

MEI MEDIA WATCH

(A Survey of Editorials)

No. 38

Wednesday, 8 May 2013

President Obama's Middle East Visit, March 2013

Note: Since the announcement of the US President Barack Obama's visit to Israel, Palestine and Jordan on 20 to 22 March there were widespread anticipation around world, and Middle East in Particular. Many expected Obama to announce grandiose plan for the Israel-Palestine conflict. But before embarking on his tour he depicted it as a 'Listening Trip' and added there was no immediate plan for this prolonged conflict. During the trip Obama met all the three heads of states and he discussed the Middle East peace process. Editorial commentaries from the international and the Middle Eastern media on this event are reproduced here. **Editor, MEI@ND.**

*

HAARETZ.com

Tel Aviv, Editorial, 7 February 2013, Thursday

1. Obama's visit to Israel is better late than never

After four years as U.S. president, Barack Obama is hastening to try to save Israel from itself; centrist parties wishing to join the coalition must now pay their dues and embark on a diplomatic rescue mission. The timing of U.S. President Barack Obama's visit to Israel is no accident. **For the full text:** <http://www.haaretz.com/opinion/obama-s-visit-to-israel-is-better-late-than-never.premium-1.501956>



Dubai, Editorial, 7 February 2013, Thursday

2. Obama's Mideast visit

The Middle East has never been America's backyard concern. It has always been on the priority list of policy-makers at the Foggy Bottom and indispensable when it comes to deal with the state of Israel and its irresistible Arab neighbours. **For the full text:**

http://www.khaleejtimes.com/kt-article-display-1.asp?xfile=/data/editorial/2013/February/editorial_February14.xml§ion=editorial

THE JORDAN TIMES

Amman, Editorial, 27 February 2013, Wednesday

3. Stoking anger

Intifadas were sparked by a single violent Israeli action against the Palestinians after years of pent-up anger and frustration. That was the case in 1987 and in 2000, when the first and second Intifadas started out, claiming the lives of more than 4,500 Palestinian and 1,000 Israelis. **For the full text:** <http://jordantimes.com/stoking-anger>



Jeddah, Editorial 11 March 2013, Monday

4. Choices before Obama, Israel

Will he or will he not? US media is debating whether Barack Obama will go ahead with his trip to Israel, his first as President, in case Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu fails to cobble up a coalition before the March 16 (Saturday) deadline.

For the full text:

<http://www.saudigazette.com.sa/index.cfm?method=home.regcon&contentid=20130311156296>



Jerusalem, Editorial, 13 March 2013, Wednesday

5. On the agenda

US President Barack Obama's visit to Israel is being billed by Washington insiders as primarily a "charm offensive." They have suggested that the American leader wants to communicate directly with the Israeli people, voicing his strong support for Israel and its security. **For the full text:** <http://www.jpost.com/Opinion/Editorials/On-the-agenda-307005>

THE DAILY STAR

LEBANON

Beirut, Editorial, 15 March 2013, Friday

6. Political tourism

President Barack Obama will arrive in Israel next week for a visit that has been preceded by a series of careful preparations to lower people's expectations if they still had any that a breakthrough in the Palestinian-Israeli conflict was in the offing. **For the full text:** <http://www.dailystar.com.lb/Opinion/Editorial/2013/Mar-15/210175-political-tourism.ashx>

guardian.co.uk

London, Editorial, 17 March 2013 Sunday

7. Obama in Israel: waiting for Godot

The international community is complicit through inaction over this dangerous and unpredictable situation. Rarely has a US president prepared to visit Israel amid such low expectations of what he can achieve there. By the time Barack Obama arrives, Binyamin Netanyahu's government will have been sworn in, a coalition which includes the Likud-Yisrael Beitenu bloc; Yesh Atid, founded by former TV personality Yair Lapid; and Jewish Home, a party linked to the West Bank settler movement led by Naftali Bennett. **For the full text:** <http://www.guardian.co.uk/commentisfree/2013/mar/17/obama-israel-waiting-godot-editorial>

THE JORDAN TIMES

Amman, Editorial, 17 March 2013, Sunday

8. What outcome?

US President Barack Obama is soon beginning his much-touted Middle East tour with a visit to Israel, where he is expected to hold talks with Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu. One would hope, against hope since it was announced ahead of time that

this will be more of a “listening” tour that Obama will engage the Israeli premier in some serious talk about the need to find an equitable solution to the Palestinian problem. **For the full text:** <http://jordantimes.com/what-outcome>

