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November 4, 2009

Middle East News: World Press Roundup

Media analyses suggest that the Obama administration is lowering expectations on Middle East peace, and is focused on preventing a meltdown. The LA Times profiles nonviolent Palestinian resistance in the occupied West Bank. Controversy surrounds a draft UN General Assembly resolution on the Goldstone report. The U.S. House of Representatives passes a bill criticizing the report, while Rep. Brian Baird critiqued its language on the House floor. Ha'aretz suggests that the Israeli leadership may be preparing public opinion for another possible Gaza war. UN chief Ban Ki-moon urges Israel to end its "provocative actions" in the occupied East Jerusalem. A commentary in Ynet says PM Netanyahu is essentially a cautious politician who avoids both war and peace, while another in Ha'aretz urges US to get tough with Israel. Michael Lame interviews Palestinian entrepreneur Bashar Masri, and Jeffrey Goldberg of the Atlantic Monthly interviews ATFP Senior Fellow Hussein Ibish.

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Short-Term Fixes Sought in Mideast

Article Author(s): Mark Landler

Media Outlet: The New York Times

Date: November 3, 2009

Source Link(s):

<http://www.nytimes.com/2009/11/04/world/middleeast/04diplo.html?ref=middleeast> ^[6]

For the last seven months, the Obama administration has labored in vain to bring the Israelis and the Palestinians together, pushing for a loose quid pro quo under which Israel would freeze construction of Jewish settlements while its Arab neighbors undertook diplomatic steps to bolster Israel's confidence in its security.

U.S. hope dims for high-level Israeli-Palestinian talks over state

Article Author(s): Karen Deyoung
Howard Schneider

Media Outlet: The Washington Post

Date: November 4, 2009

Source Link(s): <http://www.washingtonpost.com/wp-dyn/content/article/2009/11/03/AR2009110302516....> [7]

The Obama administration has concluded that an early resumption of high-level negotiations between Israel and the Palestinians over a Palestinian state is unlikely in the near future -- an acknowledgment that it has fallen short, for now, on one of its major initial foreign policy goals.

While still pressing for face-to-face talks between Palestinian Authority President Mahmoud Abbas and Israeli President Binyamin Netanyahu, Secretary of State Hillary Rodham Clinton has begun to urge Arab states to encourage Palestinian participation in lower-level talks with Israel to avoid a vacuum.

Palestinians who see nonviolence as their weapon

Article Author(s): Richard Boudreaux

Media Outlet: The Los Angeles Times

Date: November 4, 2009

Source Link(s): <http://www.latimes.com/news/nationworld/world/la-fg-nonviolence4-2009nov04,0,226...> [8]

Every Friday, Mohammed Khatib's forces assemble for battle with the Israeli army and gather their weapons: a bullhorn, banners -- and a fierce belief that peaceful protest can bring about a Palestinian state.

A few hundred strong, they march to the Israeli barrier that separates the tiny farming community of Bilin from much of its land. They chant and shout. A few teenagers throw stones.

Khatib helped launch the weekly ritual five years ago in an attempt to "re-brand" a Palestinian struggle often associated with rocket attacks and suicide bombers.

Controversy over draft UN resolution on Gaza

Media Outlet: Ma'an News Agency

Date: November 4, 2009

Source Link(s): <http://www.maannews.net/eng/ViewDetails.aspx?ID=237095> ^[9]

The UN General Assembly is likely to vote in support of a UN report alleging war crimes in Gaza on Wednesday, but experts say that, if not properly worded, the resolution could close off options for further action on the matter.

ANALYSIS / Israel preparing public for a new war in Gaza

Article Author(s): Avi Issacharoff

Media Outlet: Haaretz

Article Type: Analysis

Date: November 4, 2009

Source Link(s): <http://www.haaretz.com/hasen/spages/1125701.html> ^[10]

Maj. Gen. Amos Yadlin, director of Military Intelligence, announced Tuesday that Hamas launched a rocket some 60 kilometers into the sea, apparently as an experiment. Such a rocket, if fired from the northernmost point of the Gaza Strip, could strike the southern cities of the Gush Dan area - including Rishon Letzion, Holon and Bat Yam - and possibly reach as far as Tel Aviv itself.

