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[**Note:** Using editorials as an indicator, this series presents views, understanding and attitude of the Urdu periodicals in India towards various developments concerning the Middle East. The selection of an item does not mean the endorsement or concurrence concur with their accuracy or views. Editor, MEI@ND]

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Roznama Munsif (The Judge Daily), Hyderabad

Editorial, 21 May 2011, Saturday

1. Obama's Speech on Middle East

The speech by the US President Barack Hussein Obama on the Middle East indicates an important shift in the American policy. Obama, emphasising on the concentration of Israeli-Palestine conflict and establishment of peace in the region, demanded Israel to go back to the 1967 boundaries. The Palestinians are also insisting on the same demand for the past four decades, but Israel has always avoided it. Israel has expressed its deep anguish on this statement by the US and said that if the US President demands verification of 1967 boundaries then the peace talks are in danger.

The statement by the US President came just one day before his meeting with the Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu. The leaders of both the countries are scheduled to meet on 20 May, when they are expected to discuss the establishment of peace between Israel and Palestine. The statement by the US President becomes more important in such a scenario. If the US really wants Israel to recognise the 1967 boundaries to establish peace in the region then it indicates a clear shift in American policy towards Israel. Internationally, this speech by the US President has been termed as a shocking message

after the death of Osama Bin Laden, as Osama was considered an important supporter of the Palestinian cause. The Palestinian President Mahmud Abbas convened an emergency meeting after the speech to discuss the issue. It is not yet confirmed what was decided in the meeting but the US President has also given a warning “how can somebody talk with a group that does not recognise your right to exist.” This was an indication towards the recent unity deal between two Palestinian factions; Fatah and Hamas. The agreement between Fatah and Hamas does not enjoy the US President’s support because he thinks that the unity is dangerous for Israel. On the one hand, he wants Israel to retreat to the 1967 borders, on the other hand, he criticised the deal between Hamas and Fatah, which has complicated the situation. That apart, the American President has also rejected the efforts for recognition of Palestine as an independent state in the UN, which is a major blow for the Palestinian cause. Obama’s stand on this issue is that such recognition at the UN will be the beginning of Palestinian actions for isolating Israel. This cannot be accepted at any cost. It is not clear how Obama wants to resolve the conflict between Israel and Palestine; on the one hand, he supports the Palestinian demands while rejecting their unity and efforts on the other hand. Obama’s Middle East speech is also being termed as important because he has announced a major economic plan for the Arab world which would be started from Tunisia and Egypt. The plan becomes all the more important in the backdrop of ongoing crisis in the Arab world because economic stability has become very important after the change in regimes, as the economic condition of already backward people of many countries has further deteriorated, rather completely diminished. This economic package will work towards reinstating a new soul in their dying economy. Obama also said that he will support the people in the region for promotion of democracy in the Arab world. He asked the Syrian President Bashar al-Assad to relinquish power or establish democracy in the region. Obama thinks that this is a historical opportunity and responsibility for the US to support the people who want freedom and it will stand up to that. This was the first comprehensive address by Obama on the crisis and rebellion in the Arab world. He emphasised that the US will use all its resources to encourage reforms in the Middle East and North Africa. He announced millions of dollars in aid for Egypt and other countries that have started the process of democratisation. Critics have expressed various opinions on Obama’s speech. The majority thinks that the US President wants to minimise the anger among Arab masses on the killing of Osama. He has announced aid because he thinks that it is important to contain the expected anger, as it can affect the US and its economy. Whatever may be the facts, but as of now Obama seems to be succeeding in getting closer to the Arabs by advocating the Palestinian demands.

Source: <http://www.munsifdaily.com/epaper/21may/pages/page6/news1.html>



The Siasat Daily (The Politics Daily), Hyderabad

Editorial, 21 May 2011, Saturday

2. Obama's Middle East Speech

At last the US president has verbally advocated a long-held Palestinian demand, clarifying that Israel should retreat to the 1967 borders. Simultaneously, he made it clear to the Palestinians that he will not compromise on the security of Israel. The US has time and again advocated its support for the security of Israel, but it is for the first time that a US President has demanded from Israel to go back to its previous borders. The Palestinian have always demanded that the pre-1967 War boundaries be revived, which they say can be the only way to resolve the Israel-Palestine conflict. Even though Barack Obama emphasised on the revival of the older borders, he made another point in between the lines which perhaps is most important. He said that apart from restoring the boundaries and Israeli security, talks should include the basic reason for the Israeli-Palestinian conflict. If Obama's indication is towards the future of Jerusalem then he has tried to divert the whole Israel-Palestine conflict in a new direction and the Palestinians as well as Muslims all over the world would never accept any resolution that compromises the status of Jerusalem. Jerusalem is the first Qibla of the Muslims and any compromise on its status would not be acceptable at any cost. Any direct or indirect change in the actual status of Jerusalem or a compromise on it cannot be acceptable to the Muslims all over the world. As far as the Israel-Palestine conflict is concerned the basic conflict is on the status of Jerusalem. The border issue is also important, but Jerusalem is a matter of faith for Muslims and there is no chance of any compromise on this issue. This should be very clear to Barack Obama and his Israeli allies.

