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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 Etemaad Urdu Daily (The Confidence Urdu Daily), Hyderabad
Editorial, 4 January 2012, Wednesday

1. US-Iran Tensions

The successful test fire of long-distance missile *Qadir* during an Iranian naval exercise in the Gulf is yet another blow to the falling status of the US. The US President has signed a law regarding the implementation of sanctions on the Iranian Central Bank and Iranian financial sector after the IAEA report that stated that Iran is working to attain nuclear weapons. Iran immediately reacted saying it will block the passage of oil through the Gulf in case sanctions are imposed on imports of Iranian oil against its peaceful nuclear programme.

This show of courage by Iran signifies that the US is on a decline. The world in the twenty-first century is different from the twentieth century. It is no more ready to accept the US hegemony. The new American policy of confining its focus to the Pacific region is a testimony to it. Surprisingly, it has passed over the right to take decisions in this region to Asia, which means that the US wants to avoid any conflict prone region.

On the backdrop of weakening of American geo-political and strategic reflexes, any clash with Iran would be disastrous for regional security and stability as well as the world economy. The decision by the US to impose unilateral sanctions on Iran, which prohibits a country to transact with American financial agencies and banks in case they transact with the Iranian Central Bank, looks extremely impractical.

The Iranians have indicated that they will use the Strait of Hormuz as a strategic tool. The sharp exchanges between Washington and Tehran show that implementation of the American decision is itself a major challenge for it. After the withdrawal of its forces from Iraq, it would be difficult for the US to act against Iran. There are players in Iran who can change the game in Iraq in favour of Iran. Russia and China, which are Iranian neighbours and have good trade relations with it, will not allow the US to clash with Iran. The world has become complex and it poses a challenge for the American national security. The European countries, which have been badly hit by economic recession, may also avoid supporting the US because these sanctions could further harm their economy. The US realizes that in case Iran blocks the passage of oil vessels from the Strait of Hormuz, then it can raise the oil prices not just for the Western countries but also for the entire world.

The American leadership must realize that several regional and international powers have grown since the end of the Cold war. The recent failures of the US in wars and the global economic crisis have severely affected its capabilities to decide the future course of action and have dampened its geo-strategic strength.

The Iranian nuclear programme until now has been peaceful even though the US has been accusing it of trying to make nuclear weapons. Moreover, the American and Israeli leaderships are also thinking to target the Iranian nuclear plants, which would be a mistake. Iran has till now used its nuclear capabilities for peaceful purposes and has recently prepared a nuclear fuel rod which can be used in atomic power plants, although Iran has claimed that it would be used for medical purposes. If based on it, the US says that Iran has succeeded in making nuclear weapons, it would be very similar to the way it attacked Iraq saying that Saddam Hussein has stored nuclear and biological weapons. It had the UN green signal to attack Iraq on this pretext, but it failed to find a single such weapon, while it destroyed the Iraqi economy, culture and sowed the seeds of sectarian and racial division. It claimed before its withdrawal from Iraq that it has strengthened democracy in Iraq but the fact is that the democracy, which it claims to have established, has given way to a civil war like situation. Nouri al-Maliki is proving to be a Shi'a Saddam Hussein. The US should take stock of its policies and its real strength before taking any step, else the world will have to face more problems.

Source: http://www.etemaaddaily.com/EtemaadArchive_files/Jan/04/editorial.html



The Siasat Daily (The Politics Daily), Hyderabad
Editorial, 4 January 2012, Wednesday

