

FROM THE URDU PRESS

No. 57

16-31 October 2012

29 Ziqadah-14 Zilhijja 1433 Hijri

[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, 16 October 2012, Tuesday

1. Revocation of the First Qibla

The Chairman of the Muslim Brotherhood Mohamed Badie in one of his Friday addresses has highlighted the aspect of the Palestinian issue which has been sidelined in the international discourse; but is in fact at the heart of the conflict. According to him, the Palestinian issue is not about the liberation of a piece of land but about the revocation of the First Qiblah (A Qibla is the place towards which the Muslims face while offering prayer and the Al-Aqsa Mosque in Jerusalem is regarded as First Qibla in Islamic history), which is under illegal Israeli occupation. He urged the entire Muslim community to work towards the revocation of Jerusalem because it is their religious duty. It is indeed a sin to forget and forgo this duty. During his Friday address on 12 October, he spoke in detail about the issue and said that the revocation of the First Qibla could be achieved neither through dialogue or negotiations nor through the mediation by a third party, including the UN. It can be achieved only through community effort. He urged the entire Arab world to come forward and work together and direct all their resources towards this purpose, even if it meant taking on the might of Israel. He emphasised on the need for the Arabs to put pressure on Israel to withdraw its illegal occupation. The point raised in his address puts the history of

the conflict into real perspective. It was also mentioned that all efforts during the last sixty-two years towards the resolution of this conflict have proven to be futile. All experiments have failed; the Palestinian issue remains unresolved without a single step forward as far as the resolution of the issue is concerned.

The people of Palestine are still waiting for a state; hundreds of thousands of Palestinians are living lives of refugees waiting for their return home. Israel has not just occupied the First Qiblah but has been conspiring to damage the structure, which is an open secret. Muslims are not even allowed to offer prayers inside the structure. The kind of atrocities propagated upon Palestinians by Israel is well known. The entire area has been turned into an open jail where people have had to live on the whims of Israel. The people have so called freedom, but they cannot go anywhere and nobody from outside can enter without Israeli consent. Israeli plans for the First Qiblah and the city of Jerusalem is well known to the world and nothing is in place to prevent the execution of Israeli plans.

The Chairman of the Muslim Brotherhood has tried to raise the real issue in this address which has been changed into completely a different thing with the passage of time. The real issue has been completely forgotten and does not find any mention in the formulas and plans put forth by the people who have tried to resolve the issue. The mention by the Muslim Brotherhood Chairman is thus a kind of reminder for all the Muslims.

Source: http://dawatonline.com/Archive_Editorial.aspx?sDate=16-oct-2012



Roznama Sahafat (Journalism Daily), Delhi
Editorial, 18 October 2012, Thursday

2. Palestine, the US and the UN

Palestine has been trying to achieve a member-state status in the UN and failed again in its last attempt at the UNSC. It has also been trying to get an ‘observer-state’ status like the Vatican. The voting will take place next month though both the US and Israel are opposing the bid and have consistently tried to put roadblocks in the Palestinian efforts to achieve statehood. Thus, the US has said that if Palestine is given an ‘observer-state’ or ‘member-state’ status in the UN, it will harm the prospects of peace between Israel and Palestine because it will be difficult to bring the two to the negotiations table. The President of the 193-member strong UN General Assembly Vuk Jeremic has echoed the American and Israeli sentiments. The voting on the Palestinian bid is expected to be conducted in mid-November after the US Presidential elections. The US maintains that the only way to achieve Palestinian statehood should be through negotiations. It means that Palestine should stop its efforts to achieve statehood through the UN and continue its talks with Israel. The negotiation process has been stalled since 2010 when Palestine walked out of the talks accusing Israel of constructing illegal Jewish settlements in occupied areas in West Bank and East Jerusalem. Palestinians demand a complete end to the settlement constructions but Israel has shamelessly refused to budge. The US, the UN and the Western powers have failed in stopping the settlement construction by Israel. However, the US demands Palestine to come to negotiations table despite the ongoing illegal constructions. The American ambassador to the

UN Susan Rice said that giving observer-state status to Palestine would harm the peace process. The US and Israel want the UN to take their consent before taking any decision on the Palestinian issue as if the UN is not a free and independent organisation.