As far as the issue of pre-1967 borders are concerned, it is also a legitimate and obvious demand of the Palestinians and Obama's acceptance of this fact is an exercise in right direction. Obama should not confine this to just verbal acceptance but should take measures for its implementation as well. The US has time and again intervened in the Israel-Palestine conflict. It has always tried to justify the Israeli atrocities against the unarmed Palestinian as its legitimate right to defend. Now when Obama has talked about restoring the pre-1967 status he should sincerely and honestly try and build pressure on Israel to take measures in this direction. The US has also advocated a gradual and complete withdrawal of Israeli forces from Palestinian areas; he also said that despite this withdrawal no compromise would be made as far as Israeli security is concerned. The main question here is not about Israel's defence or security rather it is the restoration of legitimate and actual boundaries of Palestinian state and all steps should be taken to implement that. Israel has until now refused to recognise these boundaries, which it has destroyed under its occupied control. The US should make efforts for restoration of these boundaries and should not hesitate in using force if Israel refuses to do so. However, it would be foolish to expect any such move by the US but when it is time for telling the truth to the world it should be utilised.

Earlier, the US mediated an agreement between Israel and Palestine during the life-time of PLO leader Yasser Arafat, according to which it was decided that the conflict would be resolved in five years by 1999, but Israel completely defied and abused this agreement and a new phase of atrocities on unarmed Palestinians started. Even then, the US supported the vicious Israeli stand. The agreement remained confined to papers. Now, when Obama has clearly tried to give a message to Israel, he should very sincerely

pressurise Israel to endorse this stand else America's image all over the world will be affected together with the brutal and vicious Israeli stand.

Source: <http://www.siasat.com/urdu/news/idr21-19>



Roznama Hamara Samaj (Daily Our Society), Delhi

Editorial, 23 May 2011, Monday

3. Obama's Speech

Obama's message to Israel, while addressing the Middle East, that it should return all the areas it occupied in the 1967 War can certainly improve the biased image of America. But the Israeli Prime Minister is unable to digest it and looks completely muffled after Obama's speech. According to the Israeli media, this is the beginning of problems in the friendship; peace talk with the Palestinians cannot be based on the pre-1967 boundaries because Israeli borders would become very insecure and these areas now have Jewish settlements which cannot be removed at any cost. It was said by some in the media that a phase of bad relations with the US has started and that Israel would never want Obama to be re-elected because such speeches are like a stab in the back. Even though the American Republican party has also opposed this stand but the opposition leaders in Israel view Obama's speech with admiration. According to them, the US President, who advocates the two-nation theory, is not against Israel rather understands Israeli interest.

In fact, there is nothing in Obama's speech that should baffle Israel. The central idea in the speech is the protection of Israeli interest and its security; he has neither criticised the illegal Israeli settlements nor is in favour of passing of the resolution accepting Palestine as an independent state in the UN to be brought in September. The speech is so concerned about Israeli security that it endorses the Israeli stand of a "non-militarised" Palestinian state. This is the reason why Palestinians are completely disappointed with his speech. Palestinian President Mahmoud Abbas has also said that Obama's efforts regarding peace talks are worth praise but common Palestinians think that Obama is helping Israel.

The question that arises here is why the US President is so disliked in Israel that talks about reviewing Israel-US relations have started doing the rounds? Will Israel be able to sustain its illegal existence even for a minute after spoiling its relation with a superpower like the US? Even if the US President tries to do something for the Middle East, the Jewish lobby in the US will not let him do anything. Obama is the first President who has openly talked about Israeli security on the one hand and has also talked about returning of

occupied Palestinian lands. Simultaneously, he has avoided mentioning the issue of status of Jerusalem and refugees, even though Jerusalem has to be the capital of Palestinian state. This clearly shows how much the US is concerned with safeguarding Israeli interests. However, Netanyahu is miffed with Obama's speech which is testimony to the fact that he is not ready to soften his stance on peace talks. He can put any international law under his feet for Israeli interests, which his predecessors have done since Israel came into existence.