THE JORDAN TIMES

Amman, Editorial, 18 March 2013, Monday

9. Expecting the best

The West Bank is scheduled to be the second stop for US President Barack Obama while on a visit to the region. It is slated to last only a few hours, and neither the US nor the Palestinians seem to have major expectations of a breakthrough regarding the Palestinian issue during this visit, in part because Obama has already signalled that he is not carrying any concrete proposal to end the Palestinian-Israeli deadlock. **For the full text:** <http://jordantimes.com/expecting-the-best>

Telegraph.co.uk

London, Editorial, 19 March 2013, Tuesday

10. Barack Obama’s visit to Israel is long overdue

If Mr Obama believes he can persuade the Israelis to back his peace efforts, he should think again. President Obama has much ground to make up when he arrives in Israel today on his first visit to the Jewish state since entering the White House. He began his presidency four years ago amid high expectations that his fresh approach to the region’s long-standing disputes might bear fruit, particularly after his groundbreaking Cairo speech, in which he sought a “new beginning” in Washington’s relations with the Arab world. **For the full text:** http://www.telegraph.co.uk/comment/telegraph-view/9940519/Barack-Obamas-visit-to-Israel-is-long-overdue.html#disqus_thread

The Washington Post

Washington, Editorial, 19 March 2013, Tuesday

11. President Obama’s to-do list for his Mideast trip

Those who dismiss President Obama’s visit to Israel, the West Bank and Jordan this week as a substance-less Baedeker tour badly misread the state of U.S.-Israeli relations and the troubles they could create for the president in the next couple of years. Israel and the

United States have made different judgments about how soon and under what circumstances military action should be taken against Iran's nuclear program; they also may differ on what must be done to keep Syria's advanced missiles and chemical and biological weapons from falling into the hands of terrorists or of Lebanon's Hezbollah movement. **For the full text:** http://www.washingtonpost.com/opinions/president-obamas-to-do-list-for-his-middle-east-trip/2013/03/18/87cd61d0-8ff0-11e2-bdea-e32ad90da239_story.html



New York, Editorial, 21 March 2013, Thursday

12. Hopes for Obama's trip

US President Barack Obama kicked off a three-day trip to the Middle East on Tuesday (19 March). However, the outside world has little expectation that his trip will bear any significant results. As a country wielding special influence in a region that is afflicted with such woes as the crisis in Syria, the Iranian nuclear standoff and the Israeli-Palestinian conflict, the United States should send positive signals so these knotty issues can be resolved in peace. **For the full text:** http://usa.chinadaily.com.cn/opinion/2013-03/21/content_16326737.htm



Beirut, Editorial, 21 March 2013, Thursday

13. Enjoy the dabke

This week's visit by Barack Obama to Israel was supposed to be a relatively low-key affair, with the American president offering no new peace initiatives. But Obama has managed to turn the speculation on its head, as he offered Wednesday (20 March) his country's full support for the Israelis on several fronts, taking the "initiative" to engage in rhetoric and diplomacy that further tarnish Washington's negative image in the Arab world. **For the full text:** <http://www.dailystar.com.lb/News/Local-News/2013/Mar-21/210961-enjoy-the-dabke.ashx>



Amman, Editorial, 21 March 2013, Thursday

14. Opportunity to address problems

US President Barack Obama begins today his visit to Jordan for talks with His Majesty King Abdullah on regional issues. Expected to top the topics of interest are the Israeli-Palestinian crisis and the violence in Syria. Obama and his entourage are most welcome to the Kingdom, whose people still expect the US president to take action and address the many regional problems. **For the full text:** <http://jordantimes.com/opportunity-to-address-problems>



New York, Editorial, 21 March 2013, Thursday

15. 'I Speak to You as a Friend ...'

Four years ago, President Obama used his Middle East trip to reach out to the Arab world and try to build a new basis for regional understanding to replace the Bush administration's post-Sept. 11 policies of fear and vengeance. Mr. Obama failed; skipping Israel and pursuing a poorly conceived peace initiative backfired. **For the full text:** <http://www.nytimes.com/2013/03/22/opinion/i-speak-to-you-as-a-friend.html?ref=editorials>



Jeddah, Editorial, 22 March 2013, Friday

16. Does Obama not realize?

Like readers have been able to understand the private words exchanged between politicians in sight of the television cameras, but out of range of microphones. If only there were mind readers who, just as easily, could work out what was going on inside President Barack Obama's head yesterday (21 March, Thursday), on his visit the West Bank. **For the full text:** <http://www.arabnews.com/news/445642>