U.S. House backs resolution to condemn Goldstone Gaza report

Article Author(s): Natasha Mozgovaya

Barak Ravid

Media Outlet: Haaretz

Date: November 4, 2009

Source Link(s): <http://www.haaretz.com/hasen/spages/1125593.html> ^[11]

The U.S. House of Representatives on Tuesday condemned a UN report that accuses Israeli forces and Palestinian militants of committing war crimes in Gaza early this year as irredeemably biased and unworthy of further consideration or legitimacy.

With a 344-36 vote, the House passed a nonbinding resolution that urged President Barack Obama and Secretary of State Hillary Rodham Clinton to oppose unequivocally any endorsement of the report. Twenty-two representatives voted present.

A misguided resolution - US Rep. Brian Baird

Article Author(s): Brian Baird

Media Outlet: Ma'an News Agency

Article Type: Opinion

Date: November 4, 2009

Source Link(s): <http://www.maannews.net/eng/ViewDetails.aspx?ID=237101> ^[12]

Before US House members vote on H.Res. 867, regarding the UN Goldstone report on the Gaza conflict, there are a few questions worth asking.

First, why are we bringing this resolution to the floor without ever giving former South African Constitutional Court Justice Richard Goldstone a hearing to explain his findings?

America, stop sucking up to Israel

Article Author(s): Gideon Levy

Media Outlet: Haaretz

Article Type: Opinion

Date: November 3, 2009

Source Link(s): <http://www.haaretz.com/hasen/spages/1124928.html> ^[13]

Barack Obama has been busy - offering the Jewish People blessings for Rosh Hashanah, and recording a flattering video for the President's Conference in Jerusalem and another for Yitzhak Rabin's memorial rally. Only Sheikh Hassan Nasrallah surpasses him in terms of sheer output of recorded remarks.

In all the videos, Obama heaps sticky-sweet praise on Israel, even though he has spent nearly a year fruitlessly lobbying for Israel to be so kind as to do something, anything - even just a temporary freeze on settlement building - to advance the peace process.

UN chief urges Israel to end 'provocative actions' in east Jerusalem

Media Outlet: Ynetnews

Date: November 4, 2009

Source Link(s): <http://www.ynetnews.com/articles/0,7340,L-3799967,00.html> ^[14]

UN chief Ban Ki-moon on Tuesday urged Israel to end its "provocative actions" in east Jerusalem and to abide by its commitments to freeze all settlement activity in the occupied West Bank.

"The Secretary General is dismayed at continued Israeli actions in occupied east Jerusalem, including the demolition of Palestinian homes, the eviction of Palestinian families and the insertion of settlers into Palestinian neighborhoods," a UN statement said.

"The eviction today of a Palestinian family in east Jerusalem is just the most recent incident," it added.

Palestinian workers: We're being treated like cattle

Article Author(s): Daniel Edelson

Media Outlet: Ynetnews

Date: November 3, 2009

Source Link(s): <http://www.ynetnews.com/articles/0,7340,L-3799882,00.html> ^[15]

The 4,500 Palestinian workers who travel through the Eyal checkpoint, near West Bank city of Qalqilya, on their way to work in Israel, are finding it hard to enjoy the long-awaited winter.

The checkpoint provides cover for those waiting to cross it, but its little shed can shelter about 100 people at the most, leaving the rest exposed to rain and cold winds.

"I usually like the winter, but why do we have to stand here like this?" wondered Majid Nazal, a construction worker who crosses the checkpoint daily.

Alone in the world

Article Author(s): Yigal Sarna

Media Outlet: Ynetnews

Article Type: Opinion

Date: November 4, 2009

Source Link(s): <http://www.ynetnews.com/articles/0,7340,L-3799939,00.html> ^[16]

To Benjamin Netanyahu's credit, we should first note that there are no wars during his terms in office. This was the case during his first term, and this may be the case in the second one as well.

He is a cautious man. Nahum Barnea referred to it as someone on early retirement. A man who does little and finds it difficult to make decisions. In respects to wars, his hesitation should be lauded.

Clinton tries to keep peace alive

Article Author(s): Kim Ghattas

Media Outlet: BBC World News

Date: November 4, 2009

Source Link(s): http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/middle_east/8341560.stm [17]

Hillary Clinton was planning to be home by now after a week-long trip, but instead she took a detour through Egypt for talks with top officials including President Hosni Mubarak, looking for help from a country that is key to any progress in the Middle East peace process.