2. Iranian Missile Tests

On the backdrop of the tension in the West regarding the Iranian nuclear programme, Tehran has announced that it has successfully test-fired a long-distance missile near the Strait of Hormuz during its naval exercise, which has further alarmed the Western powers. If it escalates the diplomatic tensions then more countries including the US will issue statements threatening to impose more sanctions against Iran. The display of military power is an internal matter of a country. Nevertheless, in case of Iran, the US and its allies have a different view. If Iran has displayed its military and scientific developments, then it also has retorted that it is ready for another round of talks with the world powers. Iran wants to negotiate with these powers without compromising on its nuclear programme, which is not acceptable for the latter. They have already said that Iran will have to remain cautious and limit its nuclear and military power. The world powers consider themselves to be above rules and laws but bully others to follow these so-called rules. Iran will never bow to such pressurizing tactics. Iran has successfully test-fired two missiles during its naval exercises, thus warning the US and Israel of any eventuality in case of further sanctions. These missiles are capable of reaching Israeli and American camps. France has termed these tests by Iran as very bad indications referring to its concern about Iranian future plans. The Strait of Hormuz is a narrow passage in the Gulf through which oil vessels pass when headed to the West. Iran has threatened that if the world powers act against Iran, it will close down the Strait. Through this test, Iran has intimated to the world that it will not accept any more sanctions and the West will have to face the repercussions in case of further sanctions. The ten-day naval exercise and the test firing of two missiles--Nour and Qadir—have shaken the oil market. According to the Iranian Naval commander Habibullah Sairi, the Strait of Hormuz is in Iranian control and it can target any vessel passing through it. This clearly shows that Iran wants to intimate to the world that any more sanctions will attract retaliation from Iran. *Qadir* was developed in August and has the capacity to hit targets at a distance of 125 miles. These missiles can target American bases in the Gulf. The world powers are responsible for such actions from Iran. They have created a problem for themselves by imposing sanctions on Iranian oil imports. If Iran closes the Strait of Hormuz, the American and Western economies will further decline. However, Iran has provided a window by keeping the negotiations option open so that the US and its allies can mend their ways. The Iranian negotiator Saeed Jalili is ready for talks but the US President, in a bid to allure American voters, is issuing statements that he will not tolerate the Iranian nuclear programme. Rather than trying to bring down tensions with Iran, the outrageous statements have increased the tension. It has been conveyed to the countries having relations with Iran that they will have to choose between the US and Iran. A new law has been passed prohibiting any business with a country that has business with Iranian Central Bank. If the US continues with such adamant and bullying behaviour, there are very less chances of a resolution of the problem. The UN has already

imposed four sanctions on Iran for not halting uranium enrichment. Moreover, the US and EU have also imposed economic sanctions. But if Iran has test-fired the missiles despite these sanctions, then it is an indication that such methods of bullying cannot help resolve the issue with Iran and can lead to major crises. Iran should also take steps to end the uncertainty over its nuclear programme before the situation gets out of hand. It is important at times to avoid things that can create problems.

Source: <http://www.siasat.com/urdu/news/idr4-21>



Roznama Rashtriya Sahara (National Sahara Daily), Delhi
Editorial, 5 January 2012, Thursday

3. The Drama around Israeli-Palestinian Negotiations

Palestinian and Israeli negotiators held face to face talks in Amman on Tuesday and agreed to convene another round of meetings on Friday. This meeting between the Israeli and Palestinian negotiators is being considered important for a number of reasons. Firstly, this talk has taken place after a gap of 15-16 months. In November 2010, the talks broke due to Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu's refusal to stop the construction of new Jewish settlements in the West Bank. Secondly, the Arab countries have witnessed huge changes in these 15-16 months. The wind of regime change that started in Tunisia spread to other countries and major changes in the mood of Arab streets were also felt. Notwithstanding who started the movement in a country and who were the powers that helped in fulfilling or suppressing these movements, the Palestinians take it as a positive development. This could be a problem for Israel, as has been reflected from the statements made by some of its leaders during the movement against Hosni Mubarak at the Tahrir Square.

Besides, Palestine also has success at the International diplomatic level including recognition of the Palestinian state by some countries and the statehood bid at the UN. This success of Palestine at the international diplomatic level has also alarmed Israel and its guardians. They consider the breaking down of negotiations as one of the reasons for this Palestinian success. When Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu did not agree on renewing restrictions on the construction of new settlements in the occupied West Bank, it was not looked upon very favourably by the international community and a number of countries had criticized the Israeli Prime Minister.

The third reason that makes this negotiation important is the US and its allies, which have termed this negotiation as a 'positive step', although nothing concrete has come to the surface except that the two sides will meet again on Friday.

