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December 31, 2009

Middle East News: World Press Roundup

The New York Times profiles friendships between wounded Israeli and Palestinian children. A commentary in the LA Times says Palestinians and Israelis will keep killing each other in the coming year, although Israeli security forces say 2009 was a "quiet year." Israel's Deputy Foreign Minister denies there is an occupation in the occupied territories, and his government is defending 15 previously "unauthorized" settlement buildings. Hamas reportedly rejects Israel's latest prisoner swap offer. The Palestinian Bureau of Statistics says there are 10.88 million Palestinians, half of them in the diaspora. A commentary in Ha'aretz questions the Israeli government's interest in peace. Special Envoy Mitchell reportedly will propose a new formula to restart permanent status negotiations. A Jerusalem Post commentary asks how Israelis would react if they were treated like Gazans, The BBC profiles a child born during the Gaza war, and IPS offers another retrospective of the conflict. American high school students are being indoctrinated with settler ideology. The Gaza war has left Palestinian citizens of Israel disillusioned. Gaza is reportedly being slowly rebuilt. The National says that Israel should not be allowed to dictate the terms for peace. Daoud Kuttub says Pres. Obama has taken his eye off the diplomatic ball. The Jordan Times calls for international sanctions against Israel.

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A Mideast Bond, Stitched of Pain and Healing

Article Author(s): Ethan Bronner

Media Outlet: The New York Times

Date: December 30, 2009

Source Link(s):

<http://www.nytimes.com/2009/12/31/world/middleeast/31children.html?pagewanted=1&...> [6]

He can be impulsive. She has a touch of bossiness. Next-door neighbors for nearly a year, they talk, watch television and explore the world together, wandering into each other's homes without a second thought. She likes his mother's eggplant dish. He likes her father's rice and lamb.

Middle East quagmire had another good year

Article Author(s): Etgar Keret

Media Outlet: The Los Angeles Times

Article Type: Opinion

Date: December 29, 2009

Source Link(s): <http://www.latimes.com/news/opinion/la-oe-keret29-2009dec29,0,5510739.story> [7]

In 2002, at the height of the second Palestinian intifada, a new kind of illegal gambling sprang up in Israel: suicide-bombings roulette.

Israel's Right in the 'Disputed' Territories

Article Author(s): Danny Ayalon

Media Outlet: The Wall Street Journal

Date: December 30, 2009

Source Link(s):

<http://online.wsj.com/article/SB10001424052748704103104574623662661962226.html> [8]

The recent statements by the European Union's new foreign relations chief Catherine Ashton criticizing Israel have once again brought international attention to Jerusalem and the settlements. However, little appears to be truly understood about Israel's rights to what are generally called the "occupied territories" but what really are "disputed territories."

Zahhar: Hamas still open to swap deal

Media Outlet: Ma'an News Agency

Date: December 31, 2009

Source Link(s): <http://www.maannews.net/eng/ViewDetails.aspx?ID=251057> ^[9]

Hamas has not ruled out a prisoner exchange with Israel, one of the movements top leaders said upon returning from talks on the issue in Damascus.

Hamas leader Mahmoud Zahhar told Ma'an, "Hamas did not close the door on the Shalit deal.

Hamas is demanding that Israel release some 1,000 Palestinian prisoners in return for Gilad Shalit, an Israeli soldier held in Gaza.

Zahhar said Hamas is still holding internal consultations on the prisoner deal, and other issues, including reconciliation with Fatah, and the steel wall Egypt is building on the border with Gaza.

PCBS: 10.88 million Palestinians in the world, half in diaspora

Media Outlet: Ma'an News Agency

Date: December 31, 2009

Source Link(s): <http://www.maannews.net/eng/ViewDetails.aspx?ID=250948> ^[10]

The Palestinian Central Bureau of Statistics released a report on the Palestinian population worldwide, noting a decrease in family size for the population living in Palestinian territories.

The report counted a total of 10.9 million Palestinians worldwide by the end of 2009, with 2.5 million in the West Bank including East Jerusalem, 1.5million in the Gaza Strip and 1.25 million living in Israel. More than half of the world Palestinian population, the report noted, live in the diaspora.

