

JANUARY NEWS REVIEW

By David Dolan

POLITICAL TREMORS SHAKE THE REGION

Government instability rocked portions of the Middle East and North Africa during January, especially in Lebanon, Tunisia, Algeria and Israel. Popular discontent with the governments of Jordan and Egypt was also said to be growing.

The pro-Western Lebanese government collapsed the first half of January after the radical Iranian-backed Hizbullah movement pulled its cabinet ministers out of the ruling coalition.

Unrest gripped the Arab country of Tunisia during the month, forcing the country's long-ruling leader out of office. Rioting took place earlier in neighboring Algeria, with activists protesting rising food prices.

No Israeli political analyst could have foretold a few decades ago that the once mighty Labor party, which ruled Israel uninterruptedly from 1948 until 1977, would eventually slip into obscurity. However that is exactly the fate that has befallen the socialist party founded by Israel's first Prime Minister, David Ben Gurion.

On January 19, Lebanon (of all countries) submitted a UN Security Council resolution condemning Israeli settlement building in Judea and Samaria, and construction in parts of Jerusalem. Possessing veto power, the US has already announced opposition to the resolution, saying it will only further hamper efforts to get stalled peace talks moving again.

Full report. See > <http://www.ddolan.com/>

OBAMA AND THE MIDDLE EAST

Half way through his first term, US president lets Middle East slip through fingers. Peace talks break down, Syria-Iran relations tighten, Hezbollah dominating Lebanon. Bright side: Economic sanctions on Iran working

If there is one area in which Obama was successful it is creating a diligent and sophisticated diplomacy to establish an international coalition, which voted in favor of the sanctions against Iran at the United Nations Security Council. The economic pressure is beginning to take its toll on Iran, even if it has yet to "convince" the Iranian regime to abandon its dream of nuclear capabilities.

<http://www.ynetnews.com/articles/0,7340,L-4017484,00.html>