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A weekly sample of news and opinions on current events from around the Middle East collected and brought to you by the Moshe Dayan Center, Tel Aviv University. [To see full article, click on title.](#)

Palestine – Yasmeen El Khoudary: The Real Situation Facing Women in Gaza

The international media focus on women's rights because it is such a sensitive issue in the Middle East – one guaranteed to evoke anger/sympathy in the reader. I take pride in saying that Gaza, and Palestine in general, is one of the few places where women and men enjoy equality in rights, because the two are equally deprived of their most basic human rights by the Israeli occupation. So please stop attributing the results to others, like Hamas, that do not deserve them.

Source: Al Jazeera (Doha), August 2, 2011

Egypt – Editorial: Islamic or Secular State?

The controversy over whether to have a secular or religious state has become burdensome, divisive and futile. Those who stand for an Islamic state want to bank on widely held sentiments to catapult themselves to power. And those who propose a secular state, mostly the Copts and liberals, do so because they fear a situation in which the majority would oppress the minority. The Copts are, and will remain, part of the fabric of this country. So could the media please quit encouraging this useless debate?

Source: Al-Ahram (Cairo), July 28, 2011

Egypt – Editorial: From Castle to Cage

The trial of former Egyptian President Hosni Mubarak, which opened on August 2, is an event of historic importance. Never before in Egypt has a head of state been brought to account in a court of law and made to answer for his actions. But many Egyptians suspect that there are some in the new leadership who want to pin all the blame on him rather than the wider group of which they were part. That is further reason for suspecting that the Egyptian revolution is as yet an unfinished affair.

Source: Arab News (Riyadh), August 3, 2011

Syria – Tariq Almohayed: Syria: Closing Mosques and Launching Satellite Television

How ironic! The Syrian regime has managed to think up an unprecedented “reformative” step. The secular Ba`thist regime in Damascus has launched a religious TV channel (Nour A-Shams TV) at the same time that it has forcibly closed mosques, converting some into military barracks. It is truly tragic to see a regime kill its own people, close mosques, and then launch a religious TV channel to establish “a true understanding” of Islam and Shari`a law!

Source: Asharq Alawsat (London), August 2, 2011

Regional – Marwan Bishara: A Rude Arab Awakening

The transformations in Egypt and Tunisia raised expectations of swift change elsewhere, but when the Arab Spring turned into a hot summer, it led to disappointment and doubt. The longer the uprisings in Libya, Yemen and Syria take, the more difficult the post-conflict healing and rebuilding of the nations. Today's challenge is no longer limited to the removal of the expired and bloody regimes, but also to try to ensure that the transition is not excessively long and costly. The challenge for the Arabs is to define their conflict through peaceful protest, and to not be dragged into bloody conflicts that tend to change people for the worse.

Source: Al Jazeera (Doha), August 1, 2011

Turkey – Semih Idiz: Military Climb Down: Is It Just for Democracy?

While the resignation of Turkey's top generals created a stir abroad, in Turkey it was not perceived as a portent of a coup. As a step towards consolidating civilian rule over the military, this increased the government's prestige at home and abroad. However, many fear that arrests of army officers and journalists are the result of a witch-hunt carried out by the government to settle old scores.

Source: Hürriyet (Istanbul), August 1, 2011

Turkey – Soner Çağaptay, Margaret Weiss: No More Cold Turkey

Despite past fall-outs between Ankara and Washington, the Arab Spring is helping realign US-Turkish policies as the two now cooperate on a wide array of issues ranging from Syria to Libya. The changing environment might even bring Israel and Turkey close again. However, if Turkey, the advocate of Arab peoples' rights, is to become a regional power, it has to come out successfully from its own liberal democracy test. Therefore, the Arab Spring is a dream for Turkey.

Source: Hürriyet (Istanbul), July 29, 2011

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