Shin Bet: 2009 was quiet year

Article Author(s): Hanan Greenberg

Media Outlet: Ynetnews

Date: December 30, 2009

Source Link(s): <http://www.ynetnews.com/articles/0,7340,L-3827600,00.html> ^[11]

The year 2009 saw a significant decline in the number of attacks both in the Gaza Strip and in the West Bank compared with previous years, according to data released Wednesday by Israel's Shin Bet to mark the end of the year.

At the same time, many attempts by terror groups from the Gaza Strip to plant booby traps inside Israel were thwarted by removing the devices from the Strip into the Sinai, and from there to Israel.

Journey to nowhere

Article Author(s): Gideon Levy

Media Outlet: Haaretz

Article Type: Opinion

Date: December 31, 2009

Source Link(s): <http://www.haaretz.com/hasen/spages/1138927.html> ^[12]

Well, here we are. A new year begins at midnight, and for the Middle East, 2010 will be a year of negotiations. Peace envoys are warming up at the starting line, document writers are polishing draft agreements for the envoys, advisers are coming up with their own phraseology, pundits are piling up verbiage, photographers are aiming their cameras, and diplomats are packing their bags and sharpening their tongues. George Mitchell will be here soon, Benjamin Netanyahu has already been to Cairo, Mahmoud Abbas is on his way. In the end there will be a summit.

Peace talks framework may bridge goals

Article Author(s): Herb Keinon

Media Outlet: The Jerusalem Post

Date: December 31, 2009

Source Link(s):

<http://www.jpost.com/servlet/Satellite?cid=1261364553238&pagename=JPost%2FJPArti...> ^[13]

When US Mideast envoy George Mitchell arrives here in early January he is expected to declare a framework for peace talks aimed at reconciling the Palestinian demand for a state based on the 1967 lines, with Israel's goal of a Jewish state with secure and recognized borders, The Jerusalem Post has learned.

Rattling the Cage: A taboo question for Israelis

Article Author(s): Larry Derfner

Media Outlet: The Jerusalem Post

Article Type: Opinion

Date: December 31, 2009

Source Link(s):

<http://www.jpost.com/servlet/Satellite?cid=1261364551818&pagename=JPost%2FJPArti...> [14]

There's a question we Israelis won't ask ourselves about the Palestinians, especially not about Gaza. The question is taboo. Not only won't anyone ask it out loud, but very, very few people will dare ask it in the privacy of their own minds.

However, I think it's time we start asking it, privately and in public. If we don't, I think there's going to be Operation Cast Lead II, then Operation Cast Lead III, and each one is going to be worse than the last, and the consequences for Palestinians and Israelis are going to be unimaginable.

State supports Kiryat Netafim houses built without permits

Article Author(s): Dan Izenberg
Tovah Lazaroff

Media Outlet: The Jerusalem Post

Date: December 31, 2009

Source Link(s):

<http://www.jpost.com/servlet/Satellite?cid=1261364553330&pagename=JPost%2FJPArti...> [15]

The state on Wednesday asked the High Court of Justice to reject a petition filed by Peace Now against construction of 15 houses in the West Bank settlement of Kiryat Netafim and said it would complete detailed planning which would pave the way for the authorities to grant building permits for the homes.

The state's support of the 15-home project comes in the midst of a 10-month moratorium on new settlement construction.

Child born into a life of conflict in Gaza

Article Author(s): Katya Adler

Media Outlet: BBC News

Date: December 30, 2009

Source Link(s): http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/middle_east/8420565.stm [16]

Mariam El-Sharif was born a year ago into a world of conflict and violence.

Her extended family crowds around a cake with one pink candle on it.

The walls of this front room in northern Gaza are still riddled with bullet and mortar shell holes.

Israel began a three-week long assault on Gaza, a couple of hours after Mariam came in to the world. Panic and chaos spread throughout Gaza's main hospital.

Israel says its operation was aimed at Palestinian militants, who for years had been firing rockets at Israeli families over the border.