Source: http://www.sahafat.org/delhi/Oct2012/18_10_2012/p-5-1.htm



Inqilab (The Revolution), Mumbai
Editorial, 20 October 2012, Saturday

3. Palestine and International Silence

Robert Fisk in one of his articles had written, “When I landed at the Ben-Gurion airport, a young immigration official gently reminded me that Israel is a small country which is surrounded by hostile people. In response to which I said that how can Palestinians, who have been living in this land area for ages, be called outsiders? What is the rationale behind terming them outsiders?”

The above quote of Robert Fisk echoed in my mind when I read an article by Patrick Seale in *Gulf News* recently. Seale is an authority on the Middle East who writes without any inhibitions. He called on the world to put pressure on Israel to remove the siege on the Gaza Strip which has now entered into its sixth year. He also said that the policy of boycotting Hamas has been a mistake. Seale further talked about the humanitarian crisis which the Gaza Strip is facing. The injustice meted out to the people of Gaza Strip is unprecedented in human history.

The two columns have been written 12 years apart but echo similar sentiments and take a very objective view of the Israeli-Palestinian issue. Both are free from propaganda which is mullied out by Israel and the US against the rights of people of Palestine. It is very rare that people openly criticise Israel and its policies of settlement construction on occupied lands. People have remained mute spectators to the atrocities meted out to the people of the Gaza Strip. On the other hand, the ‘Arab Spring’ was very attractive for all and everyone has wanted their take on it. Perhaps they had their interest in the change of regime and it also caressed their anti-Islam sentiments. There are very few journalists who have written about Israeli atrocities in Gaza without inhibition. The international community cannot know the real situation inside Gaza without their efforts. It is the duty of the international community to work towards the removal of siege on the people of the Gaza Strip and bring justice to the people of Palestine.

Source: <http://epaper.inqilab.com/epaperhome.aspx?issue=20102012&edd=Mumbai>



Roznama Rashtriya Sahara (National Sahara Daily), Delhi

Editorial, 20 October 2012, Saturday

4. The US-Israel-Iran Triangle

The US President and Israeli Prime Minister have not had a very pleasant rapport. Benjamin Netanyahu had promised to halt settlement construction in occupied territories and demolish the existing illegal constructions. New constructions have by and large stopped but existing settlements have not been demolished even though the Israeli Supreme Court has ordered them to be demolished. Obama is disappointed with Netanyahu because he thinks that he will not help him resolve the Palestinian crisis. Obama has publicly expressed his displeasure towards Netanyahu on several occasions. After UNESCO gave membership to Palestine, Obama during one of his addresses to America Jewish meetings said that the world is going against Israeli actions and Israel will have to change its behaviour towards Palestine. But the Jewish lobby in the US is so strong that it is very difficult to put pressure on Israel. American Presidential candidates receive huge sums for their respective campaigns and the Jewish capitalists buy politicians from both Democratic and Republican parties through their money power to support Israel. This helps in having Israeli sympathisers in both the government and opposition groups and makes it difficult for the government to take action against Israel. Former Presidents John F. Kennedy and Jimmy Carter have suffered due to this; one was assassinated while the other lost a second term in election.

But yet another issue that has become a roadblock for Barack Obama is the Iranian nuclear issue. Israel has made it an issue of existential threat and the Jewish lobby has started to put pressure on the American Senate to act against Iran because the protection of Israel is a constitutional duty of the US. Obama is well aware of the situation but cannot go against the Senate even as he has refused to declare a 'red line' against the Iranian nuclear programme. However, Obama under pressure has had to issue pro-Israel statements. The point is that Israel wants to use the Iranian nuclear programme to take gain international support as it has used the holocaust. The problem is it is not working in Israeli favour because most of the countries do not see the Iranian nuclear programme as a threat. Barack Obama has mostly refrained from accepting finance from Jewish lobby which has rattled Israeli plans. The second term for Obama can become a real problem for Israel and thus, Netanyahu has started to threaten unilateral action against Iran though he very well understands that Israel alone is not capable of war against Iran while the US is extremely reluctant to enter into another war. It seems the US-Israel-Iran triangle will continue for a while.