Actually, the US, which is the biggest supporter of Israel prefers that the drama around Israeli-Palestinian negotiations continue, so that no one could argue that US is not doing anything for the formation of the independent state of Palestine and for the establishment of peace in the region. Meanwhile, Israel can continue with its policies. This is the reason why the moment any negotiation takes place between Israel and Palestine, the US Secretary of State starts issuing statements, even though the past experiences are witness to the fact that no change on the ground had occurred. On the contrary, Israel has become more belligerent. If one looks at the media reports in the past few months, few doubts remain that Israel is planning to demolish and take control of the Al-Aqsa mosque. So, if the US and the international community are really serious about peace in the region then it should stop staging the drama of negotiations and work for a formula for permanent peace that cannot be realized without implementing the two-state solution, which is the basic reason for the conflict. Israel should recognize an independent state of Palestine based on the pre-1967 war boundaries, and only then should negotiations take place. Then the world will see how the conflict is not resolved.

Source: <http://www.roznamesahara.com/Details.aspx?id=42423&boxid=2138375>



The Siasat Daily (The Politics Daily), Hyderabad
Editorial, 7 January 2012, Saturday

4. Sectarian Violence in Iraq

Iraq is not just suffering from a political crisis but also sectarian tensions. More than 75 people were killed in a series of bomb blasts in Baghdad and Nasiriyah. The attacks have targeted a specific community. Several blasts have occurred since the American military withdrawal in December, which is a very disturbing phenomenon. The American and Western policy, openly or discreetly, aims at attaining more power for themselves even if it leads to the destruction of the entire world. People may die of hunger elsewhere but their people have to live in luxury. The people of Iraq are now suffering and their tormentors have successfully escaped without punishment. Iraq now faces political instability. The Western powers that have bloodied their hands in Iraq and Afghanistan, after bullying Pakistan, have now brought Iran to the verge of war. They have planned a terrible policy for Iraq. Peace and stability has become a casualty of sectarian division. The areas in Baghdad and Nasiriyah that were targeted are Shi'a majority areas. These acts of violence need to be seriously analyzed because they have been instigated by enemy powers who want the people of Iraq—Shi'as, Sunnis and Kurds—to fight among themselves in order to destabilize Iraq. The blast in the Iraqi capital of Baghdad took place in the busy morning hours. Another blast then occurred in the district of Kazimiah, which is also a Shi'a majority area. These attacks have come at a time when Prime Minister Nouri al-Maliki is trying to strengthen the government to fill the political gap. Iraq needs a strong and neutral government after the American withdrawal to govern the war ravaged country. These attacks are trying to indicate that the American military should have stayed. Baghdad saw another blast 15

days back in which 63 people were killed. The city has witnessed the highest number of bomb blasts in the past one year with most casualties. Every day there are some deaths in one or the other area; the recent attacks have been targeted at derailing the peace efforts between Shi'as and Sunnis. The Sunnis despite being a minority have ruled over Iraq for most part of its history. But, the powers that want to propel the Shi'a-Sunni divide attack the Shi'a majority areas when they observe a period of grief. They collect in large numbers at the shrines in Karbala and other holy places. Bomb blasts in such situations are aimed at creating more problems and the Shia leaders should avoid instigating people against Sunnis. Iraq will turn into a graveyard if killing is reciprocated with killings. The foreign forces have left Iraq on the verge of sectarian war and political instability. The Nouri al-Maliki government should take concrete steps for alleviating political instability in the country. The Sunni and Kurdish parties should end their boycott of the parliament. The stand taken by Sunni parties against Vice President Tariq Hashemi for his involvement in terror activities may not help in resolving the issue, which has led him to go into hiding. All the parties will have to stand above sectarian affiliations and take stock of the situation. It has led to violence and the common people are still suffering despite the withdrawal of the foreign forces. The only way forward for the Iraqi leaders is to work with unity and fail the design of enemy powers. The powers, which are trying to push Iraq into disability, should think about their internal security.

