

MEI MEDIA WATCH

(A Survey of Editorials)

No. 29

Tuesday, 24 April 2012

Arab Summit in Baghdad, March 2012

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Note: After a prolonged delay due to the ongoing unrest in the Arab world, Iraq hosted the Arab League summit in Baghdad on 29 March 2012. This was the third summit held in Baghdad and the first since 1990 and hence there were expectations and misgivings. One of the most important issues discussed during the summit was the Syrian crisis. Editorial commentaries from the international and the Middle Eastern media on this event are reproduced here. **Editor, MEI@ND**

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THE DAILY STAR LEBANON

Beirut, Editorial, 21 March 2012, Wednesday

1. Toothless summit

The Arab League summit due to take place in Iraq next week comes amid an uncertain security situation, from Monday's (19 March) million-strong protest in the south to the coordinated attacks across the country Tuesday which left dozens dead. These incidents and the uncertain atmosphere that prevails in the country continue in the face of a security clampdown by authorities in an attempt to prove to sceptical Arab leaders that the situation is under control and Baghdad is a safe place to hold a major summit. **For the full text:** <http://www.dailystar.com.lb/Opinion/Editorial/2012/Mar-21/167390-toothless-summit.ashx#axzz1puQrXNig>



Dubai, Editorial, 22 March 2012, Wednesday

2. Destination Baghdad

While there is no such thing as failsafe security, the series of blasts in Iraqi cities and towns just before the meeting of the Arab League is a matter of some concern. While leaders who will be attending have been reassured of their safety and security measures will clearly be tightened up, one does have to ask if the sheer presence of so many VVIPs does not make for a provocative target. For any elements looking to create trouble, this would be a tempting audience for them to show their power. **For the full text:**

http://www.khaleejtimes.com/displayarticle.asp?xfile=data/editorial/2012/March/editorial_Marc_h41.xml§ion=editorial&col=

THE DAILY STAR

LEBANON

Beirut, Editorial, 28 March 2012, Wednesday

3. Hollow fanfare

After a perhaps understandable interruption last year (2011), the annual Arab Summit of 2012 is scheduled to convene Thursday (29 March) in Baghdad, in what is expected to be an exercise in futility. In the run-up to the event, media reports suggest that Arab leaders, and their representatives, will shelve the most controversial issues, such as the crisis in Syria. **For the full text:** <http://www.dailystar.com.lb/Opinion/Editorial/2012/Mar-28/168218-hollow-fanfare.ashx#axzz1q0SbMuP9>

THE JORDAN TIMES

Amman, Editorial, 29 March 2012, Thursday

4. Expected outcome

Given the security environment and the political instability prevailing in Iraq, the mere fact that the Arab summit was held in Baghdad is a feat. The Iraqis' success in convening the meeting is intended to send the message that the country is on its way to attaining security and political stability, a prerequisite to regaining a leading role in the region.

For the full text: <http://jordantimes.com/expected-outcome>

THE DAILY STAR

LEBANON

Beirut, Editorial, 30 March 2012, Friday

5. Wrong direction

The Arab masses have toppled four rulers-for-life in roughly the year since the so-called Arab Spring erupted, and another one is facing a full-blown insurgency throughout his country. A few years after the term “the Arab street” came into vogue, people are now forced to pay attention to what this street wants, and how it is going about the process of achieving it. New generations of Arab activists are creating new ways of expressing their voices and bringing about change on a variety of levels. **For the full text:** <http://www.dailystar.com.lb/Opinion/Editorial/2012/Mar-30/168461-wrong-direction.ashx#axzz1qWPe99p6>

gulfnews.com

Dubai, Editorial, 30 March 2012, Friday

6. Iraq must do more to ensure peace, stability

The country cannot exist as an entity that is divided along sectarian lines. As Iraq hosted the Arab Summit yesterday (29 March), one can only raise the question of the state of affairs in the country today. This should be viewed in the context of where the country was many years ago and where it has reached today. Following the end of a dictatorial regime and that of an occupation, it is but valid to ponder about Iraq's future. **For the full text:** <http://gulfnews.com/opinions/editorials/iraq-must-do-more-to-ensure-peace-stability-1.1001577>



Jeddah, Editorial, 30 March 2012, Friday

7. Damascus announces the failure of the Arab Summit

Damascus has announced that it will not accept any initiative reached by Arab leaders and their representatives during the Baghdad Summit. The intransigent Syrian regime insists on continuing with its current policy and has rejected in advance any results that might be reached during the summit meeting, stating that it will only deal with individual Arab states not with resolutions put forth by the Arab League. By doing so, Damascus is giving the international community ample reasons to intervene in the Syrian crisis and it is giving the Syrian opposition no choice but to continue with their revolution, which has now reached the point of no return. **For the full text:** <http://www.saudi gazette.com.sa/index.cfm?method=home.regcon&contentID=20120330120650>

THE DAILY STAR

LEBANON

Beirut, Editorial, 31 March 2012, Saturday

8. Mideast latitude

This week, the media has focused considerably on Iraq's return to the Arab fold, as symbolized by Baghdad's hosting of an Arab summit for the first time since 1990. The leaders and officials gathered in that country were understandably preoccupied with the crisis in next-door Syria, while the situation in Iraq, nine years after the U.S.-led war was launched, was also a concern. Tunisia's president, in his address Thursday (29 March), was keen to put urgent humanitarian issues such as the situation in Sudan and Somalia on the agenda as well. **For the full text:** <http://www.dailystar.com.lb/Opinion/Editorial/2012/Mar-31/168614-mideast-latitude.ashx#axzz1qWPe99p6>

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As part of its editorial policy, the MEI@ND standardizes spelling and date formats to make the text uniformly accessible and stylistically consistent. *The views expressed here are those of the author and do not necessarily reflect the views/positions of the MEI@ND.* Editor, **MEI@ND:** P R Kumaraswamy