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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 with their accuracy or views. Editor, MEI@ND]

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Dawat Online (Invitation), New Delhi

Editorial, 1 June 2012, Friday

1. Gravity of the Situation in Syria

The situation in Syria has further deteriorated; incidents of violence are reported almost every day from different cities. The US, EU, Arab League and the Security Council have expressed their grief and concern at the continued killings. They have admonished the Syrian regime for its brutal crackdown on rebels. The extent of human rights violation in Syria has appalled everyone. Scores of women, children and elderly people have been killed in the fighting and attacks. This has continued for months without any respite and the common people have joined the protest against the regime demanding change. However, the regime has refused to give its ear to the people's voice. They are not ready to bring in any reform or change that may undermine their position. The regime has labelled the protestors as rebels and is trying to suppress the rebellion by force, using all its might. It has resulted in an unprecedented bloodshed in Syria. The massacre in Houla led to the death of hundreds of unarmed civilians which was condemned by all international players, yet this did not unnerve the regime.

The behaviour, policies and measures of the Syrian regime has been criticized since the start of the protests. The US, Europe as well as the Arab world has continuously condemned the

Bashar government's handling of the situation. The Security Council has passed (sic) several resolutions but Bashar al-Assad has not relented. Turkey has also played an important role in working towards preventing the brutal crackdown by the Syrian regime. However, nothing seems to have worked until now. Iran is one Muslim country which is supporting the Syrian regime, while China and Russia are also against the use of force against Syria, as was used against Iraq, Libya etc. It is important to note that the US and its allies have failed to take any action against Syria. The argument that the US has not done anything because of Russia and China does not suffice because the US has hardly ever taken them into account on such issues at earlier instances. For example, in Iraq, the entire world was against military intervention and even the UNSC had not allowed for it but the US attacked Iraq. The main reason behind American reluctance to intervene in Syria lies elsewhere, which has been kept out of the public domain. Another important aspect is the real politic being played out in Syria. The real picture is not being allowed to come out in the open. Whatever is in the public domain is different from the real picture. It is important to know what is actually going on in Syria. Is it only the regime which is involved in the killings or there are hidden players involved in the attacks on civilians?

Source: http://dawatonline.com/Archive_Editorial.aspx?sDate=01-jun-2012



The Siasta Daily (The Politics Daily), Hyderabad
Editorial, 2 June 2012, Saturday

2. Syria in Grave Despair

The global powers have warned Bashar al-Assad to work towards peace amidst increasing violence in Syria. The rebels have also warned the Syrian regime to stop the killings. Many more deaths have been reported from various parts of the country in the last few days. The cities of Houla and Homs have been attacked by the government forces and unarmed civilians including children and women have been killed. Syria was given a time limit of forty-eight hours to implement the peace plan of UN special envoy Kofi Annan. However, the Bashar al-Assad regime did not implement any of the recommendations within the time frame. The situation in Syria now demands tough measures as all steps taken so far have failed to stop the killings. The US can further impose sanctions, though it has already imposed some sanctions. Sanctions have also been slapped on the International Islamic Bank of Syria which was accused of supporting the regime.

The situation in Syria is taking a dangerous turn. Though Kofi Annan worked hard, he failed to prevail upon Bashar al-Assad. Syria is at a cross-road and most of the Western diplomatic missions in Syria have been closed. Russia has opposed any intervention in the internal matters of Syria. It is important to bring peace in Syria without external intervention which may lead to further bloodshed. The massacre in Houla is reflective of the grave situation developing in Syria. Though the opposition groups in Syria have opposed the Russian stand on external intervention, Kofi Annan needs to expedite his efforts to bring an end to the humanitarian crisis. On the other hand, the Syrian regime should contemplate why the people are not ready to stop the protests after it started in March last and despite the huge loss of life.

The regime should focus on working towards reforms as demanded by the people rather than using its force to kill them. The international powers have termed the Bashar al-Assad government as murderers but have refused to see the hands of terrorist groups which are certainly active in Syria and working to destabilize the country. However, it is the responsibility of the regime to deal with such groups that are indulging in violence and arson without killing the unarmed civilians. The government has continuously blamed the rebels and hired terrorists for the killings but has not succeeded in either preventing the deaths or in capturing the terrorists. The regime is under fire from international agencies and Western countries. The stationing of military inside civilian areas has further complicated the situation. It is the responsibility of the Bashar al-Assad government to deal with the situation emerging from the killings and massacres which it has failed to prevent.