Source: <http://www.siasat.com/urdu/news/idr7-22>



The Siasat Daily (The Politics Daily), Hyderabad
Editorial, 9 January 2012, Monday

5. European Union and Iran

The European Union has lost its international reputation by not remaining neutral. The developed world should not just care about their own citizens but should think about others as well. But the EU has instead become subservient to the US. The EU has become so worried about Iran that it went ahead of the US in its worries. Despite the way Iran has been bullied with regard to its nuclear programme, it has not yet lost its calm. It did not express any worry when the EU imposed sanctions on imports of Iranian oil. Iran made it clear during the visit of the Turkish Foreign Minister that it does not care a bit about the EU actions. Iran has been facing such problems for the past 32 years even when it had successfully dealt with all the issues. Each country should reject these sanctions because it amounts to waging an economic war against Iran. The US and EU have not stopped poking their nose in the affairs of other states despite suffering from economic recession which has pushed them on the verge of bankruptcy. Instead, their focus is on creating trouble in the Arab world rather than solving their own problems. Iran has said that if it closes down the Strait of Hormuz, the West will have to go hungry. If the strait is closed, the Western economy will fall immediately.

It is perhaps because of this warning that the EU has tried to explore the means of negotiations. Iran has already done some military exercises in the Strait of Hormuz and further testing of weapons will instil fear in the EU countries. The American and European sanctions may also harm their own economies. That is why the EU Foreign Policy Chief Catherine Austin has tried to start a negotiation with Iran through Turkey. It is a good opportunity for Tehran as well. The Tehran visit by the Turkish Foreign Minister should be welcomed. The chief Iranian negotiator Saeed Jalili has also invited the world powers for talks. Any country might suffer due to economic sanctions. Iran should work to create a better environment for talks. The world powers should also work for resolving the issue with Iran. If these talks were hosted by Turkey then it would be much better. Russia can also help in these negotiations but any bullying of Iran by world powers may lead to worsening of the situation. The Iranian President has raised this point in his talks with his Russian counterpart. Earlier negotiations have failed but the parties should try to resolve differences and do away with any possible roadblocks before going to the negotiations table. The EU should keep itself free from any bias, which is important for a positive outcome. The neutrality of the six international negotiators will also be important for success of these talks.

Source: <http://www.siasat.com/urdu/news/idr9-24>



Dawat Online (Invitation), New Delhi
Editorial, 10 January 2012, Tuesday

6. Tunisia-Libya Unification

The demand for the unification of Tunisia and Libya has been raised once again. This time the issue was raised by the Tunisian President Munsif Marzouk and supported by the leader of the Islamic movement Rashid al-Ghannushi. It should be remembered that recently the Tunisian President Munsif Marzouk had a meeting with the interim leader of Libya Mustafa Abdul Jalil during which he had proposed this idea. Rashid al-Ghannushi supported this idea saying that not only are the two states neighbours but have close bonds in several aspects. The two are brotherly countries, both have civilizational and cultural similarities and the people in both the states are from one race. Religious unity is the most important commonality between the two. The two also share history and tradition as well as the same school of Islamic jurisprudence, the Maliki School. There is no reason to stay separate. There is no obstacle in the path of unity. Moreover, there is a strong desire among the people of both countries for unification. He also expressed that the people of Libya would take it positively because such views are common in Libya as well and this is nothing strange. According to Ghannushi, both the countries have always remained very close. They have been together even in difficult times. The two countries had stood together since the wave of change started to blow in the Arab world.

During the upheaval in Libya, hundreds of thousands of Libyans took refuge in Tunisia. He also said that it would be good for the people of Libya that their leadership is in the hands of intellectual minds that will respect the desires and wishes of the people.

