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# Middle East News Brief

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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.**

## Egypt – Marwan Bishara: Egypt's Spring Break

The Muslim Brotherhood's nomination of Khairat al-Shater for President of Egypt has raised many eyebrows and confused an already muddled political scene in Egypt. The decision comes after the group's repeated promises not to run its own candidate for president. The Brotherhood has taken a risky gamble. If they lose, their political standing would be terribly undermined. If they win, they will be accused of monopolizing power like the Mubarak-led National Democratic Party.

**Source:** Al-Jazeera (Doha), April 2, 2012

## Iraq – Emad El Din Adeeb: Saddam Returns

The deafening explosions that occurred a few days before the date of the Arab Summit in Baghdad emphasize the dangerous situation in Iraq, which is now practically divided into three minor states, and is also a major power center for extremist Islamic currents, most prominently al-Qaeda. I have always viewed the reign of former Iraqi President Saddam Hussein as an example of despotism, but compared to Iraq's circumstances today, I sorrowfully say "God bless the days of Saddam Hussein."

**Source:** Asharq Alawsat (London), April 2, 2012

## Region – Editorial: Mideast Latitude

The leaders gathered at the Arab summit in Iraq this week were understandably preoccupied with the crisis in Syria, while the situation in Iraq was also a concern. Tunisia's president, in his address Thursday, was keen to put urgent humanitarian issues such as the situation in Sudan and Somalia on the agenda as well. While these are all worthy of attention and debate, they do not take away from the importance of the main issue for Arab people, namely the Palestinian question.

**Source:** Daily Star (Beirut), March 31, 2012

## Syria – Abdulkhaleq Abdulla: No Intervention in Syria Amounts to Bad Intervention

In the case of the Syrian uprising, failure to intervene only prolongs the misery of the people in Syria. The international community should work with the Arab League. Good intervention would involve providing moral support for the Syrians, political support for the opposition, including helping them to unite, and logistical support to the Free Syrian Army.

**Source:** Gulf News (Dubai), April 3, 2012

## Iran – Melody Moezzi: Hope for Iran's Youth

Most political power in Iran lies in the hands of old bearded men in robes and turbans, plus the minor exception of a short cartoonish-looking man with a penchant for provocation and Members Only jackets. That reality, however, is bound to change in the years to come, as young Iranians enter the political sphere. As the driving force behind the massive protests that followed the reelection of President Ahmadinejad in 2009, Iranian youths have demonstrated that they are committed to democracy, and social and political reform.

**Source:** Al Arabiya (Dubai), April 3, 2012

## Turkey – Semih İdiz: Turkey's Syria Plans Hit a Hard Rock

To the dismay of the Syrian people, "the Friends of the Syrian People" meeting in Istanbul failed to produce any concrete results. The support for the Annan plan was lukewarm, and the Syrian National Council only managed to get recognition as "one of the legitimate representatives" of the Syrians. The Istanbul gathering seems to have merely provided an opportunity for Erdoğan to vent his indignation against al-Assad, and to express hopes that have little chance of being realized at this stage.

**Source:** Hürriyet (Istanbul), April 3, 2012

## Turkey – Lale Kemal: New Kurdish Strategy Reveals Divisions within the Government

Confusing remarks over the strategy, which is presented as Turkey's new plan to solve the Kurdish question, shows the differences of opinion existing among the members of the government over the Kurdish issue. The plan consists of fighting the PKK while implementing more reforms and recognizing the Kurdish BDP as a partner in negotiations. In the background of opposing voices, the team led by Erdoğan himself seems to have put its stamp on the Kurdish policy.

**Source:** Today's Zaman (Istanbul), April 2, 2012

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