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February 25, 2011

Middle East News: World Press Roundup

Young Palestinians seek to bridge national divisions, and call for protests on March 15. Deputy FM Ayalon denounces the concept of "linkage." Palestinians are injured by an Israeli attack on Gaza. Palestinians in Ramallah rally for change. Settlers vandalize Palestinian villages. Secularists are hounded by Hamas in Gaza. The Quartet launches a new peace bid. Luxembourg's FM visits Gaza, calls for ending the Israeli blockade. Yoel Marcus says peace is the only way forward for Israel. Chancellor Merkel chides PM Netanyahu for not making "a single step to advance peace." Ian McEwan donates his Jerusalem Prize money to an Israeli-Palestinian peace group. Israel allowed \$13.5 million into Gaza. A spike is reported in interest in "Israel Birthright" trips. J street plans 2,000 people at this weekend's conference. Noted Journalist Jerold Kessel passes away. Palestinians are worried Qaddafi will attack them in Libya. The Forward profiles Palestinian entrepreneur Bashar Masri. Rami Khouri says the US has a new chance to amend its Middle East policies. ATFP President Ziad Asali says stability cannot come at the price of injustice.

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Young Seek to End West Bank and Gaza Schism

Article Author(s): Isabel Kershner

Date: February 24, 2011

Young Palestinians watching the revolutions in Egypt, Tunisia and elsewhere in the region

have no shortage of their own protest-worthy causes.

Palestinian youths took to the streets of Ramallah in the West Bank to call for unity between Hamas and Fatah.

AYALON: The death of ?linkage?

Article Author(s): Danny Ayalon

Media Outlet: The Washington Times

Article Type: Editorial

Date: February 24, 2011

Source Link(s): <http://www.washingtontimes.com/news/2011/feb/24/the-death-of-linkage/> [6]

The last few weeks and months have finally proven the fallacy of one of the most mistaken theories about development and peace in the Middle East. For a number of years, foreign officials, experts and commentators have claimed that if the Israeli-Palestinian conflict was solved, then there would be peace in the Middle East. This was coined ?linkage.?

Palestinians injured in Gaza airstrike

Media Outlet: Ma'an News Agency

Date: February 24, 2011

Source Link(s): <http://www.maannews.net/eng/ViewDetails.aspx?ID=363138> [7]

An Israeli airstrike targeted southern Gaza late Thursday, moderately injuring two Palestinians in an attack on a vehicle in the city of Rafah.

The injured were taken by ambulance to the Abu Najjar hospital, said Adham Abu Salmiya, a spokesman for the Gaza medical services.

At least one of the victims was still in the vehicle, which was on fire after sustaining four direct strikes, witnesses said. Residents of Khan Younis confirmed hearing four distinct explosions around the time of the attack.

Witnesses said the vehicle belonged to the government in Gaza.

Thousands rally for change in West Bank

Media Outlet: Ma'an News Agency

Date: February 25, 2011

Source Link(s): <http://www.maannews.net/eng/ViewDetails.aspx?ID=363148> [8]

Palestinians rallied Thursday in the center of Ramallah protesting against both the state of internal political disunity and the Oslo Accords with Israel, leading to brief skirmishes between the sides.

About 1,500 protesters took to the main streets of the city carrying flags and banners and calling for unity and liberation. Protesters represented every faction, among them Hamas, Fatah, and the leftist parties.

Khalida Jarrar, a Popular Front for the Liberation of Palestine lawmaker, said it was time to "wipe this page from our history."

PA: Settlers vandalize Nablus villages

Media Outlet: Ma'an News Agency

Date: February 25, 2011

Source Link(s): <http://www.maannews.net/eng/ViewDetails.aspx?ID=363226> [9]

Settlers on Friday escalated attacks against Palestinians in villages south of the West Bank city of Nablus, Palestinian officials said.

Palestinian Authority settlement official Ghassan Douglas said residents of the illegal Yitzhar settlement set fire to a bulldozer belonging to Ibrahim Ishteyah in Burin.

Meanwhile in Jit, settlers sprayed racist graffiti and punctured the tires of villagers' cars, Douglas said.

The PA official added that settlers chopped down 25 trees belonging to Hassan and Mohammad Safadi in Urif.

Gaza's Islamist rulers hounding secular community

Article Author(s): Daaa Hadid

Media Outlet: Associated Press

Date: February 25, 2011

Source Link(s): <http://www.statesman.com/news/nation/gazas-islamist-rulers-hounding-secular-comm...> [10]

After nearly four years of Hamas rule, the Gaza Strip's small secular community is in tatters, decimated by the militant group's campaign to impose its strict version of Islam in the coastal territory.

Hamas has bullied men and women to dress modestly, tried to keep the sexes from mingling in public and sparked a flight of secular university students and educated professionals. Most

recently, it has confiscated novels it deems offensive to Islam from a bookshop and banned Gaza's handful of male hairdressers from styling women's hair.

