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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 Rashtriya Sahara (National Sahara Daily), Delhi**  
Editorial, 16 December 2011, Friday

### 1. The Question of Protection of Al-Aqsa Mosque

The recent statement by the Grand Mufti of Jerusalem Muhammad Hussein about Israel trying to permanently close the First *Qiblah*<sup>1</sup> on some pretext should shock everyone, particularly the Islamic world. The Grand Mufti criticized the silence in the Islamic world on the issue of closure of the Moroccan Door of the Al-Aqsa Mosque, expressing his fear that the Muslims may completely lose access to their First *Qiblah*. He also appealed to the Arab League, the OIC and other representative bodies to formulate a strategy for protection of the Al-Aqsa Mosque.

The question is will the Muslim countries and their organizations, the Arab League and its members, who have remained conspicuously silent for five decades, be able to prepare a plan,

<sup>1</sup> The Al-Aqsa Mosque situated in the Noble Sanctuary or the Temple Mount in the old city of Jerusalem is regarded by Muslims as the first *Qiblah*, that is, the direction which is faced towards while Muslim prayer (*Salah*) is offered.

particularly at a time when the region is going through a tsunami of sorts known as the Arab Spring? Tunisia was the first to be affected by it; followed by the fall of Mubarak in Egypt. Tunisia now has elected a new President and the electoral process is being carried out in Egypt. A new government will soon take over there if things do not take any untoward turn; but the priority of these governments would be to maintain sustainability. They will have to work hard for stabilizing their rule. Can they be expected to work on a strong plan regarding the Al-Aqsa Mosque, especially when Egypt still has diplomatic relations with Israel?

Libya, that championed the cause of the Islamic world, and its leader Muammar Qaddafi, who used to be regarded as a hero in the Muslim world, had to meet such a terrible end due to conspiracy by the American, European and the Western world. The rebels-turned-rulers backed by the West are fighting it out with the supporters of the ruler-turned-rebels. Can they be hoped to work for the protection of the Al-Aqsa Mosque? Saddam Hussein inspired thousands of people to give his name to their children and had he been alive then perhaps he would have responded to the call of the Grand Mufti of Palestine. His country itself is in a precarious situation. Bomb blasts, suicide attacks and the killing of innocent people has become a daily affair. It cannot be estimated when normalcy would be restored. In such a scenario, expecting Iraq to come to the rescue of the Al-Aqsa Mosque would be nothing less than living in a fool's paradise.

Bahrain and Yemen have also been affected with the Arab Spring and are licking their wounds. It would be an achievement if these rulers can save themselves through help from friendly countries. They never allowed the Palestine-Israeli conflict to reach their courtyard and perhaps that is why they have successfully dealt with the Arab Spring. Syria had been an important party in the conflict and its former leader Hafez al-Assad was a hero of the Muslim world. The world still remembers Hafez al-Assad with fond memories and respect. It should be born in mind while analyzing the situation in Syria. The US has been able to give a lesson to the rulers of those countries that did not like Israel or those who worked for the cause of the Al-Aqsa Mosque. The remaining ones are under the radar. It still has to be seen how many countries come forward to respond to the call of the Grand Mufti.

The question then is if the oppressed do not have the strength to raise their voice against the oppressor, then how to do justice? The world should contemplate about it.

**Source:** <http://roznamasahara.samaylive.com/Details.aspx?id=40198&boxid=14158788>



**The Etemaad Urdu Daily (The Confidence Urdu Daily), Hyderabad  
Editorial, 17 December 2011, Saturday**

## 2. The US Military Withdrawal from Iraq

The withdrawal of American forces from Iraq is the most noticeable event of this decade. The idea of military victory of the Middle Ages has changed but in the changed circumstances so have the ways. The withdrawal of American forces from a foreign land after Vietnam indicates a trend. Despite the claims of achieving the target for which American forces landed in Iraq, a number of questions remain unanswered. The causes of this American withdrawal are more domestic than the security scenario in the Middle East. The US President Barack Obama is heading for re-election. Barack Obama is losing popularity due to the continuous decline of the American economy, increasing unemployment and other issues. In order to catch his declining fortune, he got the leader of Al-Qaeda Osama Bin Laden killed last May.