Source: <http://www.siasat.com/urdu/news/idr2-26>



The Etemaad Urdu Daily (The Confidence Urdu Daily), Hyderabad

Editorial, 4 June 2012, Monday

3. Several Flaws in the Judgment against Mubarak

The Egyptian court after hearing the case against former President Hosni Mubarak for one year has in its decision admonished him for injustice, repression and violation of fundamental rights during his rule of three decades and has found him guilty of killing unarmed civilians during protests against his rule for which he has been given a life imprisonment. Justice Ahmad Rifat ruled that the prosecution failed to prove that the protesters were killed under Mubarak's order though, he has been found guilty of not taking any step towards preventing the killings. The ruling can be challenged in the higher court. The ruling also lacks in setting the responsibility of killings on any agency or individual. The prosecution had said that Mubarak and al-Adly had ordered the use of force against the protestors.

The killing of protesters at Tahrir Square was undoubtedly inhuman; the government is responsible for that even if the President himself was not present at the site. The Judge has criticized Mubarak's thirty years rule in harsh words; yet has tried to hide his crimes behind the harsh criticism. If the three decades of his rule were dark days then the responsibility for it has to be established. The court has failed to take note of the corruption and suppression during Mubarak's rule. Many people and families had suffered and did not get any justice. People were at least expecting a death sentence for Mubarak, like Saddam Hussein.

The prosecution and affected people have expressed their desire to challenge the ruling. The ruling can lead to further instability in Egypt. Many individuals and groups including the Muslim Brothers and liberals have expressed their dissatisfaction on the ruling. The ruling also charged former Interior Minister Habib al-Adli of similar charges who was also given life imprisonment. However, a number of other officials have been relieved of all charges. The corruption charges against Mubarak and his family have also been rejected. Mubarak's

sons Gamal and Ala have been found guilty of malpractices on the stock market for which they will be prosecuted separately.

According to government statistics, nearly 500 civilians were killed during the protests and many more were injured. It has to be understood that all the agencies involved in the ruling including the Judiciary, the prosecution and the Military Council are remnants of the Mubarak era. This raises questions about the transparency and autonomy of the Judiciary. It has been reported in the media that Mubarak did not react to the ruling. Mubarak has reportedly resisted being transferred to jail from the hospital.

Source: http://etemaaddaily.com/EtemaadArchive_files/june/04/editorial.html



Roznama Rashtriya Sahara (National Sahara Daily), Delhi

Editorial, 4 June 2012, Monday

4. Hosni Mubarak's Fate

The former President of Egypt, Hosni Mubarak finally meets the same fate as met by other dictators. He has been sentenced to life imprisonment even though some have termed it too little and believe that he should be hanged till death. Looking at the way Mubarak repressed all voices of democracy during his thirty-year long rule, such sentiments are not surprising. However, the sentencing of Mubarak in itself is significant because of some of the remnants of the Mubarak era who are still struggling to seize power like the military which has refused to respect the people's revolution. The thin lead gained by the Brotherhood presidential candidate Muhammad Mursi against the former Prime Minister Ahmed Shafiq speaks volumes about the influence of former leaders and their connivance with the Military Ruling Council. People have expressed their anger by protesting against the Military Council after the first round results were declared.

Despite the fact that some people advocate a harsher sentence, the ruling was significant as it admonished Mubarak and termed his rule as a dark period of repression and injustice. The court also found Mubarak guilty of not protecting civilians during the protests against his regime. However, the life imprisonment to Mubarak and the former Interior Minister is not harsh to be precise. Moreover, six commandoes and two sons of Mubarak have been cleared of any charges due to lack of evidence which indicates the presence of Mubarak era elements at important positions in the Egyptian regime that can lead Egypt to instability.

Mursi and Shafiq will compete in the second round of presidential elections on 17 June. The Muslim Brotherhood seems to be leading in popularity but the thin lead gained by their candidate in the first round indicates a Western conspiracy against the Islamist movement. The court ruling raises suspicion with regards to the neutrality of the Judiciary. It is also suspected that if Ahmed Shafiq somehow comes to power, Mubarak may be released from jail and cleared of all the charges.

The end of emergency in Egypt is a victory for the people. The emergency laws gave unaccounted powers to the security forces that were misused by the powerful military. Though this is a welcome step, the future of Egypt will depend on the role the military carves out for itself in the Egyptian political structure.

