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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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The Siasat Daily (The Politics Daily), Hyderabad

Editorial, 16 June 2011, Thursday

1. Recep Tayyip Erdogan and Turkey

The general elections in Turkey are very important for the Middle East and North African countries particularly for countries like Syria, Lebanon, Egypt and Palestine. Against the backdrop of anti-government movements in the Islamic world, the Justice and Development Party (AKP), under the leadership of Recep Tayyip Erdogan, has achieved its third consecutive electoral victory. The AKP won 326 seats out of a total of 550 parliamentary seats as against the 341 it won in 2007 and this is one seat less than 327 required for an absolute majority. However, Prime Minister Recep Tayyip Erdogan has not dropped his plan for a new constitution despite not gaining absolute majority. In his victory address in Ankara he said that 'the people have elected our party and a new constitution will be formed with consultation and national agreement.' But the opposition Secular Republican Party has gained 23 seats winning a total of 135 seats. Turkey, which is waiting for the EU membership for a long time, has achieved major economic progress during the past one decade under Erdogan and hundreds of thousands of people have come out of poverty. The neighbouring countries are looking at the opening of new avenues in the trade and industry sector. Turkey has been able to develop its society as per

the changing international trends. Turkey has set an example for Egypt, Syria, Tunisia and Yemen by putting aside the threats from Al Qaeda and other terrorist organisations and by creating a way forward within Islam, democracy and fundamentalism. After first taking part in 2002 general elections the AKP has gained huge popularity due to its policies towards the Middle East and North Africa. The problem of unemployment has been solved after strong economic performance. Last year Turkey recorded a 9 percent economic growth which is a fairly good compared to other developing countries. Turkey has achieved good rapport at international level with its influential West Asia policies. Turkey is worried due to the situation in its neighbouring Syria. Turkey will have to play a critical role in the near future. The Islamists are gaining ground in Syria and Egypt. It will not be easy for Syrian President Bashar al-Assad to face the tide of anti-government movement particularly in the presence of the Muslim Brotherhood and the Turkish role would become more important in such a scenario. Turkey has gained immense respect around the Islamic world by its pro-Palestinian stand in recent times and its protest against the atrocities on the Palestinians by the Jewish state. Turkey will have to try and strengthen its trade and political ties with neighbouring countries of Syria and Iran. In the past such efforts have been made, but it becomes more important in the context of the ongoing violence in Syria. Prime Minister Recep Tayyip Erdogan has achieved popularity as a strong leader because of his foreign policy initiatives with Turkey's neighbours. The current issue of allowing Syrian refugees to come to Turkey can create problems between Turkey and Syria. If Turkey can resolve the problem in Syria then it can further strengthen its ties with Iran. There is no doubt that Turkey allowed Syrian refugees to come to Turkey due to the adverse conditions in Syria. The Syrian refugees in Turkey were very happy about Erdogan's success which can give a wrong indication to the governments in Syria, Iran and Lebanon. Turkey should be aware of the problems and shall be careful about not antagonising the Arab world. Till now, has worked within the limit of its declared policies. It has free-trade agreements with Syria, Iraq, Jordan and Lebanon. Turkey can emerge as a strong leader in the region if it continues with its economic progress and people-to-people contacts.

Source: <http://www.siasat.com/urdu/news/idr116-1>



Roznama Rashtriya Sahara (National Sahara Daily), Delhi

Editorial, 21 June 2011, Tuesday

2. NATO's Barbarism

The NATO countries are putting all efforts to remove Col. Muammar Gaddafi from power but they have not yet achieved success. However, their efforts have brought NATO's barbarism out in the open. It seems that the UN has allowed NATO to brutally suppress the people of Libya in the name of anti-Gaddafi mission. If this is not true then the NATO forces would not have been targeting the innocent civilians, children would not have been killed and women and old people would not have come under NATO's fire. The civilian areas would not have been bombarded.

The continuous attack on Libya by NATO is just another proof of the Western and American double standard which was displayed in Iraq and Afghanistan. Otherwise, anguish against rulers and anti-government movements are also going on in the countries which are allies and friends of the US and Europe. But the problems there are being covered up or are let off with light rebuke, while Libya is facing NATO bombardment for the past several weeks. The strength of the rebels and people's support for them has become completely meaningless. The question here is that if the NATO has intervened in Libya to protect the civilians from the so called atrocities by Gaddafi then why the same civilians are coming under the fire of NATO forces, why common people are being targeted and why is the UN completely silent on these attacks?

The fresh example of NATO barbarism is an attack on east Tripoli last night (20 June) in which seven civilians were killed according to Reuters. It need not be mentioned here that if this is the figure reported by western media then figures could be much higher according to local media.

Even if this figure is correct then it is a matter of shame for the entire world that NATO is targeting common civilians in Libya who are supposedly supporters of Col. Gaddafi, meaning that the NATO is not just fighting against Gaddafi but also against those common people who are supporters of the Libyan leader. More outrageous is that a number of children have been killed in NATO attacks till now.

The point here is not what the Libyan ruler is doing and whether the way he is refusing to relinquish power is correct, but why NATO is unable to see the atrocities by only Col. Gaddafi. Moreover, why civilian are being targeted in Libya? If the people who are protesting against Gaddafi are righteous in the eyes of advocates of freedom of expression this is not at all a problem, but the opinion of supporters of Gaddafi should also be respected and should be dealt with peacefully through negotiations and the future of the country should be decided by taking majority opinion into consideration. But NATO is trying to weaken the country by playing the game of terror and power and the only target seems to be taking control of Libyan oil treasures, to weaken the economy of the country and to punish Gaddafi for thwarting American hegemony

till now. The unfortunate thing is that Gaddafi himself and his wrong decisions are providing open grounds for NATO to play its game of barbarism.