The following questions are raised with respect to establishment of peace in Middle East:

Which country has the fifth largest store of nuclear materials? Which country has not declared its nuclear capabilities but intends to use nuclear weapons? Which country has used chemical weapons despite keeping its nuclear power hidden? Which country killed an American President who was putting pressure on its nuclear programme? Which country deems that it is above the international laws?

And the questions raised in a documentary film broadcasted by the BBC on 20 March 2003:

Which country in the Middle East has unannounced nuclear weapons? Which country in the Middle East has unannounced chemical and biological weapons? Which country in the Middle East has not received any investigation experts? Which country has imprisoned a person for eighteen years for leaking its nuclear secrets?

The entire world knows that there is only one answer to all these questions:

Reckless Zionist state---ISRAEL

How reckless is Israel, what are its destructive future goals and what is the purpose of its atomic programme can be estimated from the incident of 6 October 1973 when Egypt and Syria attacked Israel to avenge the defeat of 1967 and Israel was on the verge of worst defeat, its air-power was completely destroyed; Israel had almost decided to use its nuclear weapons for which a nuclear alert was issued in Israel on 8 October. Fortunately, the American intelligence agencies got information about Israeli plans on the morning of 9 October itself, so the then American Secretary of State Henry Kissinger estimated the situation and immediately provided military support to stop Israel from using nuclear weapons, which changed the entire equation. This incident signifies that Israel would never hesitate from using nuclear weapons whenever it wishes. Based on its whims it can change the entire map of the Middle East with the help of nuclear weapons. Israel, which came into existence as a result of Western animosity towards Islam, has unleashed a reign of terror on the Palestinians and is constructing Jewish settlements after grabbing Palestinian lands that is not hidden from the world. Despite this the Palestinians have always welcomed the efforts for peace talks and they have praised Obama for his efforts. If Netanyahu is so worried about Obama's statement that the talks should start from 1967 Arab-Israel borders, then how can one expect a positive attitude from him during the talks!

Source: <http://www.hamarasamaj.com/delhi/index.html>



Roznama Rashtriya Sahara (National Sahara Daily), Delhi

Editorial, 23 May 2011, Monday

4. Necessary to Reprimand Israel

The American President Barack Obama has again said that peace in the Middle East is conditional upon formation of an independent Palestinian state. He emphasised on the point that if Israel withdraws to the 1967 position then it would not be just in favour of Palestine but serve Israeli interests as well. But immediately afterwards, Israeli Prime Minister Netanyahu negated US President's opinion by saying that Israel would never endorse American position on withdrawal to 1967 borders or removal of Jewish settlements from West Jordan. Even though Obama termed it as an amiable disagreement between two friends, the fact is that even Barack Obama looks helpless like his predecessors with stubborn Israeli instance.

There is no doubt that there is a place on this earth where all experiments of brutality and atrocities have been tested and every new cruelty is more belligerent and different than the earlier one, this is the same place that is known as the land of defenceless people, that is Palestine. The only crime the Palestinian Muslims have committed is that they are firm on independence of their territory and their enemies, the Jews, are obstinate on not accepting any roadblock on the plan of 'Greater Israel.' The situation is that the West is not just financing the expansion of Jewish settlements but also helping Israel acquire nuclear powers. As far as Palestine is concerned, or for that matter the Islamic world, the developed countries think that it should shed violence and walk on the path of peace after providing small aid for fighting with their poverty and hunger. The US has always opposed construction of settlement in West Jordan but the strange thing is that Israel is involved in its mission completely unnerved by all the warnings and preaching; now the Jewish population in West Jordan is around 500,000. The American leaders have always fulfilled the formality of asking Israel to stop atrocities on Palestinians and ending Jewish settlements but Israel, taking benefit of lame American voice, is writing a new history in brutality and atrocities. If the same behaviour continues, the dream of peace in Middle East will never be achieved. The negative reaction of Israeli Prime Minister Netanyahu on Barack Obama's speech demands that Israel be hauled at international level and shall be reprimanded for continuing with the construction of Jewish settlements.

This context has to be understood that the Muslim world was full of anger against the US due to George W. Bush's hatred mission against the Muslims and to compensate for it the current President Barack Obama in his address at the Cairo University in 2009 expressed his willingness for friendship with the Islamic world saying that the US is neither against

Islam nor against Muslims. Likewise, after the killing of Osama Bin Laden to dilute the anger and dislike that may have cropped up in some of the Muslim quarters, this statement in favour of Palestine can be seen in this context to gain sympathy in the Muslim world.