Source: <http://roznamasahara.samaylive.com/Details.aspx?id=59570&boxid=13945751>



Roznama Rashtriya Sahara (National Sahara Daily), Delhi

Editorial, 6 June 2012, Wednesday

5. Turbulence in Syria

The violence in Syria has not come down despite earnest efforts from the United Nations and the Arab League. Kofi Annan has also failed in his mission until now. The recent proposal of creating a buffer-zone inside Syria by the Saudi Foreign Minister and the tough stand taken by the Russian President on Syria during the European Union Conference in St. Petersburg are significant.

As far as the Saudi proposal is concerned, it was announced during a joint press conference with the UN Secretary General to protect the rebels. Prince Saud Al-Faisal stated that it is important to protect the people of Syria. The fact that the proposal by the Foreign Minister is his own or has been suggested to him by Western leaders is difficult to determine; but what is certain is that any such unilateral move will not help resolve the crisis in Syria. There is no doubt that unarmed civilians have been targeted by the Syrian military in the wake of their quest for targeting rebels which has deteriorated the condition. The military has not showed enough patience in dealing with the protestors and the regime has tried to resolve the crisis by the use of force. But, a further fact is that the arms and weapons supplied by the US and the West to the rebels have also helped in the deterioration of the situation. The measures suggested by Kofi Annan were better but they too did not succeed. The situation has hence worsened but, suggesting that a buffer-zone will resolve the problem is nothing but naive. It will pave the way for external intervention, leading to more chaos. Moreover, China and Russia are completely against any such foreign intervention.

The pressure tactics being used by the EU on the Russian President to control the situation in Syria does not have any standing. The EU wants Putin to put pressure on Syria to remove heavy weapons from civilian areas and work to implement the Annan plan. On the face of it, the proposal looks fine but is it solely the responsibility of the Syrian military to remove the weapons? It would be sheer foolishness to expect the military to retreat on the one hand and have weapons being supplied to the rebels on the other hand. The media has blamed the Bashar al-Assad regime for the massacre in Houla but the President has rejected the charges stating that the rebels and hired terrorists have indulged in killings and arsons. Assad is ready for political negotiations but is against any external intervention. The problem is that the negotiations are being used for asking Bashar al-Assad to leave. In such conditions, it is very difficult to achieve a peaceful resolution. But the need is to work for the implementation of the Annan plan and avoid any external military intervention in Syria.

Source: <http://roznamasahara.samaylive.com/Details.aspx?id=59810&boxid=12747281>



The Siasta Daily (The Politics Daily), Hyderabad
Editorial, 8 June 2012, Friday

6. Violence and Casualties in Syria

Violence has intensified in Syria leading to an increase in casualties. It has escalated despite all the efforts from the international community including the UN. In a recent incident a hundred people including children and women have been reportedly killed in clashes between the rebels and government forces in the district of Hama in central Syria. The opposition groups have termed it as a massacre while the government has termed it as a clash between the rebels and security forces. The US Secretary of State, Hillary Clinton, immediately issued a statement condemning the killings and asking Bashar al-Assad to step down. This is a clear indication that the US will try to engineer a regime change in Syria. The rebels who have been active for almost a year are trying to topple the Assad regime. This has created a civil-war like situation. Both the parties seem to be unserious in protecting the unarmed civilians.

International pressure on the Syrian regime has also increased. The US and the UN have tried to put pressure on Assad to resign. Kofi Annan who was in Syria to help resolve the problem as a special UN representative has failed in gaining any success. The current crisis in Syria is its internal matter, and undoubtedly the regime still enjoys large support despite a huge demand for change. The rebel and opposition groups that are demanding international intervention have to understand the designs of foreign powers and try to resolve their problem through negotiations. The international powers which want a regime change in Syria have their own interests though Russia and China are against international intervention and support measures to end violence.

Syria has been affected by the Arab Spring for such long time but Bashar al-Assad continues to remain in power. Yet the way violence has escalated in recent days and the killings of people demands immediate measures to prevent a humanitarian crisis. The only way Syria can avoid international intervention is to stop the violence and killing of innocent civilians that would require both the parties to sit at the negotiations table and work towards peace. The responsibility, however, lies with the government to yield to its people's demand and fulfil their aspirations.

