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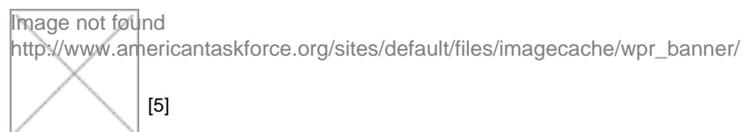
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December 31, 2007

Middle East News: World Press Roundup

The Associated Press weighs the challenges and opportunities facing Israelis and Palestinians as they try to conclude a final peace settlement in 2008 (1.) A New York Times editorial urges more Bush administration engagement in the post-Annapolis peace efforts stagnation (3.) Inter Press Service examines the prospects of Israeli PM Olmert remaining in office through 2008 as the consequences of the 2006 Lebanon War and peacemaking with the Palestinians stress his governing coalition (6.) Der Spiegel (Germany) reports on an Israeli entrepreneur who has located his computer company's development center in the West Bank in an effort to help create a high-tech Palestinian economy (8.) BBC (UK) interviews a range of Mideast experts on the prospects of achieving Israeli-Palestinian peace in 2008 (9.) A Daily Star (Lebanon) opinion by Michael Young takes issue with claims that 'neo-conservatives' still dominate and impact U.S. Mideast foreign policy (10.) An Arab News (Saudi Arabia) opinion by former U.N. weapons inspector Scott Ritter calls for a re-evaluation of the current relationship between the U.S. and Israel in favor of one of mutual benefit (12.) A Yedioth/Ynet News opinion by Hebrew university professor Gabi Sheffer cautions Israel from a re-invasion of Gaza, urging instead serious negotiations with Syria and the Palestinians, including Hamas (14.)

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About That Peace Process

Media Outlet: The New York Times
Article Type: Editorial

Date: December 31, 2007

Source Link(s):

http://www.nytimes.com/2007/12/31/opinion/31mon2.html?_r=2&oref=slogin&oref=slog... [6]

It didn't take long for the glow of the Annapolis peace conference to wear off. Israelis and Palestinians have quickly fallen back into predictable destructive patterns. Arab countries have not done anywhere near enough to support the negotiations. Even the United States is behind on its pledges: because of bureaucratic wrangling and Israeli doubts, it has yet to establish a promised "mechanism" to monitor the two sides' behavior and pressure them into meeting their commitments.

Israeli Army, A National Melting Pot, Faces New Challenges In Training Officers

Article Author(s): Steven Erlanger

Media Outlet: The New York Times

Date: December 31, 2007

Source Link(s):

<http://www.nytimes.com/2007/12/31/world/middleeast/31israel.html?pagewanted=prin...> [7]

The young officer candidates, in uniforms and old American helmets, their M-16s slung over their shoulders, were blowing up balloons. Lilac, blue and red balloons. Then they attached them to targets.

The balloons were "hostages," they said. The point was to hit the target but not a hostage. Of course, since some of these young men and women were training for office jobs, their skills were not always so acute. They did not kill any hostages, but sometimes they did not hit the target, either, their bullets piercing the desert hills.

Challenges 2007-2008: A Prime Minister Hangs On, Just About

Article Author(s): Peter Hirschberg

Media Outlet: Inter Press Service (IPS)

Date: December 31, 2007

Source Link(s): <http://ipsnews.net/news.asp?idnews=40636> [8]

At the start of 2007, it seemed that war would cost Israeli Prime Minister Ehud Olmert his job. As he completed the year, still in office, the greatest threat to him staying there now seems to be the prospect of peace.

2008: The Year Of Palestine?

Article Author(s): Roger Hardy

Media Outlet: Bbc News

Date: December 31, 2007

Source Link(s): http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/middle_east/7148445.stm [9]

Will 2008 see the creation of a Palestinian state, or will November's Annapolis peace conference prove another false dawn?

US President George W Bush shows no inclination to become a lame duck, pledging no let-up during his last year in office.

