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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, 4 August 2012, Saturday

1. Increasing Pressure on Egypt

Close to the heels of the US Secretary of State's visit, US Secretary of Defence Leon Panetta paid a visit to Egypt in order to restructure and revitalize their relations with the new government. In keeping with the Secretary of State's visit, his schedule includes a visit to Israel after Egypt. He would have returned from Israel by now. In addition to talks with the military leadership, the Defence Secretary also held meetings with the political leadership. Given the current situation, Egypt has become important for the US because of its ramifications for Israel having acquired distinct change in its political set up. The old allies have gone and though the military leadership gives a ray of hope, it is important to have good understanding among the two institutions. That is the only way to achieve their goal. The change has altered the strategic plan that was laid out for Egypt. Tactics of not allowing the new political leadership to take any daring step has already been put in place but it is not as secure as it was earlier. The fear about the new leadership emanates from many reasons; firstly it belongs to the Muslim Brotherhood, which cannot be completely relied upon. Its relations with the Palestinian organization Hamas are also a matter of concern. Moreover, the Brotherhood has a distinct character in Syria. It has a

different policy towards Iran which was spelled out in a policy statement of President Morsi. The group has been an advocate of good relations with the Muslim world and its interest in other Muslim issues also creates fear.

The continuation of Egypt-US relations is an important issue. The US does not want Egypt to reorganize its role in the Middle East. It should not become a problem for Israel, but rather should work towards paving a cordial atmosphere for Israel as it had been doing in the past. The agreements with Israel might not be revoked. Egypt continues to play the same role in the case of the Palestinians of Gaza Strip and has not taken a relook at its role as a US ally. Likewise, it will continue to maintain a status-quo in its relations with the Muslim world. The US promises to continue its aid to Egypt. This can be discreetly interpreted as the Egyptian military continuing to follow the American model. The US additionally wants Egypt to not change its policies towards Iran so as to pose any problems for the US and Israel. It should keep itself away from Iran and should support the American and Israeli policies. The urgency is significant in the context of the upcoming presidential elections in the US and Israel wants as many guarantees as possible. The American leaders are engaged in placating the Israeli leaders and both the ruling and the opposition parties are making promises. The visit of the US Secretary of Defence was to ensure some of those guarantees from the Egyptian side on these issues.

Source: http://dawatonline.com/Archive_Editorial.aspx?sDate=04-aug-2012



The Siasat Daily (The Politics Daily), Hyderabad
Editorial, 4 August 2012, Saturday

2. Syria and Kofi Annan

India and Russia have regretted the decision by Kofi Annan to distance himself from the critically important international efforts for peace in Syria. The UN and the Arab League had appointed Annan as their representative to find a solution for the Syrian crisis but he was unable to effect any resolution between the two fighting sides. It is a huge blow to the international powers. The UN and the Arab League should not pull out of their efforts in Syria but try to analyze the reasons which forced Kofi Annan to resign. The Arab League was hoping to achieve some result with the Annan-led peace mission. The Western powers should understand the actual reason for it. Kofi Annan was cautious in explaining the reasons for his failure but in fact it is a failure of the Western powers who are taking a wrong note on the crisis. The West and its regional allies have not been honest in their assessment of the situation in Syria. If the proposals by Kofi Annan would have been accepted, large scale bloodshed could have been prevented. The diplomatic options for resolution of the crisis have not been exhausted and a diplomatic resolution could have brought a peaceful transition of power. The tactics to camouflage the crisis into a Sunni-Shi'a fight is a major blunder, as it is being played out to be by the US. The Bashar al-Assad government will be found guilty of mass murder if it is put on trial at the International Criminal Court. The massacre of civilians in the ancient city of Aleppo would have been enough to bring him to book. But most of the international powers including the US are more interested in playing out their political game than protecting the civilians. Kofi Annan while offering his resignation said that Bashar al-

Assad should now step down and work towards a peaceful transition for a more representative government. He also regretted the international powers taking sides of one or the other group. The term of Kofi Annan ends on 31 August. Moreover, the draft resolution on Syria had to be modified due to reservations raised by India. The clause demanding Bashar's ouster has been removed from the resolution but it is not clear what steps could be taken to bring an end to the violence. The need is to take a humanitarian look at the situation in Syria and take measures towards a political solution of the crisis. The people should not suffer due to the stand taken by their President. The Amnesty International has also drawn attention towards the humanitarian crisis in Syria in one of its reports. It is important that the international powers do not create another humanitarian crisis while dealing with the current crisis.

Source: <http://www.siasat.com/urdu/news/idr5-26>



The Siasat Daily (The Politics Daily), Hyderabad
Editorial, 15 August 2012, Wednesday

3. Expectations from the OIC Summit

The efforts for unity among the Islamic world should yield some results. The most important task for the Organization of Islamic Cooperation (OIC) leaders assembled in Mecca will be to focus on the need to cleanse the political system from the problems arising from the protests in the Arab world. They also have a special responsibility towards the situation in Syria, Palestine and Myanmar. The Islamic world is facing major challenges. Commentators have questioned the role of the OIC in dealing with the problems in the Islamic world. It has been accused not just of inactivity but also for playing into American hands and has shown a poor track record in dealing with the problems in the Islamic world. The OIC has failed in bringing down the American and Israeli influence in the Muslim world. It will be up to Saudi Arabia's King Abdullah to decide on the future course of action in the OIC summit meeting in Mecca. The Muslim leaders have expectations from the summit. One remembers the situation in Iraq five years back when a similar summit called by the King took a decision on securing peace in Iraq. King Abdullah did succeed in bringing the fighting Iraqi factions to the negotiations table and establishing peace. The plight of Rohingya Muslims in Myanmar will be another important issue to be discussed in the Mecca summit. The situation of Indian Muslims may also come up for discussion, particularly in the light of the violence in Assam. It is expected that concrete measures will be taken to bring peace in the Muslim world. It will be an appropriate place to further the ties among Islamic countries and work towards unity. The situation in Syria has to be discussed without forgetting the changes that has occurred in countries like Libya and Egypt. The UN has also not been able to effectively deal with the external interventions in the Muslim countries and the OIC summit thus becomes more significant in this backdrop.

Source: <http://www.siasat.com/urdu/news/idr16-35>

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