The withdrawal from Iraq could lead to a revival of his popularity. The American people were never happy about the attack on Iraq. The arrival of so many dead soldiers further increased the problem. According to statistics by the Pentagon, 4,487 American soldiers were killed and 32,226 were injured in Iraq. The people of Iraq celebrated the “day of freedom” while the American flag was removed from the US military camps. People in the street of Baghdad were seen celebrating and saying that “We have attained freedom today.” The US could not make way to the hearts of the people of Iraq even after nine years of stay. This was the most expensive war the US had ever fought at an estimated cost of 100 billion dollars; 1.5 million American citizens had served in Iraq.

170,000 American soldiers were deployed in Iraq in the beginning of the war. Iraq also suffered immensely due to this war. As many as 113,728 Iraqi citizens were killed in the war while another one million were killed in the terror attacks and violence. More than 220,000 women and children were affected by the war. Iraq has become a country of widows and orphans. The American President while welcoming the returned forces termed the war on Iraq as the most successful war. The President also expressed his satisfaction on the security and democratic situation in Iraq, even though the situation there is still precarious.

Though the uniformed soldiers have been withdrawn, the military consultants will continue to give training to the Iraqi security forces. The US attack on Iraq was based on the pretext of Weapons of Mass Destruction. Saddam Hussein regime came to an end after the attack, he was arrested after being in the hiding for a long time and finally he was hanged after a shady court prosecution. The current situation in Iraq is witness to the hollowness of the American claim of a free and independent Iraq.

The US Secretary of Defence claimed while participating in the event organized for celebrating the return of the American forces from Iraq that the world has become a more secure place due to the sacrifices by the American forces. The international organization of journalists (IFJ) has raised doubts about the freedom of press in Iraq.

The stories of barbarism by American soldiers have been censored. Some incidents have been leaked and actions were taken by the military command. Iraqis were severely tortured in American custody. Scores of incidents of rape and violence against women have come to light.

The US bombardment on Iraq began in March 2003 at the orders of then President George W. Bush. Iraqi oil installations were burnt for months. Earlier, more than 1.5 million Iraqis, mostly children, had lost their life due to lack of food and medicine due to international sanctions. Barack Obama had promised 'change' during the 2008 presidential elections. He had assured his people that the US would pull out its forces from Iraq and Afghanistan.

The US war on Iraq is not much different from the wars of middle ages. Who will pay for the death and destruction in Iraq? To what extent are the rulers in Iraq independent? Who will ensure the security of the people of Iraq? Nouri al-Maliki and Barack Obama will have to answer such questions. The US shall think hundred times before venturing into Iran after such bitter experience in Iraq. The withdrawal of American forces is a welcome step. Barack Obama will certainly have its political benefit but should also take a re-look at the American foreign policy.

**Source:** [http://www.etemaaddaily.com/EtemaadArchive\\_files/Dec/17/editorial.html](http://www.etemaaddaily.com/EtemaadArchive_files/Dec/17/editorial.html)



***Roznama Munsif (The Judge Daily), Hyderabad***  
**Editorial, 20 December 2011, Tuesday**

### **3. US Military Returns from Iraq**

**T**he US military has pulled out its last soldiers from Iraq this Sunday. The former US President George W. Bush attacked Iraq in March 2003 on the basis of a false propaganda. While chemical weapons could not be found, Iraq is still struggling to come to terms with the destruction due to the war.