Quartet tries new Israeli-Palestinian peace bid

Article Author(s): Edith M. Lederer

Media Outlet: Associated Press

Date: February 24, 2011

Source Link(s): <http://www.statesman.com/news/nation/quartet-tries-new-israeli-palestinian-peace...> [11]

Envoys from the United States, the United Nations, the European Union and Russia are hoping to hold separate meetings with Israeli and Palestinian negotiators to try to revive peace talks, the U.N.'s Mideast coordinator said Thursday,

Robert Serry said the so-called Quartet of Mideast mediators has proposed meetings with the two sides on all core issues blocking a peace settlement. They include borders of a Palestinian state, security arrangements, the fate of Palestinian refugees and the status of Jerusalem.

Luxembourg FM visits Gaza, calls for ending Israeli blockade

Media Outlet: Xinhua

Date: February 25, 2011

Source Link(s): <http://english.peopledaily.com.cn/90001/90777/90854/7300821.html> [12]

Luxembourg Foreign Minister Jean Assleborn visited the Hamas-ruled Gaza Strip on Friday and called on Israel to lift a tight blockade that had been imposed on the enclave for more than three years.

Assleborn, who is also a deputy prime minister of Luxembourg, arrived in the Gaza Strip earlier on Friday, from Israel, for a several-hour visit in the enclave.

"My message to Israel is very clear. If you like your children please like and love the children in Gaza and give them a possibility to live under better and normal conditions," Assleborn told a new briefing in Gaza.

Path of peace is Israel's only choice in new Mideast

Article Author(s): Yoel Marcus

Media Outlet: Haaretz

Date: February 25, 2011

Source Link(s): <http://www.haaretz.com/print-edition/opinion/path-of-peace-is-israel-s-only-choi...> [13]

President Shimon Peres, an incorrigible optimist, promised us a new Middle East. He even predicted that the day would come when Gaza would turn into the Singapore of the Middle East. He was also the first to encourage an alliance of security interests between secular Turkey and Israel.

Like many of us, he too believed that so long as Mubarak stayed in power, the peace agreement would last. He was also confident that Mubarak's corrupt son would perpetuate his father's policies. After all, billions of dollars of American aid should not be taken lightly.

Merkel chides Netanyahu for failing to make 'a single step to advance peace'

Article Author(s): Barak Ravid

Media Outlet: Haaretz

Date: February 25, 2011

Source Link(s): <http://www.haaretz.com/print-edition/news/merkel-chides-netanyahu-for-failing-to...> [14]

A crisis erupted between Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu and German Chancellor Angela Merkel. During a telephone call this week, Merkel told Netanyahu that he had disappointed her and had done nothing to advance peace, sources told Haaretz.

The prime minister tried to persuade Merkel that he was about to launch a diplomatic initiative, explaining he is making a speech in two weeks in which he will outline a new peace plan.

Ian McEwan donates Jerusalem Prize money to Israeli-Palestinian peace group

Article Author(s): Maya Sela

Media Outlet: Haaretz

Date: February 25, 2011

Source Link(s): <http://www.haaretz.com/print-edition/news/ian-mcewan-donates-jerusalem-prize-mon...> [15]

The British author Ian McEwan, who received the Jerusalem Prize at this year's International Book Fair, said he will be donating the \$10,000 award to Combatants for Peace.

The group was founded by Palestinians and Israelis who had previously taken an active part in fighting each other. Its representatives said they are committed to working to end the occupation and achieve a two-state solution.

McEwan met Thursday with group representatives Bassem Ararmin, Muhammed Aweida, Yoni Yahav and Roi Amit to hand them the prize money.

Demand soars for Birthright trips

Media Outlet: Ynetnews

Date: February 25, 2011

Source Link(s): <http://www.ynetnews.com/articles/0,7340,L-4033008,00.html> ^[16]

A record 40,108 eligible Jewish young adults in North America applied to participate in a Taglit-Birthright Israel trip this summer.

Registration for the trip, which closed February 22 after only seven days, represents both the highest number of applicants from North America and the shortest registration period.

Israel allows \$13.5 million into Gaza

Article Author(s): Tani Goldstein

Media Outlet: Ynetnews

Date: February 25, 2011

Source Link(s): <http://www.ynetnews.com/articles/0,7340,L-4033859,00.html> ^[17]

Israeli authorities ? the Bank of Israel and security forces ? approved and facilitated the transfer of \$13.5 million in cash to the Gaza Strip through the Erez crossing on Wednesday, just several hours before a Grad rocket attack on the southern city of Beersheba, Ynet has learned.

The money was transferred from a bank account of the United Nations Relief and Works Agency in the Bank of Palestine in Ramallah to the organization's account in the same bank in Gaza in order to pay the salaries of UNRWA employees in the Strip.

