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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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Inqilab (The Revolution), Mumbai
Editorial, 2 January 2012, Wednesday

1. Strife in Syria

The situation in Syria continues to deteriorate since the start of the strife in March 2011, which has resulted in the killings of more than 45,000 people. Peace remains elusive despite a number of peace plans lying on the table. The UN-Arab League peace envoy to Syria, Lakhdar Brahimi, has warned that if the situation does not improve, Syria can witness killings up to 100,000 people during the 2013. A few days back, dozens of mutilated dead bodies were found from the northern parts of Damascus. More than 30,000 have been reported missing. The UN figures claim that more than 100,000 people have been rendered homeless due to the ongoing crisis in Syria. Thousands have migrated and taken refuge in neighbouring countries of Turkey, Lebanon, Egypt and Jordan. It has also been reported that the number of political prisoners since the start of the protests has swelled.

Bashar al-Assad has refused to abdicate despite the seriousness of the crisis, while the armed opposition has been demanding his resignation before they can come to negotiations table. The Arab allies of the Syrian regime are also not happy with Bashar al-Assad's response to the crisis. Western powers have also expressed hope that Assad will step down. Russia which has backed Bashar al-Assad till now also seems to be getting out of patience. Russian President Vladimir Putin has recently said that Bashar's exit is becoming inevitable. In the

current scenario, it is clear that the crisis can be resolved only through Bashar's exit, which has become a matter time now.

The bloodshed in Syria is growing, violence has increased in leaps and bounds; people are traumatized, there is no security and local economy has collapsed forcing them to take refuge in neighbouring countries. To bring the fighting rebels and the government to the negotiation table it is important to create an atmosphere of peace that can lead to ending the 22 month-old crisis. It is also important that the international players like the US, Russia and China do not interfere in the internal matters of Syria and let the UN or Arab-Muslim representative organizations to resolve the matter. If the two parties are unable to resolve the matter then an honest effort to mediate and broker peace should be made. Outside forces do not have any business in trying to interfere in the internal matters of a country.

It is because of Russian and Chinese stand that the diplomatic gains made during October 2012 could not take off. They vetoed three UN resolutions against the Syrian regime. Had the resolutions been passed, then possibly there might have had a solution to this problem or at least some sort of compromise might have happened between Assad's Government and the opposition groups.

Source: <http://epaper.inquilab.com/epaperhome.aspx?issue=02012013&edd=Mumbai>



Roznama Urdu Times (The Urdu Times Daily), Mumbai
Editorial, 3 January 2013, Thursday

2. Iran China and the New Global Order

Noam Chomsky is among a few of the American-Jewry who has repeatedly written against Zionist imperialism. He was mostly referred to as 'Nom' in Urdu circles (including us) but the correct pronunciation is 'Noam'. Chomsky is a Professor at the famous Massachusetts Institute of Technology. A recent essay by him published in the *Indies Times* sheds light on the American-Iranian-Chinese triangle. He writes that the idea of a 'new world order' that was propagated by the US before the Afghan and Iraq wars has been explained as a 'new world order' dominated by the US because the latter has been known as the 'new world'. However, this new order has completely failed. China is emerging as the next dominant power. Slowly, many countries are refusing to accept American dominance. The Latin American countries and Iran are foremost on the list of countries who have shrugged off the US. The only reason for an aggressive American policy towards Iran has been the latter's refusal to budge to American whims. Noam Chomsky has also pointed out that officially it has been accepted in both the US and Europe that Iran is not a military threat to them rather the main problem is that it has become completely free and independent, which is unacceptable to the imperialist powers. According to him, the economic sanctions imposed on Iran by the US have failed because no other country except the European countries is following them. The vacuum created in the Iranian economy due to these sanctions has been filled by Russia, China, Turkey and Latin American countries. Iran does not has to worry about who are its business partners particularly because its international trade basket has swelled. Moreover, Pakistan and Turkey are building oil and gas pipelines to import Iranian

hydrocarbon despite American writ and their bilateral trade has also flourished. Chomsky also says that the Western policies towards Iran have enraged the public opinion in Arab countries to the extent that they have become supportive of the Iranian nuclear programme to the extent that they want Iran to acquire nuclear weapons. Clayton Jones has written in the *Christian Science Monitor* that China's role in the Iranian nuclear energy sector is growing. Chinese leaders like Iran continue to pursue their independent foreign policy without taking any of American warnings.