For American Teens, Lessons in Hebrew Immersion and Settler Ideology

Article Author(s): Nathan Jeffay

Media Outlet: The Jewish Daily Forward

Date: December 30, 2009

Source Link(s): <http://forward.com/articles/122211/> [17]

For participants in the Yeshiva University schools' newest exchange program, the last month has been one of slumber parties, shopping trips, Hebrew-language immersion and settler ideology.

In early December the Queens, N.Y.-based Samuel H. Wang Yeshiva University High School for Girls became the first American girls' school on record to immerse its students in West Bank-based programming.

?The two-state solution is starting to look impractical?

Article Author(s): Jonathan Cook

Media Outlet: The National

Date: December 31, 2009

Source Link(s):

<http://www.thenational.ae/apps/pbcs.dll/article?AID=/20091231/FOREIGN/712309844/...> [18]

The biggest effect for Israel's 1.3 million Palestinian citizens of its assault on Gaza last winter has been to smash any remaining illusions that there is a future for the minority in a Jewish state, the community's leaders have agreed.

They say that minority voters have almost completely abandoned Zionist parties, even left-wing ones, believing that none is really interested in a peaceful solution to the country's conflict with the Palestinians.

Rock by rock, Gaza slowly rebuilds

Article Author(s): Erin Cunningham

Media Outlet: The National

Date: December 31, 2009

Source Link(s):

<http://www.thenational.ae/apps/pbcs.dll/article?AID=/20091231/FOREIGN/712309846/...> [19]

In a rare scene in a territory where industry has all but collapsed, a Palestinian worker in the Gaza Strip pounds on fractured slabs of destroyed buildings with a shoddy hammer, dumping the fragments into a machine that then crushes and spits the gravel into a bin.

Subsequently mixed with the odd bag of smuggled cement, the rubble of Gaza is transformed by this flagship factory in the north into flimsy but lucrative bricks now used to patch some of the enclave's war-damaged houses.

Israel's double game should not set terms

Media Outlet: The National

Article Type: Editorial

Date: December 30, 2009

Source Link(s):

<http://www.thenational.ae/apps/pbcs.dll/article?AID=/20091231/OPINION/712309915/...> [20]

Again Benjamin Netanyahu holds out a poisoned chalice disguised as a peace initiative. The Israeli prime minister has played a wily game this past year to placate international pressure for a peace deal and the demands of his right-wing domestic coalition. During his recent visit to Cairo, Mr Netanyahu was praised for 'moving forward' on peace negotiations, although the visit came the day after Israel announced plans for 700 new homes in East Jerusalem.

When Obama took his eyes off the [Palestine] ball

Article Author(s): Daoud Kuttab

Media Outlet: The Jordan Times

Article Type: Opinion

Date: December 31, 2009

Source Link(s): <http://www.jordantimes.com/?news=22763> [21]

For a few minutes on Sunday I wondered what would have happened if I was reading rather than listening to US President Barack Obama's statement from Hawaii. The US president took time off his Christmas vacation to speak about the incident that occurred on the flight from Amsterdam to Detroit. Had I not heard his voice and seen his picture, I would have thought that the speaker was none other than former US president George W. Bush. What has happened to Obama in less than one year?

Sanction Israel?

Media Outlet: The Jordan Times

Article Type: Editorial

Date: December 31, 2009

Source Link(s): <http://www.jordantimes.com/?news=22760> [22]

Sanctions on Israel? What a good idea. It seems that the country does not yield to diplomacy, nor does it fear force, being the overwhelming military power in this region. Since this balance of power in its favour has not induced the country to act magnanimously, there is only one thing for the world to do in order to once and for all end this problem: sanction Israel!

MIDEAST: New Year Reopens Wounds of the Old

Article Author(s): Eva Bartlett

Media Outlet: Inter Press Service (IPS)

Date: December 30, 2009

Source Link(s): <http://www.ipsnews.net/news.asp?idnews=49850> [23]

For many survivors of the last Israeli war on Gaza, time has not healed their wounds, physical or emotional.

Amal Samouni, 10, still suffers vision problems in her right eye. The shrapnel remaining in her head causes her constant pain and she is unable to concentrate at school.

Her concentration is broken, also, by memories of her martyred father and younger brother, both of whom she saw shot dead at close range by Israeli soldiers during the 2008-2009 winter war on Gaza.

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