The suggestion to unite Tunisia and Libya came up initially in 1974. The leaders of the two countries at that time, Muammar Qaddafi and Habib Bourguiba had agreed. Though Qaddafi was more enthusiastic about the unity, this aspiration was found among the people as well. He did not only raise the slogan of Arab unity, but also envisaged an idea to form a federation including Egypt, Syria, Sudan, Tunisia, Algeria, and Libya and relentlessly worked for the realization of the idea. He struggled to make it a reality. When he was unsuccessful, he formed a unity with Chad and, therefore, tried to formalize the unity in the Arab world but at that time Muammar Qaddafi was feared in the region. It is probably for this reason that this plan could never succeed although it was a political necessity for this region or for the leaders of this region. That is why when Algeria hosted the fourth NAM conference, the Tunisian President Habib Bourguiba again raised the slogan for united Libya, Tunisia and Algeria. This gave the impression that it was also a race for taking credit. Habib Bourguiba and Muammar Qaddafi had signed an agreement for the unification of Tunisia and Libya, which is known as the Djerba Declaration. According to it, it was decided that the new state would be known as Arab Islamic Republic. But differences propped up on a number of issues, one being that certain outside forces were not in favour of the unification, which obviously was not in their interest. They created a situation that within a month both Libya and Tunisia backed out of the agreement and now after 40 years, the same voices have been raised again.

Source: http://dawatonline.com/Archive_Editorial.aspx?sDate=10-jan-2012



Roznama Munsif (The Judge Daily), Hyderabad
Editorial, 12 January 2012, Thursday

7. India-Israel Relations?

It is normal to have diplomatic and trade relations between two countries, but some principles have to be followed for establishing such relations. A country follows a certain foreign policy and has to stick to it. Sacrificing old relations to build new ones cannot be appreciated, which is what is going on in our country these days. India, that was until two decades back a strong supporter of Palestine, has started to build strong relations with Israel, the enemy state of Palestine. India, in fact, has gone far ahead in its relations with Israel. This was not part of India's foreign policy. We never had diplomatic relations with Israel during the periods of Nehru, Indira and even Rajiv Gandhi. But the RSS-minded former Indian Prime Minister from Congress P. V. Narasimha Rao put the foundation stone of this evil diplomatic relations with the wicked state. It was opposed within the Congress party at that time and the matter was put under the carpet. The NDA government, when they came to power, took this relation to another level.

Surprisingly, the Congress party has continued with the mistakes committed by Narasimha Rao and later NDA governments. The talk between the two countries on various issues during the past one decade is evidence of that. Our Foreign Minister S. M. Krishna on his recent visit to Israel has termed it to be a natural ally of India. The two countries have agreed to sign several agreements in various issues including trade, security and terrorism. It is sad that India, which has in the past termed Israel as an occupying state that has occupied Palestinian land and is known for its terrorist activities the world over, is standing side by side with Israel announcing promotion of close relations with it. The current Indian stand supports Israel's anti-Palestine policies, which can never be justified. We know that Israel has been occupying Palestinian lands for the past five decades, has subjected the Palestinians to all kinds of oppression, and has been backed by the US. Sixty percent of the people world over term these Israeli actions as human rights violation and support the people of Palestine. But the people of Palestine have not yet got justice because time and again, the US and its allies put some roadblock or other in the attainment of statehood of Palestine. India was a big support for the people of Palestine in such troubled situations as it always supported the Palestinian cause, which was part of Indian foreign policy; but the changes that were started 20 years back have pulled India away from Palestine. It is another matter that India has not given any clear indication or announced its withdrawal of support for Palestine, rather it still states it support for the cause of Palestine. But if two individuals are fighting, one cannot support both of them if you are supporting one it means you are against the other. The policy behind building good relations with Israel is still a secret; one cannot fail to note here that Israel has shown extreme warmth in building relations with India as well. Apart from other things, it also plans to install a statue of the father of the nation, Mahatma Gandhi. This, according to the analysts, is part of a policy to build closer relations with India. The Israeli municipality in Jerusalem has announced that it will install a statue of Mahatma Gandhi at the Jabal al-Mukaber area of East Jerusalem. This is the same spot where the second Caliph of Islam, Omar had raised the slogan of praise of Allah after victory of Jerusalem. Israel had captured the area during the Six-day war in 1967. It knows that the spot is important for Muslims and that Palestinians and other Arab and Muslim countries can raise objection to it. This can also lead to problems in relations between India and Palestine. Israel can term itself whatever it wants but it cannot deny the fact that it is an illegal and occupying state. It has been occupying Palestinian lands for maintaining its illegal entity and its closeness with such a huge democracy is not at all acceptable. The government of India should immediately review its foreign policy.

