahram Weekly (Cairo), Issue No 983, 28 January - 3 February 2010**

[A Dangerous Fissure Is Growing between Europe and its Muslims / Shada Islam](#)

Switzerland's recent vote to ban the building of new minarets has provoked outrage among Muslims and applause from Europe's increasingly popular anti-Muslim politicians. As such, it appeared to deepen the divide between Muslim and non-Muslim Europeans. However, for all the furor over the minarets referendum, European Muslims today are focused less on religious symbols and more on securing recognition as full-fledged citizens of Europe.

Source: **The Daily Star (Beirut), February 01, 2010**

[Iran and Turkish-American Relations / Ömer Taşpınar](#)

Washington is increasingly frustrated with Tehran and appears ready for a policy shift from engagement to coercive diplomacy. In practice, such coercive diplomacy would mean implementing so-called "smart sanctions" that are supposed to hurt the leaders of the country more than the innocent people. All this debate about sanctions does not bode well for Turkish-American relations.

Source: **Today's Zaman (Istanbul), February 1, 2010**