However, Barack Obama's statement regarding formation of Palestine shall be welcomed and the border disputes between Israel and Palestine shall be resolved at international level to help heal the wounds which have become a cancer with time and which has not let the Muslims or the Jews all over the world to live with peace.

Source:

<http://www.roznomasahara.com/epapermain.aspx?queryed=9&eddate=05%2f23%2f2011>



Dawat Online (Invitation), New Delhi

Editorial, 25 May 2011, Wednesday

5. Independent State of Palestine

The efforts for a peaceful solution for the Palestine issue has not yielded any result till now; no such solution seems to be in sight in the near or far future which may be acceptable to Israel. Whatever efforts were made or whatever proposals presented, have failed because they were not acceptable to Israel. As far as the Palestinian position is concerned, it was never respected rather they have always been asked to soften and review their stance, even though fact of the matter is that the issue of establishment of Israel is itself contentious and needs review. There was no state by the name of Israel before 1948. The territory was known as Palestine. As Israel was established, the native population became homeless; they lost their national identity and the nation. When they demanded their right, the entire world came together to put the condition that they first recognise the state of Israel, only then the matter of their right would be looked into. The people of Palestine have to stay in different countries as refugees; they knocked at all the doors where they thought they can get some help and took a completely different path as they became hopeless from all the quarters. It should be taken into account that they were compelled to defer from the peaceful path by the civilised world and as they chose this path their voice was completely ignored. It means that the West itself provided the reason for it because they started the peace talks only after that, nobody was even ready to listen to their demands till then and then the business of peace formula and peace deal started.

The US remained on the fore front of this exercise, the European community also made some efforts on its own. The Muslim world also made some efforts. The efforts in past some years have at least brought a consensus among all the countries in the world except Israel that there should be an independent Palestinian state side by side Israel. The

European community accepted this ‘fact’ and the US itself accepted this in the roadmap proposed by it. The US leadership has continuously announced that the negotiations that have been held under the US mediation have brought it to the fore; however, Israel never accepted any of these proposals and plans and as a result all of them failed. When Barack Obama became the American President, he also started efforts to resolve this issue and presented some proposals, all this resulted into softening of Palestinian stance and they accepted all the conditions put forth by the ‘international community,’ but, on the other hand, Israel started putting new conditions for starting the peace talks and sabotaged the process of negotiations. Now when some countries have recognised the independent state of Palestine and the European community also seems ready to soften its instance and, as the pressure is increasing, the US also has clarified its stand on the issue of independent state of Palestine. Recently, President Barack Obama in a policy statement said that the proposed state of Palestine shall be based on the 1967 borders, but the Israeli Prime Minister has refused to accept this position. This refusal has brought the peaceful resolution of the Palestine issue on the same juncture as it was on day one. This has also clarified that who are the real roadblock to the peaceful resolution of this issue and what are main causes of failure of efforts taken in this direction?

Source: http://dawatonline.com/Archive_Editorial.aspx?sDate=25-may-2011



The Siasat Daily (The Politics Daily), Hyderabad

Editorial, 25 May 2011, Wednesday

6. Israeli Prime Minister's Speech

The Prime Minister of Israel Benjamin Netanyahu expressed consent to make painful compromise, including land swap, with Palestinians to enhance the possibility of peace efforts in the Middle East and also put forth the conditions of the Jewish state. He was putting his opinion in front of the American Congress leaders despite his disagreement with the US President Barack Obama on the Palestine issue, but the Palestinian President Mahmoud Abbas rejected Netanyahu's speech. The main reason for this is that Israeli Prime Minister Netanyahu's speech is not honest. Whatever he said about the occupied Palestinian territories would not pave the way for peace. When Netanyahu himself is saying that he is ready to make painful compromise including land swaps then how is a long-term agreement between Israel and Palestine not possible? Because on the one hand he refers to the historical relations of Jews and Israeli Arabs with the West Bank and, on the other hand, he is informing the American Congress about painful compromise. His statement lacks real intent and does not reflect the political truth. The US President Barack Obama has asked Israel to resolve the issue on the basis of 1967 War. However, the Israeli Prime Minister has put the statistics in front of the Congressmen which deals with 650,000 Israelis living in the surrounding of Jerusalem