The pullout from Iraq was one of the main issues in Barack Obama's electoral manifesto. He had promised that if elected he would immediately withdraw American forces from Iraq. Even though delayed, he fulfilled his promise. There would still be some security forces for protection of the American embassy. However the question is did the US find WMDs for which it attacked Iraq? In fact the accusations of storing WMDs and links with Al-Qaeda were all proved wrong. The US could neither find WMDs nor any sign of Al-Qaeda links. The US had attacked Iraq with a larger game plan, for which it conspired to create a situation whereby it could justify its excursions in Iraq and Afghanistan. The attack on Iraq was carried out to teach a lesson to Muslim rulers against the backdrop of September 11 attacks. The Iraqi President Saddam Hussein was a strong leader who never accepted American imperialist designs and did not budge under American pressure. The 9/11 incident proved the brittle nature of American security apparatus which the whole world witnessed. The US conspired to attack Iraq to clean the blot on its security but what could it achieve through this war?

It paid an enormous cost for this war of nine years. It had approximately 1.7 million soldiers and 500 military camps in Iraq at a time. It lost 4,500 soldiers to this war and another 32,000 were injured. A total of 15 million American soldiers served in Iraq in the past nine years. The cost of

this war badly affected the American economy. According to estimates, the total cost of the war was more than 100 billion dollars. This was the reason why Obama made it an electoral issue and succeeded. The majority of people in the US were in favour of withdrawal of American forces from Iraq. Even though the US did not meet the same fate as Vietnam in Iraq but it had to suffer huge losses. It claims that it has brought democracy in Iraq and freed it from tyranny of Saddam Hussein but Iraq's instability is not hidden from the world. Terror and violence have become the order with hundreds of people dying each day. More than 100,000 innocent Iraqis have died during the past nine years. The Saddam regime had not killed as much people as were killed in the American invasion.

Iraqi security is in danger today; the Kurds are demanding separate state, while two Sunni majority provinces want a separate entity. Political stability has become a major challenge now. The people of Iraq are happy about the American withdrawal but are unaware of the approaching challenges. There are a number of security threats facing the country; the supporters of Saddam can regroup and challenge the regime, sectarian violence can worsen as well. Iran could also extend its influence in the region. There is no guarantee that democracy will continue. The NATO campaign in Afghanistan also seems to be failing. After a decade of attack and continuing violence there is no hope for peace and stability in Afghanistan. The situation has got out of hand after NATO attacks on Pakistani tribal areas and Pakistan's boycott of the Bonn conference. The US has pushed Iraq into such a deep pit that it will take enormous effort and unknown amount of time for the Iraqis to come out of it.

**Source:** <http://www.munsifdaily.com/epaper/20dec/pages/page6/news1.html>



***Roznama Rashtriya Sahara (National Sahara Daily), Delhi***  
**Editorial, 22 December 2011, Thursday**

#### **4. Worsening Situation in Syria**

**T**he situation in Syria is getting worse amidst efforts by the UN and big powers to intervene and violence between security forces and rebels that have resulted in the death of another 98 people. It is unlikely that the UN or Western powers would try to directly dismantle Bashar al-Assad's government due to the stand taken by Russia and China; but at the same time there is no justification for the way Syria is being hauled and pressurized to resolve the issue.

The Arab League has already imposed some sanctions on Syria and has suspended its membership. The US and Western support to the Arab League action is well known and the League has now knocked on the doors of the UN to enforce its action plan. The support to the



Arab League's plan in the General Assembly is important but whether it will resolve the matter in Syria is doubtful. The UN General Assembly has passed a resolution demanding Syria to take action as suggested in the Arab action plan. It requires that the Syrian regime hold peaceful negotiations with the rebels, stop the military action against them and immediately implement domestic political reforms. The interesting point is that some of the countries which advised Syria to have democratic reforms have curtailed democratic voices at home. They have killed many democratic voices before they could threaten them and now are giving lesson on democracy to Syria. There is no doubt that the violent confrontation between the state security forces and the rebels has led to deteriorating circumstances and genuine efforts should be made to establish peace. The state has not succeeded in its efforts and the country is going through an extremely bad situation and people from across the spectrum have lost their life, yet to put the blame entirely on the government would not be correct.