Source: <http://roznamasahara.samaylive.com/Details.aspx?id=22109&boxid=1221331>



The Siasat Daily (The Politics Daily), Hyderabad

Editorial, 22 June 2011, Wednesday

3. Unrest in Syria

The Syrian President Bashar al-Assad has promised constitutional changes and reforms on the backdrop of rising unrest in Syria. The political situation in the country is indicative of the cracks in the presidential palace. Majority of people are complaining against the atrocities by the ruling group and government forces. A huge number of people are fleeing to Turkey while violence is perpetuating. A number of civilians have lost their lives since the protests started four months back. President Bashar al-Assad, in his third address to the people since then, has expressed confidence that the situation will soon improve. He said that national consultation will be carried out for reforms; he has also said that some foreign powers are trying to weaken the country in the name of protest. The military and civilian authorities in Syria are hand-in-gloves while the people have mostly complained against the military for being harsh on people by inciting violence in peaceful demonstrations. The anti-government protest in Syria is part of larger unrest in Arab world behind which the international powers are working. The people are angry with the military which brutally killed a thirteen-year old child. It is the responsibility of the government that it takes corrective measures if people are protesting against the armed forces. The people of Syria have all the right to protest against the atrocities of the armed forces and to come out on the streets for their security and the security of their women and children. But the government is saying that terrorists are using the people's protest to create problems in Syria. The deteriorating situation in Syria and the atrocities by security forces have alerted the people at the international level. The human rights groups have found that the protests in Syria are largely peaceful. But some groups have taken to arms and the military is using force against them. The central point of violence has been Daraa where the security forces had arrested 15 youths on 18 May, who were accused of writing anti-government graffiti on the walls and tortured them. Friday is an important day in the Islamic world. Last Friday, (17 June) a large number of people collected and marched in the streets demanding release of the youths. The people also demanded more political freedom and protested against corruption. The security forces then resorted to use of force to take control of the situation and violence erupted killing hundreds of people. A total of more than two hundred security personnel have also been killed in the violence till now. Along with Syria, other Muslim countries are also facing turbulent times

these days. The people are rightly agitated against use of force by the authorities. The Syrian government has completely failed in controlling violence. They should seriously take account of the situation and take measures to deal with the situation. If the people who have gathered near the Turkish borders to cross over to that country are not safe then asking for return of those who are in refugee camps in Turkey would be useless as has been appealed by the President. More than ten thousand Syrian citizens have taken refuge in Turkey who fear for their life if they return to Syria. The need is to try and build confidence among people. The government should focus on peace and security of the people in the coming national consultation summit. The Syrian President has invited more than a hundred personalities to study the mechanism and possibilities of constitutional reform but the use of force against people has to be stopped immediately. The use of political force for military tactics can be counterproductive.

Source: <http://www.siasat.com/urdu/news/idr22-17>



Dawat Online (Invitation), New Delhi

Editorial, 25 June 2011, Saturday

4. The Problems facing Turkish Leadership

The Turkish voters have given the mandate to the ruling Justice and Development Party (AKP) to form a government for the third consecutive term. The party was formed in 2001 and in 2002 participated in elections for the first time and gained victory. It got only 34 percent vote that time but succeeded in forming the government. Five years later, in the second elections for the party and the sixteenth election for the Turkish Parliament, the Turkish electorate supported the party with more vigour and the share of vote for the party rose to 47 percent. In the elections held on 12 June 2011 the party got 85 votes (sic), thus the share of votes for the party is continuously increasing, but since turkey has a very complex method of representative seat distribution, the number of seats for the AKP has decreased. While it had 363 seats in the 530 member Parliament in 2002, it was reduced to 341 in 2007 and 326 in 2011. However, the share of votes has continuously increased. There is no need to tell that AKP is an Islamist group. The Islamist section, that wishes to see Islam playing a dominating role, has remained active in Turkey for a long time, but their heartfelt wish has always been suppressed and they have been forced to accept not just a secular politics but a secular way of life. Turkey has a 99 percent Muslim population. The interesting aspect is that those who insist that the politics and society shall not have anything to do with religion also term themselves as Muslims. According to them, it should be ruled by human wishes.

The general elections in Turkey are important not just for the people of Turkey but for the outside world as well. These elections were very important for the Islamists on the one hand while of huge interest for the US, Europe and the Muslim world itself. The ruling party was working for a two-third majority and its leadership had appealed to the electorate because that was the only way to achieve its goal. The most important of them was the constitutional amendment. It has to be remembered that the current Turkish constitution was formed by the military which was completely unconcerned with religion. It declared itself as the protector of the Turkish democracy. The reason is well known. Till then the military was dominated by people without religious understanding of life. So the military always obstructed the path of Islamists and whenever they came to power they were deposed. But gradually the situation changed and the Islamists made their way in Turkey. The Nursi (Gulen movement) movement worked for it patiently and Khwaja Muhammed Fethullah Gulen is worth praise for patiently working for the progress of this movement. The current Turkish leadership faces a number of problems which pose a major challenge for them. The biggest challenge is to maintain and further enhance the positive atmosphere for the Islamists and remove all hurdles in its way. Another important task is to maintain the status of Turkey in international politics which it has gained in the past one decade and further work for the policy planned by the leadership. They also need to work for the further development of the economy in the country. The leadership also faces a major challenge of promoting a policy of alliance in the country. It is hoped that they will work for solutions of all the problems.

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

Translated and Compiled by Md. Muddassir Quamar

**Md. Muddassir Quamar is a Doctoral Candidate at the School of International Studies, Jawaharlal Nehru University.
Email: muddassir.2005@gmail.com**

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