

MEI MEDIA WATCH

(A Survey of Editorials)

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Iran Parliament Elections, March 2012

Note: On 2 March 2012, Iran conducted first round of elections to the 290-member parliament or *Majlis*. This election was considered to be a fierce contest between President Mahmoud Ahmadinejad and the Supreme Leader Ayatollah Ali Khamene'i. As a mark of an existing rift between these two big men, the conservatives appeared to gain the control of the country's republic. Editorial commentaries from the international and the Middle Easter media on this event are reproduced here. **Editor, MEI@ND**

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gulfnews.com

Dubai, Editorial, 1 March 2012, Thursday

1. Poll unlikely to change Iran nuclear stance

Transparency will be the key component lacking in tomorrow's (2 March) elections. If the West thinks that the upcoming Iranian elections will provide the world with a new face of Iran they can think again. Supreme Leader Ayatollah Khamene'i is set to clinch absolute power and since relations between him and President Mahmoud Ahmadinejad are fractured, no stone will be left unturned in what is likely to be a battle of attrition. **For the full text:** <http://gulfnews.com/opinions/editorials/poll-unlikely-to-change-iran-nuclear-stance-1.988250>

THE DAILY STAR

LEBANON

Beirut, Editorial, 2 March 2012, Friday

Middle East Institute @ New Delhi, www.mei.org.in

2. Hollow exercise

It is hard to see Friday's (2 March) Iranian elections as little more than a show, bereft as they are of genuine opposition figures, with each candidate being pre-approved by a religious council loyal to Supreme Leader Ali Khamene'i. The results therefore, have basically been decided already and the polls will prove little more than a competition between friends of Khamene'i, albeit friends with differences over their allegiance to President Mahmoud Ahmadinejad. **For the full text:** <http://www.dailystar.com.lb/Opinion/Editorial/2012/Mar-02/165223-hollow-exercise.ashx#axzz1pLLJuM9A>

TheNational

Abu Dhabi, Editorial, 2 March 2012, Friday

3. Iran's elections limit chances for diplomacy

First-round parliamentary elections in Iran today (2 March) offer voters a bewildering array of parties but very little real choice. Arbitrary disqualifications, intimidation, politically-manipulated legal processes and other measures have relentlessly narrowed the spectrum of political debate to just a few shades of grey. **For the full text:** <http://www.thenational.ae/thenationalconversation/editorial/irans-elections-limit-chances-for-diplomacy>

gulfnews.com

Dubai, Editorial, 5 March 2012, Monday

4. Opportunity for Iran to be positive

Gains for conservatives and Ahmadinejad's rivals may force changes in internal politics. It is important for Iran to fully become part of the international community. This is being said given its geographical location as well as the political role it plays on the regional and international scene. Yet in order for Iran to reach a status where it is accepted by the global community, it has to adopt measures that would prove that it is indeed a country that seeks cooperation and good relations with the rest of the world. **For the full text:** <http://gulfnews.com/opinions/editorials/opportunity-for-iran-to-be-positive-1.989984>

arab news.com

The Middle East's Leading English Language Daily

Jeddah, Editorial, 8 March 2012, Thursday

5. Iranian election and nuke issue

It is now over a week since the first round of the Iranian parliamentary elections took place and it remains unclear when the second round of voting will occur for the runoff election in the 65 constituencies where there were no clear winners. The vagueness of the electoral process is, however, nothing to do with any incompetence by the authorities. It is instead part of a deliberate fog that has been blown over the whole exercise, to disguise both a rising conflict within the country's leadership and the continuing suppression of any genuine opposition voices.

For the full text: <http://arabnews.com/opinion/editorial/article585073.ece>

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