The peace negotiations with the rebels have not materialized because the conditions put forth by them are not acceptable to Bashar al-Assad. Another important point is the Russian statement that the West is looking for an excuse to interfere in the internal matters of Syria. No need to say that the rebels are supported by these countries, and in such a situation it would be wrong to expect that Bashar's efforts would yield result. The UN is targeting the regime alone rather than looking at the problems being created by the rebels. Unfortunately, the mechanisms to deal with the protests and demonstrations by Bashar's security apparatus have only benefitted the rebels and the worst affected remain the common people.

The overall situation in Syria is fast deteriorating with violence and killings and this has led to increasing Western pressure on the Syrian government. This pressure is in fact part of the plan for foreign intervention in Syria. The Bashar government would do well to stop use of force and work out a strategy to deal with violence and prevent Syria from becoming another Libya.

Source: <http://roznamasahara.samaylive.com/Details.aspx?id=40861&boxid=11911343>



**Roznama Hamara Samaj (Daily Our Society), Delhi**  
**Editorial, 23 December 2011, Friday**

### **5. Israel's Attitude: No Surprise**

If you have never come across the practical example of proverbs like *hurling a hundred shoes towards the truth and praising the lie* and *bullying even after being caught indulging in wrong*, then you look at the oppression of Palestinians by the occupying power Israel. You would come to know that if the corrupt are powerful with resources then the blind world prefers to pat it for its wrongs. The story of Israeli suppression of the Palestinian people is long; the way

Israeli forces killed innocent civilians by bombing in the darkness of night a congested and populated city like the Gaza Strip to destroy its buildings and kill the residents is unparalleled at least in the recent history of wars. We are not surprised at the Israeli behaviour, rather we despise the western supporters of Israel, who call themselves as the foremost flag bearers of human rights.

But what can you do if the West cannot see any violation of human rights when such heinous acts are perpetuated by Israel and the US. Who does not know that Israel, an illegal child from the womb of British and Western imperialism, has nothing called humanism and loyalty in its policies. All its policies began with individual selfishness and interest and the friendship or sympathies end with their achievement. There was some hope of Palestinian independence after full membership to Palestine was granted in UNESCO and people in the subcontinent had grown hopeful about freedom for Jerusalem and that an independent state of Palestine would soon be a reality. The US and Britain had put all their resources to prevent the granting of full membership to Palestine in UNESCO which could lead to the security and stability of Jerusalem. The US made it an issue of self respect but in effect all this was being done due to Israeli pressure which could put an end to the American President's tenure in a matter of seconds. If the US is patting Israel on its inhuman and illegal actions rather than taking them to task, then it is because Israel is in control of all the satellites of the US and other Western nations. Media or mass communication is known as the fourth pillar of democracy. Currently more than 70 percent of media organizations are under Israeli people. Likewise, most of the American nuclear research organizations are headed by Israelis. It can also be argued that Israelis are in control of the American economy. If Obama and Co. dares to utter a word against an Israeli policy, then Israel is in a good position to pull his tongue out of his throat. A country that is occupied by such a hypocrite cannot be expected to condemn Israel's illegal actions.

Let's see the Israeli bullying that puts humanity to shame. Despite criticism by the UN, Britain, France, Germany and Portugal, it has gone on to continue its illegal settlement activities. On the one hand, it is making a joke out of a power like Russia by continuing the settlement construction and on the other hand, it asks friendly nations to put pressure on Palestine to come to the negotiations table. Israel now fears that if the number of its critics increase it will be left alone in the Security Council and the world will not have any pity for it. Who will support an Israel that is simply hell bent on illegal constructions while making a show of inviting Palestine for negotiations?

