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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, 7 November 2012, Wednesday

1. The Issue of Palestine

The statement given by Palestinian leader Mahmoud Abbas during his interview to an Israeli television channel is being talked about in Palestinian, Israeli as well as Arab and non-Arab circles. The Palestinian group, which Abu Mazen heads, does not find any problem in the statement but Hamas reacted with sharp criticisms. Israel has also welcomed the statement. The interview was conducted by an Israeli channel, so it has presented the interview in its own way and has tried to portray the Palestinian leader's views from the Israeli viewpoint. From the Israeli standpoint, the statement is very important and reaction has come in from the top leaders including President Shimon Peres and Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu.

Mahmoud Abbas has expressed his stand on a number of core issues in the said interview. An important point mentioned by him was that Israel and Palestine should resolve their problems through negotiations and use of force will not achieve any result. On the other hand, other

Palestinian factions want to keep all their options open because according to them, the talks have mostly failed and Palestinians have had more losses than gains due to talks. Talks have always resulted in the weakening of Palestine and have strengthened Israel. Palestinians have respected all agreements and truce or have been forced to respect them while Israel has never respected any agreement and could not be forced by anyone to abide by them. However, Palestinians have been forced to come back to the negotiations table despite the violations of earlier agreements by Israel. This aspect is more than clear to Mahmoud Abbas and he himself has admitted the unyielding nature of talks.

Mahmoud Abbas also said that he recognizes Israel and advocates the restoration of the pre-1967 war situation. The UN recognized Israel way back in 1948. Israel then expanded its borders through military means in 1948-49, which was illegal. It again took to military operations in 1967 and further captured Palestinian lands including the city of Jerusalem. The international community has termed the military action and the occupation as illegal and demanded that Israel withdraw to pre-war borders, even though Israel could never be forced to do so. Mahmoud Abbas now says that the pre-1967 war border has to be restored. He also said that his birthplace is now under Israel but he no more wants to go back to the place and does not deem it as a Palestinian right. In this way, he has completely relinquished the Palestinian refugee's rights to return. He also termed the rockets attacks on Israel as wrong and said that he would not tolerate an *intifada* in his lifetime.

Source: http://dawatonline.com/Archive_Editorial.aspx?sDate=07-nov-2012



Dawat Online (Invitation), New Delhi

Editorial, 13 November 2012, Wednesday

2. Trade between the US and Gulf States

According to sources, the US is planning to enter into a big arms deal with the states of the Gulf. The US Department of Defence is looking after the deal, which is being executed through the Pentagon. The world's largest arms manufacturing company Lockheed is also reportedly involved in the deal. It has been reported that through Lockheed, the Pentagon has entered into huge arm deals with Saudi Arabia, UAE and Qatar. The total deal has been estimated at US\$23 billion. Qatar and UAE have bought missile defence systems pegged at US\$6.16 billion. Till date, this is the biggest international trade deal for the missile defence programme. Likewise, the arms deal with Saudi Arabia is reported at US\$7.6 billion. Saudi Arabia seems to have bought 25 fighter jets from the US including CJ130 cargo jets and KC130J refuelling jets. The announcement was made by the Pentagon and the arms will be manufactured by Lockheed Martin. These deals were made in 2012, even while the US had already sold arms to the tune of US\$4.92 billion to Saudi Arabia

in December 2011. Israel had raised objections to the sale of such a huge cache of arms to Saudi Arabia, which can lead to a tilt in the region's balance of power. However, the US had ensured Israel of its military superiority to calm down its nerves.

According to the spokesperson of Lockheed Martin Peter Simner the fighter jets being sold to Saudi Arabia are the latest and most sophisticated, with improvisation on the earlier models. Earlier the Pentagon had announced that Qatar and UAE had wanted to buy missile defence systems from the US to secure their country from any external attack. The arms in this deal will also be provided for by Lockheed Martin. The US wants to increase defence cooperation with these Gulf countries so that their security is enhanced. It includes Kuwait, Bahrain and Oman. The American economy is falling every day and the biggest challenge facing the administration is to improve the economy. The utmost concern is to do away with budget deficits. Many proposals have come in this regard including the printing of dollars but it has also been said that it would not be easy, as the American economy has been weakened to a grave extent. This is a major headache for several countries including Israel. However, the US has maintained that it will take care of Israeli problems, as it is important to maintain its lifeline.

Source: http://dawatonline.com/Archive_Editorial.aspx?sDate=13-nov-2012

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