J Street aims to have 2,000 at weekend conference in DC

Article Author(s): Hilary Leila Krieger

Media Outlet: The Jerusalem Post

Date: February 25, 2011

Source Link(s): <http://www.jpost.com/JewishWorld/JewishNews/Article.aspx?id=209808> ^[18]

More than 50 members of Congress are expected to attend J Street's second-annual conference here this weekend, with 200 offices receiving the progressive group's lobbyists during its visit to Capitol Hill on Tuesday, according to the organization.

The number of federal lawmakers coming to the conference gala on Monday night are slightly more than the 44 who came last year, but well under the 148 lawmakers who served as a host committee at the last conference. This year J Street has no host committee.

PA, Hamas fear Gaddafi will attack Palestinians in Libya

Article Author(s): Khaled Abu Toameh

Media Outlet: The Jerusalem Post

Date: February 24, 2011

Source Link(s): <http://www.jpost.com/MiddleEast/Article.aspx?id=209749> ^[19]

Palestinians on Thursday expressed fear that Muammar Gaddafi would turn against thousands of Palestinians living in Libya under the pretext they are helping his opponents.

The concern came in response to charges made by Gaddafi and his son Seif al-Islam to the effect that Arabs living in Libya were involved in the fighting against the government.

Both the Palestinian Authority and the Hamas government have called on neighboring Arab countries to intervene to prevent Gaddafi from carrying out "massacres" against Palestinians in Libya.

Jerrold Kessel, journalist, author, filmmaker, dies at 66

Article Author(s): Leslie Susser

Media Outlet: The Jerusalem Post

Date: February 25, 2011

Source Link(s): <http://www.jpost.com/JewishWorld/JewishNews/Article.aspx?id=209791> ^[20]

Jerrold (Yoram) Kessel, who died on Thursday after a long battle with cancer, was one of Israel's leading English-language journalists, with a career that spanned over four decades in radio, print and television, including stints as Jerusalem correspondent for the London Jewish Chronicle, news editor at The Jerusalem Post, Israel reporter for CNN and sports columnist for Ha'aretz.

He was 66.

We first met at the Hebrew University in the 1960s, as part of a group of young ex-South African immigrants studying subjects like literature, history, politics, economics and philosophy.

Young Palestinians call for protests on 15 March

Article Author(s): Harriet Sherwood

Media Outlet: The Guardian

Date: February 24, 2011

Source Link(s): <http://www.guardian.co.uk/world/2011/feb/24/palestinian-young-people-protests> [21]

Their movement has no name and no leaders. Just a goal, and a tool.

The goal is to force an end to the political divisions among Palestinians by stirring the youth of Gaza and the West Bank to emulate their brothers and sisters in Egypt, Tunisia and Libya.

Their tool ? as elsewhere ? is the internet, specifically Facebook. "End The Division", a page in both Arabic and English, calls for protests across the Palestinian territories and refugee camps in Jordan and Lebanon on 15 March. It has already got thousands of supporters, and is growing by the day.

Palestinian-American Entrepreneur Re-Envisions West Bank Development

Article Author(s): Nathan Jeffay

Media Outlet: The Jewish Daily Forward

Date: February 23, 2011

Source Link(s): <http://forward.com/articles/135638/> [22]

In his chic office in Ramallah, Bashar Masri, believed to be the richest person in the Palestinian territories, is in high spirits. It's February 3, his 50th birthday, and the past year has been a particularly good one.

It is a year that has seen him start construction on the first planned Palestinian city, an \$800 million development that will have more homes than Ramallah. And he nearly achieved in the boardroom what Palestinian Authority President Mahmoud Abbas, whose office is just a few blocks away, hasn't managed in negotiations.

Second chance in the Middle East

Article Author(s): Rami Khouri

Media Outlet: The Jordan Times

Article Type: Editorial

Date: February 25, 2011

Source Link(s): <http://www.jordantimes.com/?news=34856> [23]

Sometimes in life you get a second chance to get something right, after getting it wrong the first time. The perception I get from discussions in Washington, with independent analysts and people in and close to the administration, is that the Obama team remains caught and wavering between two approaches: to forge ahead with a bold new policy that responds to the historic changes now rippling through the Middle East; to broadly maintain established old patterns of American policy, especially vis-à-vis Arab autocrats and the Arab-Israeli conflict.

Stability not at cost of injustice

Article Author(s): Ziad Asali

Media Outlet: Arab News

Article Type: Editorial

Date: February 24, 2011

Source Link(s): <http://arabnews.com/opinion/columns/article283346.ece> [24]

One would expect the usual demands for democracy, human rights, freedom of expression and regularly scheduled elections as well as a heightened commitment to the people of the region, that their rights and aspirations will be reflected in this new vision. Furthermore, it would not be surprising if all these were packaged as part of an initiative to address the Palestine-Israel conflict and a commitment to the establishment of a state of Palestine.

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