Source: <http://roznamasahara.samaylive.com/Details.aspx?id=76835&boxid=1621796>



Dawat Online (Invitation), New Delhi

Editorial, 22 October 2012, Monday

5. The US is here to stay in the Middle East

The US Secretary of State Hillary Clinton has said that the US should continue to work towards the promotion of democracy in the Middle East despite an increasing anti-American trend. It should not care about violent incidents like the attack on US embassy in Benghazi. She added that it indeed is not a responsibility of the US yet strengthening of democracy in the Middle East would be in its interest because a long-term peace can only be possible through democracy. The US should not be rattled with small losses. It is important for American interests to promote and strengthen democracy and democratic institutions and respect for human rights. She further said that it would not be easy because the region is very unstable. It would be no less than playing with fire. The US may have to face terrorist attacks and not every incident can be pre-empted. It is not possible that people start living in bunkers due to the fear of terror attacks.

She also mentioned that the US is well aware of the situation in Libya and Yemen which are going through major crises due to terrorist activities. It understands the changing landscape of the region with the rise of Islamist forces in Tunisia and Egypt and the deepening crisis in Syria. These points were mentioned during her address at the Centre for Strategic and International Studies in Washington. The audience comprised of major American policy and strategic thinkers and analysts. She also clarified that democracy promotion in the Middle East has nothing to do with idealism; rather it is about America's national interest. It is a strategic need; it is important to encourage the Arab society to stand up against extremism lest they gain power. According to her, it is important to help those who believe in a heterogeneous society. It was also mentioned that the rise of Friday liberals and Islamists in Egypt is a major concern. She said that it would be important to help the people of Egypt who believe in universal freedom and want to have better relations with their neighbours. She did not mention any name but it was very apparent, and perhaps that is why the US wants to stay in the Middle East.

Source: http://dawatonline.com/Archive_Editorial.aspx?sDate=22-oct-2012



Roznama Sahafat (Journalism Daily), Delhi

Editorial, 22 October 2012, Monday

6. Admitting Algerian Genocide

It is more than a half-century since the North African Muslim country Algeria was struggling for independence and the French government has for the first time admitted the genocide where hundreds of Algerians were massacred in Paris.

French President Francois Hollande issued a statement saying that France admits the genocide of Algerians in Paris committed on 17 October 1961. He also said that he would like to pay tributes to those who lost their lives 51 years ago.

The official admission for the genocide has come before Hollande's scheduled visit to Algiers. Hundreds of thousand people lost their life during the Algerian struggle for

independence from French rule between 1954 and 1962. Relations between the two countries are still under stress more than fifty years after Algerian independence. Historian Jean-Luc Einudi's book *The Battle of Paris-October 17, 1961* (1991) is a written account on the genocide.

The genocide can be compared to Jallianwala Bagh massacre in India by the British colonial rulers. In reaction to the intensified struggle for independence, France imposed curfew on the movement of Algerian migrants in Paris which was defied by Algerian leaders who marched peacefully in Paris. The administration cracked down on the peaceful protestors, hundreds were killed in firings. Many leaders were tied down and thrown in the Seine River.

Algeria celebrated its fifty years of independence last July. The admission of genocide by the French President can affect his electoral prospects because the right wing political parties have criticised him for the move. Thus, any official apology may take time. It seems France now wishes to build bridges with its former colony to tap its natural resources.

Source: http://www.sahafat.org/delhi/Oct2012/22_10_2012/p-5-1.htm

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