Tel Aviv, Editorial 22 March 2013, Friday

17. Listen to Obama

Obama's goal in coming to Israel has been achieved: He won Israeli hearts and gave Israelis a sense of security, in the hope that now they will take charge and push the leadership toward a peace agreement with the Palestinians. President Barack Obama penetrated the hearts of the Israeli people yesterday (21 March, Thursday) with his moving and compelling speech at the International Convention Centre in Jerusalem. **For the full text:** <http://www.haaretz.com/opinion/listen-to-obama.premium-1.511236>



Dubai, Editorial, 22 March 2013, Friday

18. Obama's futile visit

Despite the historically strong US-Israel relationship, Barack Obama and Benjamin Netanyahu have not exactly been the best of friends. In the past, Israel's hard-line prime minister has openly opposed Obama's intention for putting a hold on expanding Israeli settlements, undercut him by lobbying the pro-Israel Congress instead and even supported Republican candidate Mitt Romney in US presidential election. **For the full text:** http://www.khaleejtimes.com/kt-article-display-1.asp?xfile=/data/editorial/2013/March/editorial_March44.xml§ion=editorial

The Nation

Lahore, Editorial, 22 March 2013, Friday

19. Extreme approach

Any hope that President Obama in his second term in office might emerge as an advocate of the beleaguered Palestinians seems to have been dashed when during a joint press conference with Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu in Tel Aviv on Wednesday (20 March), he stated that US-Israel alliance was "eternal". **For the full text:** <http://www.nation.com.pk/pakistan-news-newspaper-daily-english-online/editorials/22-March-2013/extreme-approach>

gulfnews.com

Dubai, Editorial, 23 March 2013, Saturday

20. Palestinians fed up with Obama's talk

Four years after his Cairo speech, US president still refuses to act against Israeli colony expansion. Palestinians will only have found Barack Obama's visit to Palestine and Israel disappointing if, before the visit, they had any hopes of the American president taking an interest in their cause. In the event, even if Obama was able to turn on his famous charm, he showed that his administration does not care about the Palestinians, because instead he is focused on Syria and Iran. **For the full text:** <http://gulfnews.com/opinions/editorials/palestinians-fed-up-with-obama-s-talk-1.1161827>



Jeddah, Editorial 23 March 2013, Saturday

21. Obama's Middle East visit

Even though every single pundit as well as layman warned not to expect anything out of the ordinary from President Obama's visit to Israel and the West Bank, the journey was still highly anticipated. From the time Obama's visit was first announced shortly after his re-election in November last year, it was talked and written about as though it were certain to produce earth-shattering developments when in fact the same people who applauded the visit consistently added that it would produce nothing of substance. **For the full text:** <http://www.saudigazette.com.sa/index.cfm?method=home.regcon&contentid=20130323158053>

THE JORDAN TIMES

Amman, Editorial, 23 March 2013, Saturday

22. Successful visit

US President Barack Obama's visit to Jordan for talks with His Majesty King Abdullah concluded with assurances of further collaboration and strengthening of the excellent relations the US and Jordan have enjoyed over the past decades. **For the full text:** <http://jordantimes.com/Successful+visit-58600>



New York, Editorial 23 March 2013, Saturday

23. Obama in Israel

Readers have been asking us to be a bit more forthcoming in respect of President Obama's visit to Israel. We confess we've been hanging back. The trip reminded us that in many ways we find the President an extremely attractive figure. He is smart, and articulate. He presents well. We understand this isn't a universal view among conservatives. To our ear, he speaks beautifully, comes across as thoughtful and sincere, and cuts a youthful and energetic figure. It was fun to watch him connect with young Israelis and affecting to see him lay

a wreath at the grave of Theodor Herzl. **For the full text:**
<http://www.nysun.com/editorials/obama-in-israel/88237/>



Delaware, Editorial, 24 March 2013, Sunday

24. Obama rightly links secure Israel to 'absence of war'

Today at sundown the eight-day Jewish holiday of Passover begins. But many Jews were reminded of the importance of the holiday that essentially gave birth to their people when President Obama visited Israel last week. **For the full text:**
<http://www.delcotimes.com/articles/2013/03/24/opinion/doc514fb27b90490919968542.txt?viewmode=fullstory>