Source: <http://www.siasat.com/urdu/news/idr8-20>



The Etemaad Urdu Daily (The Confidence Urdu Daily), Hyderabad

Editorial, 13 June 2012, Wednesday

7. Syria: A Challenge

The situation in Syria has worsened after the 25 May massacre in the town of Houla. The Syrian president in his address to the parliament after the massacre said that Syria now faces a war by external powers. This may lead to more killings and it seems Syria has now reached a point of no return.

The international community is equally responsible for the current situation. Global powers do not intervene in a country despite serious humanitarian issues unless they have economic, political or other interests. Hundreds of people have been killed in the violence that has continued for more than a year. The efforts by the international community have not yielded any result. The Kofi Annan plan also failed to take off. The regime is determined to remain in power through use of force. The Houla massacre led to a complete diplomatic cut off of Syria. The international community has till now refrained from direct intervention because they do not find much economic interests in Syria. The US-led western forces intervened in Libya for oil, while Iraq was attacked due to suspicion of nuclear and chemical weapons. Similarly, Afghanistan was attacked to tackle the menace of Al-Qaeda.

The lack of any similar action in Syria by these self-proclaimed champions of human rights is criminal. However, the West and Russia agree that the only resolution for the crisis in Syria is the end of the Bashar regime. Russia however has a different agenda in Syria. The failure of the international community in bringing an end to the killings in Syria is stark. One aspect of this criminal dilgence has been the fact that the opposition is led by the Islamists. However, if things do not improve, it can lead to further ethnic and sectarian killings. The Assad government is risking the extermination of Alawis through the continued violence.

Syria is on the verge of ethno-sectarian war, whereby Sunnis and Alawis are up in arms to prevent their interests. People have started to raise questions about the ability of the Assad regime to protect the Alawis from the impending Sunni onslaught. The lack of confidence among the people with respect to the regime is growing day by day. The Syrian economy has also plummeted leading to large scale unemployment and poverty. The regime now completely depends on the intelligence and military to continue its existence.

Source: http://etemaaddaily.com/EtemaadArchive_files/june/13/editorial.html



Hindustan Express (Daily Hindustan Express), New Delhi

Editorial, 13 June 2012, Wednesday

8. The Roads are Closing in on Assad

The Assad regime is on the verge of collapse if one believes the exiled leader of opposition, Abdul Basit. The clashes between the rebels and security forces have escalated in recent times and it would be difficult to speculate about the outcome. Both sides have indulged in violence leading to the killing of scores of innocent people. The

geo-political climate in the region has ensured that both sides have received international aid and weapons.

If the government forces are receiving moral and military help from Lebanon and Iran then the rebels have achieved support from Western cronies which has helped in the continued violence. The international community has become a mute spectator. Kofi Annan who was given the responsibility to negotiate with the government and rebels to establish peace has failed. The international team of observers in Syria has also not been able to achieve much. The rebels as well as the government have showed no sign of relenting. Resultantly, the Bashar regime has not shied away from the use of brute force to protect itself while the rebels have indulged in violence and arson to weaken government security. Meanwhile, reports have come through that a large group of Jihadis have entered into Syria from Turkish borders to help the rebels while in a blow to the Bashar regime, the Missile Regiment of the Syrian military based in the city of Homs has rebelled and joined the Free Syrian Army.

This could be a major blow to the government which may weaken the regime. Perhaps that is why the exiled opposition leader expressed his sentiments of the coming end of the regime. But it would be futile to expect an immediate end to violence in Syria which has continued despite all efforts. The Syrian regime has refused to listen to any kind of counsel for reforms and threats of international intervention. The efforts by the US, the UN, EU and Arab League have failed without any trace of success. Syria has lost international confidence and the regime has lost the legitimacy to continue. It is because of the Russian and Chinese opposition that the Western powers have refrained from a Libya-like intervention in Syria. But it has come to light that the West is backing the rebels to oust the Syrian regime.

It is the sheer double standard and opportunism of the global powers that they have sided with the rebels after trying to improve relations with the Syrian regime. They now realize that Bashar may not be able to survive for long, hence they have been trying to improve relations with the rebels. The Bashar al-Assad government is counting its days as the rebels gain momentum. The point to observe now is what kind of end Bashar chooses for himself, Mubarak-like arrest or Qaddafi-like killing.

Source: http://dailyhindustanexpress.com/gujashtah_shumare/june2012/13_06_2012/epaper/page_5_large.htm

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