The US can dare to do it because it cannot escape saying yes to Israel. But Britain, France and Russia who have kept their land free from Israeli hypocrites should not commit such an immoral act. The Israeli action of settlement construction indicates that Israel has nothing to do with peace and is interested in only continuing with policies that lead to violence and destruction. It is imperative for Israeli existence that the Arab remains unstable. This could be the only way it can ensure its permanent existence and justify its illegal acts. If the Arab world does not watch out now then it can be said that the Arab Muslims are not made of the blood which used to keep boiling until they could get rid of illegal and immoral actions and entities. But irony is that the Arab world itself has an ample number of hypocrites who can be termed as double headed snakes. They never tire of weeping at the oppression of Palestinians but on the other hand, work with Israel. There is no excuse for their going to the negotiations table while Israel is continuing

with the illegal settlement construction. Israel should be told that the negotiations can be resumed only upon the condition that it will stop settlement construction and will restore all Islamic architectures which its security forces have destroyed.

Source: [http://www.hamarasamaj.com/delhi/23\\_12\\_2011/edarti\\_safha.htm](http://www.hamarasamaj.com/delhi/23_12_2011/edarti_safha.htm)



**Roznama Rashtriya Sahara (National Sahara Daily), Delhi**  
**Editorial, 23 December 2011, Friday**

## **6. The UN Condemns Israel**

The United Nations was founded after the Second World War in order to create a just and peaceful international order, according to which if one state indulges in the heinous act of aggression towards another, it could impose economic and other sanctions against the aggressor. Further, if a state violates the international law by occupying the land of another state and suppresses its people or bombards them or tortures them, then the UN can send its forces there to prevent it from continuing its barbaric actions. But if one looks at the Israeli aggression on Palestine, its suppression of innocent and unarmed Palestinian civilians and its occupation of Palestinian lands for more than sixty years and the Palestinian struggle against this occupation, then the international laws, the UN and the US and Western powers and their tall claims all look completely hollow and meaningless. Israel has not only ensured the Palestinian struggle for basic needs like food and water by its military blockade but has constantly targeted innocent Palestinian civilians, women and children by bombardment at its will on some or the other pretext. If India and other peace and justice loving nations raise their voice against such Israeli actions or any resolution is proposed in the UN General Assembly then the Western nations, who have the veto power, use their veto putting aside all their claims of working for human rights, justice and peace. This is the reason due to which Israel, with the backing of the US, has continued with the barbaric, heinous and inhuman aggression on and suppression of the people of Palestine for more than sixty years.

Amidst the Israeli aggression and suppression, there have been times when one thought that an independent and free Palestine could soon be a reality but Palestine has become a casualty of Israeli and Western conspiracies. A good news came recently that all regional and political groups in the UNSC have together condemned the construction of illegal settlements by Israel in the occupied Palestinian lands. The representatives in the UNSC have said that the continuing construction of illegal settlements will be harmful for the future of a Palestinian state. They also expressed their worries about the increasing incidence of violence by the settlers, though the close Israeli ally, the US, was not party to this unusual condemnation. Israel has also not yet



reacted to the statement of condemnation. Israel in fact recently issued tenders for construction of 1,000 buildings in West Bank and East Jerusalem.

The representatives of the European Union, NAM, Arab countries and the G-20 countries in the UN have also severely criticized the incidents of burning of Mosques by Israel. Russia which holds a veto power in the UNSC has also criticized the Israeli policies. Israel has been occupying the West bank and East Jerusalem since 1967 and as much as 500,000 Jewish settlers live in about a 100 illegal settlements. These settlements are illegal as per international laws yet Israel refuses to regard them as illegal.

Meanwhile, four members of the UNSC- France, Britain, Germany and Portugal- have condemned the burning of the Aqsa Mosque in occupied Jerusalem and the Burqa Mosque in West Bank. According to a report by the UNICEF, as many as 19 children have been killed and 403 have been injured this year in Israeli attacks on occupied Palestine.

**Source:** <http://roznamasahara.samaylive.com/Details.aspx?id=40985&boxid=1323731>

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