before the 1967 War. He also said that the Palestinians have not yet recognised Israel so they would not change their stand on the occupied territories. The fact in this context is that the Israeli governments have chosen a policy of not accepting Palestinians in their neighbourhood. None of the six Israeli Prime Ministers in the past decades have accepted the formation of a state of Palestine due to which the problem has worsened. The recent speech by Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu in Washington at the US Congress would also not help resolve the issue rather it would further create problems. He has proposed to resolve the issue of territory referring to the 1967 without taking into account the real problems of Palestinians which smacks of a preparation for a new war against Palestinians. The central issues in the conflict are not just of borders but include the status of Jerusalem as well as the refugee problem. Putting across its dishonest problem without considering these important issues is nothing but an effort to further create problems. The Palestinians shall not be deceived with peace without giving them their due rights. If the Israeli Prime Minister Netanyahu has any honest plan then it shall include the interests of both Arabs and Palestinians. By the way, Netanyahu has expressed his willingness for land swaps to solve the Palestine issue at a time when Palestinian President Mahmoud Abbas is campaigning for getting recognition for Palestine at the UN. When the UN General Assembly would be convened in September, the US and Israel will oppose the recognition of an independent state of Palestine. The US has only wasted time in the name of negotiations for the past two decades. Palestinians have termed this speech as against their rights and just a deception in the name of negotiations. When Israel talks about promises then one should remember that it would not be based on honesty and justice. Saeb Erekat has also rejected the Israeli Prime Minister's speech terming it as a pack of lies. This speech would be a roadblock in the way of peace talks. The talks about peace without recognising an independent state of Palestine is just a deception. In such a situation the Palestinians need to continue with their efforts and strengthen their unity. The recent Hamas-Fatah unity has rattled the Jews and they are making efforts to defeat the struggle for achieving statehood for Palestine. The speech by Israeli Prime Minister at the US Congress also looks to be a part of this effort.

Source: <http://www.siasat.com/urdu/news/idr126-3>



Roznama Munsif (The Judge Daily), Hyderabad

Editorial, 28 May 2011, Friday

7. Announcement of NAM support for Palestine

The Palestinian struggle for an independent state seems to be yielding some result. Hundred and twelve countries which are part of the Non-Aligned Movement have announced their support for an independent state of Palestine. On the occasion of the Bali Meeting to commemorate the 50th anniversary of NAM the "Bali Declaration"

was passed in which all the members of NAM unanimously supported the Palestinian bid for UN recognition which is a very good step. There are 193 members in the UN and a two-third vote is necessary to become a member, which means that Palestine would need the vote of at least 128 countries to become a member of the UN which is an important target of the people and authorities of this country.

Palestine has received support and promise from 112 countries and the UN General Assembly meeting is scheduled for September 2011 so the Palestinians still need the promise from 16 more countries to pass the resolution. According to the Indonesian Foreign Minister Marty Natalegawa, 29 NAM members have not yet committed their support for the Palestinian bid due to some reasons but he strongly hopes that the situation will improve before the General Assembly meeting. The NAM declaration has clearly stated that it will vote in favour of the resolution for a Palestinian state with June 1967 borders and Jerusalem as its capital.

The US and Israel have not yet reacted on this declaration by NAM but one day earlier the US President Barack Obama warned Palestine of such a bid for membership in a joint press conference with British Prime Minister David Cameron in London. He said that if Palestine wants to resolve the issue then it should come to negotiations with Israel and the exercise for UN membership is futile. Earlier, he had said that Israel should retreat to the 1967 boundaries to pave way for talks and that is the only way to solve the issue. This remark by Obama, which he made in his Middle East speech, has delighted the hearts of all in Arab countries and it was hoped that the Palestinians would soon get their rights. Obama had also said that the Palestinians should get their right and an independent state is their legal right which no one can snatch from them. The Israeli Prime Minister expressed his anguish over Obama's statements and refused to accept this decision. But he immediately changed his position and announced his consent for withdrawal from Palestinian lands and going back to 1967 borders but also put forth a condition that the PA leader Mahmoud Abbas of Fatah should end the unity agreement with Hamas. Both the US and Israel hardly look serious about resolving the issue of Palestine and are just passing time. The President of US, which terms itself as the lone super power in the world, changes his instance within 48 hours. Only a fool should expect practical steps for international peace from someone who displays such lack of seriousness. The same thing has been occurring for the past five decades with respect to Palestine; only statements have been issued and no concrete steps have been taken. On the one hand, the US makes high claims for promotion of democracy in the Middle East and, on the other hand, it has avoided the resolution of Palestine issue and giving their due right to the Palestinians, because the issue is related to its close ally Israel? Double standard does not suit an international power.

In the meantime, the announcement by NAM that it will support Palestine is worth praise and if 16 more countries commit support till September then this long-held conflict can be resolved. One hopes that the Palestinians would soon get their due right of establishment of an independent state.

Source: <http://www.munsifdaily.com/>

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