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Middle East News & Views

מרכז משה דיין ללימודי המזרח התיכון ואפריקה
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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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[Husseini Must Resign / Nasser Laham](#)

Adults and children alike were left speechless when they saw what aired on Israel's Channel 10 Monday. No matter what pain it causes him personally, chief of staff Rafik Al-Husseini must resign immediately for the sake of the country and its interests. Bold steps are required to overcome this crisis and quickly – his silence is no longer enough. Guilty or not, Husseini must cede all responsibilities until a commission of inquiry can be established and its results reviewed.
Source: **Ma'an News Agency (Bethlehem), February 12, 2010**

[It's Back to Square One in Palestine / Rami G. Khouri](#)

The likelihood that Palestinians and Israelis will soon launch indirect negotiations, or "proximity talks" mediated by American officials, sounds positive on the surface, but in reality it is a very bad sign. It provides the illusion of progress toward peace, while in fact it mainly affirms the depressing state of play of the five primary actors in this long Middle Eastern drama – the Palestinians, Israelis, Americans, Arabs and the United Nations.
Source: **The Daily Star (Beirut), February 13, 2010**

[Has the Isolation of Iran Begun? / Tariq Alhomayed](#)



Anyone following the latest news on Iran, and particularly the Western–Iranian dispute regarding the nuclear issue, will notice that features of political isolation have become evident against Tehran as a result of the western political attack, and in contrast to this there has also been a clear decline in Iran's political activity.

Source: **Al-Sharq Al-Awsat (London), February 15, 2010**

[A GCC Perspective / Abdullah Alshayji](#)

It is ironic that while Iran continues to represent such a threat to all GCC states, they continue to lack a coherent and well-thought-out strategy in dealing with Iran. It is time the GCC states – which have repeatedly voiced their concerns and rejected the use of military action against Iran and recently argued against tougher sanctions – formulate a unified and coherent strategy on Iran and do away with their fragmented and disjointed stance towards the country.

Source: **bitterlemons-international.org, February 11, 2010**

[Saudi Arabia Refuses Pakistani Diplomat Over Vulgar Name Translation](#)

In an unfortunate result of translation, Pakistani diplomat Akbar Zeb will not become the next Pakistani ambassador to Saudi Arabia. Despite Mr. Zeb's impressive career during which he has served as the ambassador to the United States, India and South Africa, the 55-year-old diplomat's name proved to be the immovable hurdle. When translated into Arabic, Akbar Zeb means "Biggest Dick." In a region that stresses modesty, particularly in public, this could not stand.

Source: **Al-Bawaba (Amman), February 8, 2010**

[The French Burqa Ban: Culture Clash Unveiled / Sadanand Dhume](#)

The importance of the potential ban of the burqa – and the firestorm of debate it has generated – goes far beyond setting sartorial boundaries for the Paris Metro. Although fewer than 2000 women – the barest fraction of France's five million Muslims – wear the burqa, the French, unlike the Americans, recognize that both the burqa and the hijab can be as much a political statement as a personal one.

Source: **Yale Global Online (New Haven), February 8, 2010**

[Turkey's Moderating Influence on the Middle East / Abdullah Bozkurt](#)

Turkey's active engagement and new dynamism in foreign policy has moderated many positions and softened the approach of most actors in the Middle East with the possible exception of Israel, a country which is also distancing itself from other international partners, including the European Union, and is increasingly isolating itself.

Source: **Today's Zaman (Istanbul), February 13, 2010**