Source: <http://www.munsifdaily.com/epaper/12jan/pages/page6/news1.html>



The Etemaad Urdu Daily (The Confidence Urdu Daily), Hyderabad
Editorial, 13 January 2012, Friday

8. Diversion from Principle Foreign Policy

Relations are an important component of human life as are relations between countries and nations. A country can no more remain isolated in the times of globalization and has to have some dependence on others. However, relations are based on some principles, which are derived from mutual respect and convictions. The Government of India should disclose the principles of India's foreign policy upon which the recent visit of External Affairs Minister S. M. Krishna to Israel took place. This first visit by a UPA External Affairs Minister to Israel raises questions about the Congress party's own convictions. The party had voiced its support for the people of Palestine before independence. In the post-independence scenario, the Congress leadership strived to uphold the support for the cause of Palestine.

India has always opposed Zionist expansionist policies. The first Prime Minister of India Jawaharlal Nehru and the subsequent Prime Ministers, Lal Bhadur Shastri, Indira Gandhi, Morarji Desai, Rajiv Gandhi, V. P. Singh and even Chandra Shekhar and I. K. Gujral had always opposed the Israeli expansionist policies and did not establish diplomatic relations with Israel. P V Narasimha Rao, during whose government the Babri Masjid was demolished, shook the basis of Indian foreign policy by establishing diplomatic ties with Israel. The relations with Israel then were nourished during Atal Behari Vajpayee's government. The saffron BJP got a natural ally in the form of Israel.

The Manmohan Singh government in 2004 then gave a new impetus to the relations with Israel. Earlier in 2002, the NDA Minister of External Affairs had visited Israel, and now after ten years S. M. Krishna is the second Minister of External Affairs to make an official visit. Though the tour of Middle East also included Jordan, Palestine and UAE, the time he spent in Israel and issues which came up for discussion were not visible elsewhere. Israel is establishing its settlements on Palestinian lands. It has captured the first Qiblah of Muslims in Jerusalem. It has continued to oppress the Palestinians.

The agreements, which India has signed with this country, are weakening the bases of Indian foreign policy. India and Israel have announced that they would work together on counter terrorism. Israeli terrorism is not invisible. What could be the reason to have an agreement on counter terrorism with a country which itself is involved in terrorism? India and Israel have termed each other as natural allies. The majority of the Indian population is against Israel. The two countries have no natural mutual interest and the government by terming Israel as a natural ally has violated the people's wishes.

Israel is geographically a small country but is fulfilling 20 percent of India's defence requirements. There cannot be any justification for India's relations with Israel in agricultural field. India is a country full of water resources and through proper management, each and every part of India can be irrigated. But India has been buying Israeli equipments in the name of dry land agriculture. Indian delegations visit Israel. Israel may be a state, but its expansionist policies have put the life of Palestinians in jeopardy. It continues to violate the human rights of Palestinians, it has made them homeless, and relations with such a country are against India's civilization and culture.

The formal meeting with Palestinian President Mahmoud Abbas cannot be put in the same vein as relations with Israel. If India is serious about the Palestinian cause then it should put diplomatic pressure on Israel to resolve the conflict. It seems India is diverting from its foreign policy based on principles. The government should realize that not only do the 200 million Indian Muslims but also a majority of Indians oppose Israel's expansionist policies. The government looks at it as just an issue, which is attached with Muslim emotions. But it is not just a matter of religious importance; the people of Palestine also want their homeland. They want their rights. The US has prevented Palestinians from getting the membership of the UN but the UNESCO has given membership to Palestine. In the backdrop of such a situation, India's growing relations with Israel are unjust and are against the principles of foreign policy.