In her discussions she is expected to try to undo some of the damage done by her comments in the past few days while also looking for ways to keep some semblance of movement in the moribund Middle East peace process.

The Obama administration is worried that in the absence of any talks, violence might resume.

Settlement by stealth belies promises of restraint

Article Author(s): Donald MacIntyre

Media Outlet: The Independent

Date: November 4, 2009

Source Link(s): <http://www.independent.co.uk/news/world/middle-east/settlement-by-stealth-belies...> [18]

Maysaa Al-Kurd has lived all her life in the home her family moved into in 1956. The pomegranate tree standing in the garden was planted by her father when she was still an infant nearly half a century ago. But that hardly reassured her yesterday when she heard the Jewish settlers break into the next-door extension building her brother Nabil built to house his family in 2001.

Despite progress, Obama hesitant about Netanyahu meeting

Article Author(s): Ron Kampeas

Media Outlet: Jewish Telegraphic Agency (JTA)

Date: November 3, 2009

Source Link(s): <http://jta.org/news/article/2009/11/03/1008924/israels-offer-unprecedented-lack-...> [19]

With President Obama and Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu set to appear at the same convention of Jewish activists, and their governments nearing a deal on the thorny settlements issue, it would seem like a great time for a sit-down.

But there's a problem: the reluctance of the Palestinians -- and by extension the Arab world -- to climb on board for renewed negotiations.

For sale ? one Middle East peace strategy (hardly used)

Article Author(s): Emile Hokayem

Media Outlet: The National

Date: November 4, 2009

Source Link(s):

<http://www.thenational.ae/apps/pbcs.dll/article?AID=/20091104/OPINION/711039948/...> [20]

Pity the Palestinians, but pity also the peacemakers whose good intentions inevitably stumble up against the harsh realities of Israeli-Palestinian politicking.

The US secretary of state Hillary Clinton's retreat from the position that a complete Israeli settlement freeze is a necessary confidence-building measure before final-status negotiations is not new; Barack Obama admitted as much in September. It simply reflects the dead end that US peace diplomacy has reached, and the need to start anew with a different approach.

A bad month for Mideast peace-making

Article Author(s): Rami Khouri

Media Outlet: The Daily Star

Article Type: Opinion

Date: November 4, 2009

Source Link(s):

http://www.dailystar.com.lb/article.asp?edition_id=10&categ_id=5&article_id=1082... [21]

In baseball three strikes mean you are out, but in American foreign policy in the Middle East three strikes seem to mean business as usual. In the past few days and weeks, the United States has made three very controversial moves related to Arab-Israeli issues that generate widespread skepticism and anguish ? though their total significance remains difficult to gauge, because this depends on whatever else the US may do in the weeks and months ahead.

BUILDING IN THE WEST BANK: An Interview with Bashar Masri

Article Author(s): Michael Lame

Media Outlet: Re-Think the Middle East

Article Type: Interview

Date: November 3, 2009

Source Link(s): <http://www.rethinkme.org/?p=260> [22]

Bashar Masri is a Palestinian, born and raised in Nablus, educated in Egypt and the United States. Trained as a chemical engineer and with a background in management consulting, Bashar moved back to the West Bank from the Washington DC area in the mid-1990s, establishing himself in Ramallah. He was the founder and first publisher of the Palestinian daily newspaper *Al Ayyam*. A successful businessman, Bashar is CEO of Massar International, which engages in a variety of business activities across the Middle East, North Africa, and Eastern Europe.

Hussein Ibish on the Fantasy World of One-Staters

Article Author(s): Jeffrey Goldberg

Media Outlet: The Atlantic

Article Type: Interview

Date: November 3, 2009

Source Link(s):

http://jeffreycgoldberg.theatlantic.com/archives/2009/11/hussein_ibish_on_the_fan... [23]

Hussein Ibish, a senior fellow at the American Task Force on Palestine, which is the leading American group advocating for an independent Palestine alongside Israel, has a new book out, "What's Wrong With the One-State Agenda?" which does a comprehensive job of demolishing the arguments made by those who think that Israel should be eliminated and replaced by a single state of Jews and Palestinians. He has performed an important service with this book by noting one overwhelming truth about this debate: Virtually no one in Israel wants a single-state between the river and the sea.

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