He is due to visit the Middle East early in 2008, a sign of his personal commitment to advancing the peace process there.

But he will not find it easy to cut through the scepticism that is widespread in the region.

An Israeli Hurdle For Haj Pilgrims

Media Outlet: Gulf News

Article Type: Editorial

Date: December 31, 2007

Source Link(s): <http://archive.gulfnews.com/articles/07/12/31/10178545.html> [10]

Some 2,000 Palestinians who performed their Haj duties at Makkah are now stranded on two boats off the Egyptian coast.

The reason for this is a dispute that has arisen with the Israeli authorities, who demand the right to security control checks of all pilgrims, something the Palestinians are reluctant to do, fearing reprisals from the Israeli security forces.

In checking for security clearance, Israel also investigates whether any of the personnel are related to Palestinians already in Israeli jails, or known person wanted by Israel.

Us Must Re-evaluate Its Relationship With Israel

Article Author(s): Scott Ritter

Media Outlet: Arab News

Article Type: Opinion

Date: December 31, 2007

Source Link(s):

<http://www.arabnews.com/?page=7§ion=0&article=105132&d=31&m=12&y=2007> [11]

The government of Prime Minister Ehud Olmert has embarked on policies that are questionable at best when one examines them from a purely Israeli standpoint; they are nothing less than a betrayal of the United States when examined from a broader perspective.

No One Is Righteous

Article Author(s): Akiva Eldar

Media Outlet: Haaretz

Article Type: Opinion

Date: December 31, 2007

Source Link(s): <http://www.haaretz.com/hasen/spages/939889.html> [12]

Tzipi Livni is absolutely correct when she says "Egypt's activity on the Philadelphi Route is dismal and problematic." The foreign minister told the Knesset Foreign Affairs and Defense Committee the truth; these weapons do strengthen Hamas' grip, at the expense of the pragmatic elements in Gaza. It's too bad no one asked her why she thinks the Egyptian government, which she said plays a positive role in the peace process, is acting against its own interests.

We Won't Win In Gaza

Article Author(s): Gabi Sheffer

Media Outlet: Ynetnews

Article Type: Opinion

Date: December 31, 2007

Source Link(s): <http://www.ynetnews.com/articles/0,7340,L-3488559,00.html> [13]

IDF Chief of Staff Gabi Ashkenazi declared recently that should the IDF enter the Gaza Strip in full force, in the framework of an Israeli military operation, he has no doubt that this time around the army and the entire State of Israel will be triumphant. Several commentators were quick to explain that this declaration was an attempt to highlight the great defeat suffered by his predecessor, Dan Halutz, and to promise to the people that under Ashkenazi's leadership the army will not suffer another defeat such as the Second Lebanon War failure.

Clinton Leads In Jewish Backers, But Key Ones Back Obama, McCain

Article Author(s): Ben Harris

Media Outlet: Jewish Telegraphic Agency (JTA)

Date: January 2, 2008

Source Link(s): <http://www.jta.org/cgi-bin/iowa/news/article/2007123120071231endorsements.html> [14]

As the nation trains its spotlight on Iowa and New Hampshire, two Jewish politicians have become central players in the Granite State's political drama that may well determine who secures the Democratic and Republican nominations.

Jewish Pols Backing Clinton, But Also Obama, McCain

Article Author(s): Ben Harris

Media Outlet: Jewish Telegraphic Agency (JTA)

Date: January 3, 2008

Source Link(s): <http://www.jta.org/cgi-bin/iowa/news/article/2007123120071231endorsements.html> [14]

As the nation trains its spotlight on New Hampshire, two Jewish politicians have become central players in the Granite State's political drama that may well determine who secures the Democratic and Republican nominations.

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[9] http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/middle_east/7148445.stm

[10] <http://archive.gulfnews.com/articles/07/12/31/10178545.html>

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<http://www.arabnews.com/?page=7§ion=0&article=105132&d=31&m=12&y=2007>

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