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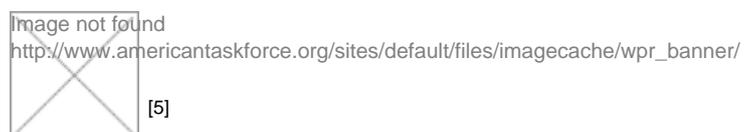
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December 18, 2007

Middle East News: World Press Roundup

Reuters reports on how Israel's interpretation of a freeze in settlements is being translated on the ground (1.) BBC (UK) examines the steps being taken to ensure that the \$7.4 billion pledged by the international community as aid to the Palestinians reaches those most in need (5.) A Times (UK) opinion by chief foreign commentator Bronwen Maddox acknowledges the importance of the Paris donor conference while stressing that realization of its benefits hinges on Israel's relaxing of its restrictions on Palestinian freedom of movement (7.) The A Daily Star (Lebanon) editorial stresses the critical role of the United States in Israeli-Palestinian peacemaking in the wake of the Paris donor conference (9.) In a BitterLemons (Israel/Palestine) interview, Palestinian legislator Hanan Ashrawi ties the Israeli demand to be recognized as a Jewish state prior to negotiations to the 'demographic' issue (11.) A Haaretz (Israel) editorial urges the Israeli government to remove all roadblocks in the occupied West Bank that are hindering the Palestinian economy, in accordance with the World Bank report on the issue (12.)

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Israeli Neighborhood Haunts Peace Talks

Article Author(s): Sarah El Deeb

Media Outlet: The Associated Press

Date: December 18, 2007

Source Link(s): http://www.washingtonpost.com/wp-dyn/content/article/2007/12/18/AR2007121800177_... [6]

The Jerusalem neighborhood of Har Homa, with its white stone buildings and billboards hawking new real estate projects, now has managed to disrupt Israeli-Palestinian peace talks for the second time in a decade.

Israel's announcement this month that it plans to build 307 new homes in this east Jerusalem neighborhood, on land Palestinians want for the capital of their future state, drew international condemnation.

The plan was the first wrench thrown into peace negotiations relaunched last week after a violent seven-year hiatus.

Palestinian Aid: Where Will It Go?

Media Outlet: Bbc News

Date: December 18, 2007

Source Link(s): http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/middle_east/7148175.stm [7]

As donors meet in Paris to pledge aid to the Palestinian Authority, BBC Middle East analyst Roger Hardy explains the steps being taken to make sure the money will reach those who need it most.

The idea is simple - to use a massive injection of outside aid to consolidate the fledgling peace process launched in Annapolis in November.

But how will the aid get to those who need it? And how will it be spent?

Blair's Uphill Battle To Revive Palestinian Economy

Article Author(s): Ian Black

Media Outlet: The Guardian

Article Type: Special Report

Date: December 18, 2007

Source Link(s): <http://www.guardian.co.uk/middleeast/story/0,,2228779,00.html> [8]

It was hard to avoid the obvious seasonal message when Tony Blair, briefly playing the tourist, stayed overnight in Bethlehem recently: yes, there was room at the inn in the little West Bank town, a rare public vote of confidence in prospects for the Palestinian economy.

Britain's former prime minister has been travelling incessantly since becoming the representative of the "Quartet" of Middle East peacemakers in the summer, and generally keeping a low profile.

Israel Alone Can Offer Something All The World's Money Cannot Buy

Article Author(s): Bronwen Maddox

Media Outlet: Time

Article Type: Commentary

Date: December 18, 2007

Source Link(s): <http://americantaskforce.org/db/index.php?e=1&s=4&f=1> [9]

Today's conference in Paris, a drive to breathe life into the Palestinian economy, is as easily derided as last month's summit in Annapolis, but it is worth much more.

It Will Take More Than Money To End The Plight Of The Palestinian People

Media Outlet: The Daily Star

Article Type: Editorial

Date: December 18, 2007

Source Link(s):

http://dailystar.com.lb/article.asp?edition_id=1&article_id=87537&categ_id=17 [10]

Monday's gathering in Paris of donor countries to support the widely hoped-for establishment of a Palestinian state was necessary but not sufficient. Without the funds that were pledged, any form of Palestinian independence that might be negotiated as part of a peace agreement to end the Israeli occupation would be a flimsy thing indeed. The more important litmus tests are yet to come, however, and each demands unprecedented levels of seriousness from both the principals and their American mediators.

Roadblocks Counter Funding

Media Outlet: Haaretz

Article Type: Editorial

Date: December 18, 2007

Source Link(s): <http://www.haaretz.com/hasen/spages/935523.html> [11]

When Foreign Minister Tzipi Livni declared in Paris on Sunday that "a developed Palestinian economy is in Israel's interest," we can assume that she meant that it is also in the interest of the Palestinians. After all, it is for the Palestinian, not the Israeli interest that more than 90 representatives of states and organizations gathered in order to express their willingness to contribute to the economic development of Palestine.

Annapolis Gains Momentum

Article Author(s): Gershon Baskin

Media Outlet: The Jerusalem Post

Date: December 18, 2007

Source Link(s):

<http://www.jpost.com/servlet/Satellite?cid=1196847364346&pagename=JPost%2FJPAr...> [12]

There is great public skepticism regarding the outcome of the Annapolis meeting. Many of the skeptics state that at the end of the day, it was little more than a photo-op for the principals - Bush, Olmert and Abbas - and that it produced no real substance.

The failure of the parties to produce a joint statement that contained any content on the principles for resolving the core issues for permanent status, for some, points to the Annapolis meeting as a failure.

The Palestinians Need Peace As Well As Aid

Article Author(s): Tim Butcher

Media Outlet: The Telegraph

Article Type: Opinion

Date: December 19, 2007

Source Link(s):

<http://www.telegraph.co.uk/opinion/main.jhtml?xml=/opinion/2007/12/18/do1803.xml> [13]

There is a children's park not far from my Jerusalem home, which neatly illustrates international aid attempts to deal with the Israel-Palestine question.

The playground, really only known to the Palestinian local population, was paid for by an Italian contribution, funded through the EU and constructed by the UN Development Programme, and, at first glance, all looks in order with its see-saw, slides and climbing frame.

Then you notice the swings.

Speaking Truth For Peace

Article Author(s): Michael Felsen

Media Outlet: The Jerusalem Post

Article Type: Opinion

Date: December 19, 2007

Source Link(s):

<http://www.jpost.com/servlet/Satellite?cid=1196847374237&pagename=JPost%2FJPAr...> [14]

For years, countless synagogues and other Jewish institutions in the United States have flown the banner declaring "We Support Israel in Her Quest for Peace."

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