THE JORDAN TIMES

Amman, Editorial, 24 March 2013, Sunday

25. Concrete help

One concrete result of President Barack Obama's visit to the Kingdom was his declaration that he intends to work with the US Congress to guarantee Jordan's government bonds on international markets. The move will reduce the Kingdom's borrowing costs and help alleviate the fiscal crisis by financing the national budget deficit to the tune of \$1.25 billion to \$2 billion. **For the full text:** <http://jordantimes.com/concrete-help>

TheNational

Abu Dhabi, Editorial 24 March 2013, Sunday

26. Obama grasps why it's wise to set the bar low

What a difference four years make. In June 2009, Barack Obama flew to Cairo, shook hands with Hosni Mubarak, and gave a stirring speech, boldly entitled A New Beginning, at Cairo University. A skilled and powerful orator, the US president addressed himself to the whole Muslim world. He invoked America's cultural links to Islam, and his own, and called earnestly for progress towards peace between Israel and the Palestinians, whose statelessness he called "intolerable". **For the full text:**
<http://www.thenational.ae/thenationalconversation/editorial/obama-grasps-why-its-wise-to-set-the-bar-low>

THE JORDAN TIMES

Amman, Editorial, 26 March 2013 Tuesday

27. In support of Arab brethren

Jordan used the platform offered by the Arab summit which convene in Qatar on Tuesday (26 March) to call for finding a political solution to the escalating situation in Syria and for support the Palestinian people. **For the full text:** <http://jordantimes.com/in-support-of-arab-brethren>

THE HINDU

Chennai, Editorial, 27 March 2013, Wednesday

28. Obama's back-seat drivers

President Barack Obama's first official visit to Israel-Palestine, made from March 20 to 22, has only confirmed the inability of the United States government to make any significant contribution to the achievement of a fair and just peace in the region. Indeed, the very tone of Mr. Obama's respective talks with Israeli Prime Minister Binyamin Netanyahu and Palestinian Authority President Mahmoud Abbas shows the stark difference in Washington's public attitude towards the two sides. Mr. Obama called Mr. Netanyahu by his nickname, "Bibi", 10 times in half an hour, and in all his speeches to Jewish Israelis he used Hebrew phrases, but in Ramallah he used only one Arabic word, the greeting "marhaba", and referred to his host only as "President Abbas." **For the full text:** <http://www.thehindu.com/opinion/editorial/obamas-backseat-drivers/article4551658.ece>

THE JORDAN TIMES

Amman, Editorial, 27 March 2013, Wednesday

29. Helpful move

One of the early fruits of US President Barack Obama's recent visit to the region is the reversal of the Israeli position on revenues it owes to the Palestinians but had withheld arbitrarily to punish them for winning an upgraded status by the UN last year. It is now confirmed that Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu ordered the "immediate" release of millions of dollars collected on behalf of the Palestinian Authority, in the form of taxes and

customs duty, on goods destined to the West Bank coming through Israeli ports. **For the full text:** <http://jordantimes.com/Helpful+move-58780>

The New York Observer

New York, Editorial, 27 March 2013, Wednesday

30. Obama in Israel

Leave it to the anti-Semitic maniacs in Tehran to bring President Obama and Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu together. The relationship between the two men can most charitably be described as complex. But during Mr. Obama's recent visit to Israel, the president and the prime minister were able to focus on an issue that binds them and the nations they lead the prospect of a nuclear-armed Iran. **For the full text:** <http://observer.com/2013/03/obama-in-israel/>



Dubai, Editorial, 5 April 2013 Friday

31. Peace, now!

Just last month, US President Obama made his much-anticipated visit to Israel and the occupied territories. Even though the Palestinians did not expect much from a leader they now resent for being too pro-Israel, surprisingly Obama or at least his exemplary oratory skills showed them a ray of hope. **For the full text:** http://www.khaleejtimes.com/kt-article-display-1.asp?xfile=/data/editorial/2013/April/editorial_April10.xml§ion=editorial



Jerusalem Editorial 22 April 2013, Friday

32. Shared dreams

The vast majority of Israelis share the dream of seeing both Israelis and Palestinians flourish in free, democratic states of their own. Unfortunately, the majority of Palestinians still do not. Some commentators, primarily on the Left, have lamented the fact that the main focus of US President Barack Obama's visit to Israel, the Palestinian Authority and Jordan has not been the peace process. **For the full text:** <http://www.jpost.com/Opinion/Editorials/Shared-dreams-307371>

Compiled by MariMuthu U

MariMuthu U is a Doctoral candidate at the School of International Studies, Jawaharlal Nehru University, New Delhi. Email: dingowolf83@gmail.com

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