Source: http://www.etemaaddaily.com/EtemaadArchive_files/Jan/13/editorial.html



Roznama Hamara Samaj (Daily Our Society), Delhi
Editorial, 13 January 2011, Friday

9. Israel's Joke with the Prophet of Peace Mahatma Gandhi

It's a famous saying that after tasting the illicit, one forgets the distinction between good and bad. This saying comes true for the Israeli authorities who are staunch enemy of Muslims. They had been suppressing the Palestinians until now but now they have become so shameless that they are targeting the prophet of peace, Mahatma Gandhi. On the recent visit of Indian Minister of External Affairs S. M. Krishna, the Israeli authorities in Jerusalem announced that they would construct a statue of Gandhi in the city. This is evidently a tactic to woo the Indian leaders and to gain their support. This is nothing more than a joke on the part of Israel. They have also said that Israel supports a permanent seat for India in the UNSC. Our leaders should oppose Israel by not giving into their childish behaviour. They should tell the Israelis that the date of uprooting of Palestinians from Jerusalem coincides with the date of the assassination of Gandhi. They should also tell them that Gandhi never stood for seizing the rights of others to please someone else. Moreover, Gandhi apparently was opposed to the settlement of Jews in Palestine and the formation of Israel. This tactic of Israel could just be a blackmailing tool at a time when the US has shown apparent weakness. Israel is trying to move to other emerging powers for support. There are several issues now where the US has opposed Israel. India's relations with Arab countries could be a problem for Israel in the future and that is why it is trying to come close to India. The question is that the world community wishes to see peace in Israel but the Palestinians are being harassed and oppressed. The Jewish settlements in occupied Palestinian areas have been continuing and the year 2011 saw a 20 percent increase in settlements. As much as 142 new Jewish settlements were built in the West bank last year. Jerusalem has been made a graveyard of Palestinians and Jews brought from world over are

being settled in Jerusalem on the dead bodies of Palestinians. It is outrageous to install Gandhi's statue there. Thus, the Indian leadership should make it clear to the Israelis that it is not acceptable and in case it does not heed, the government of India should review its diplomatic ties with Israel.

Source: http://www.hamarasamaj.com/delhi/13_01_2012/edarti_safha.htm



The Siasat Daily (The Politics Daily), Hyderabad
Editorial, 15 January 2012, Sunday

10. The Arab League Observers in Syria

If the situation does not improve in Syria, Bashar al-Assad may well have to lose power. Large-scale protests were held in a number of Syrian cities against him on Friday. The Arab League was forced to say that if violence does not abate in Syria it could lead to civil war, which can then spread to other countries. It has sent observers into Syria yet they have failed to help improve the situation. It is a blow for chances of peace. The situation in Syria has deteriorated since last March. More than 5,000 people have been killed. It is stalemate in Syria now as the government and opposition forces have not blinked but it can lead to more bloodshed. The situation in Syria is different from other countries but it has been completely isolated internationally and the West is waiting for an opportune moment to intervene in the country. It is also feared that the bloodshed in Syria can spread to minority areas. The Arab League has also failed to improve the situation in Syria. Any problem in Syria could spiral into a regional problem. The number of violent incidents has increased since the return of the Arab observers group. The opposition in Syria is not happy with the way the Arab League has handled the situation. If it fails in helping to improve the situation, then the Syrian case has to be referred to the UN, which will reflect badly on the League. It has also emerged that there are differences within Arab League over Syria. The Arab league should put their act together and act decisively in the case of Syria. They should also take a decision on continuing the Arab observer group in Syria. The Syrian President Bashar al-Assad has also criticized the Arab League for speaking in different voices. The people of Syria want to see change and want the Arab League to act and put pressure on Assad to leave. The Western powers could intervene if the situation worsens and minority Christians and Kurds is targeted by the security forces or the armed opposition. Until now, the minorities have expressed their confidence in the leadership of the Assad regime. The Arab countries should be more worried about the situation in Syria. The neighbouring countries of Jordan, Lebanon and Iraq may have to face grave problems if the situation does not improve. The Iranian and Hezbollah factor is also important. The Arab League had earlier suspended Syria from its membership but that has not helped improve the situation in Syria.

Source: <http://www.siasat.com/urdu/news/idr15-26>

FROM THE URDU PRESS-38/QUAMAR

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