Source: <http://www.urdutimes.net/?edate=2013/01/03&epg=03>



**Dawat Online (Invitation), New Delhi
Editorial, 7 January 2013, Monday**

3. Negotiations with the Palestinians

Palestine may or may not have benefitted from its enhanced status in the UN but it has certainly unnerved Israel. Perhaps, Israel did not imagine that the Palestinian bid would be realized and the former would find itself alone on the issue. Israel tried everything it can; diplomacy, deceit, power and force and everything failed. This has created a kind of distress among Israeli leaders and they took some decisions to try and show that the UN decision has had no effect on Israeli policy and it has not weakened its resolve. Israel will always stand firm with its decisions and the entire world if comes together cannot force it to change its stands. Another motive behind these decisions was to challenge the world, that if anybody has the power to prevent it from pursuing its policies; Israel will not step back on its claim to make Jerusalem as its permanent capital, neither will it abandon its policy of building new settlements in the occupied territories. There can be no negotiations over Jerusalem as it belongs to them which they will never surrender and they do not have any internal differences over the issue. Israel is united in its claim for Jerusalem and the issue has no scope for reconsideration.

The reality, however, is a little different and the UN decision has rattled Israel from within. The issue has stirred a sharp debate in Israel which is a testimony to their worries. It has created serious concerns over security among Israelis. Security is the major problem in Israel. Security is a daily struggle in Israel and peace has become a mirage. Even after having armed itself and established military dominance and strong support from major powers, Israel still feels insecure. It is said that Israel is always ready to go to war, but is that true? Do they prefer to remain on a permanent state of war? If that is true they would never try to pursue Palestinians to drop the idea of war with Israel. They would not have tried to unarm the Palestinians and would not have tried to pressurize the PLO to drop the clause on their resolve to fight till the very end. There have been instances when Israeli leaders have tried to propose ways of 'peaceful co-existence'. There are wide spread differences among the opinions of Israelis themselves on the issue of Palestinians which range from ultra conservative to liberals. The conservative elements hate the Palestinians to the extent that they want them to be completely demolished. But the realities cannot be negated beyond a point. The Palestinian existence is a reality and they cannot be removed from this world.

Israelis know it better that the rest of the world, so it has to be addressed sooner or later and the sooner the better.

Source: http://dawatonline.com/Archive_Editorial.aspx?sDate=07-jan-2013



Roznama Rashtriya Sahara (National Sahara Daily), Delhi

Editorial, 7 January 2013, Monday

4. Announcement for 'State of Palestinian'

Palestinian Authority President Mahmoud Abbas (Abu Mazen) has signed an order on Friday, 4 January changing the name of Palestinian Authority in West Bank to the 'State of Palestine'. Though the Indian media did not give it any notice, Israeli media spent considerable time over discussing the issue. The move follows the last year decision by the UN to upgrade the Palestinian status to that of a non-member observer state, but the state which was given accorded this state was non-existent in reality. What is known as Palestine is termed so only by the Palestinians. Palestine for the rest of the world is divided into two areas; the West Bank and Gaza Strip. The West Bank is ruled by Fatah led by Abu Mazen after the death of Palestinian leader Yasser Arafat. The Gaza Strip is ruled by Hamas that came into existence during Arafat's time and had ideological differences with him over a number of issues. The main point of difference was over armed struggle against Palestine; while Fatah had nearly abandoned armed struggle, Hamas deemed it to be of utmost importance. The order is symbolic but Israel takes it very seriously because it may be symbolic for the rest of the world to give Palestine a non-member observer state but not for Israel. It can lead to long list of war-crime cases against it in the International Court of Justice. Palestinians have suffered under Israeli occupation; even if the killings of Palestinians be set aside it would be difficult for it to defend the cases of forceful eviction of Palestinians from their lands, farms and orchards. But this may not have been possible until Palestine is accorded statehood. The West bank and Palestine according to UN laws would not have been able to go to ICC and ICJ but now that they have been renamed as 'State of Palestine' they would be able to do so. But there is still a hurdle because according to UN regulations an area may not be considered state until some states accept it as such. But this may not be a big hurdle because there is no limitation for the number of states required to accord recognition. Israel is unnerved because recognition by three states not necessarily neighbours would be acceptable. They can very well be India, China and Russia. It may not be a major problem looking at the support the Palestinian bid garnered at the UN. Israel is also worried over other developments. The same day Fatah organized a huge rally in the Gaza Strip to celebrate its 48th foundation day. Israel knows that such a huge Fatah rally in the Gaza Strip cannot have taken place without consent from Hamas, particularly against the background of Khalid Mashaal's return to the Gaza Strip after 45 years. Even Abu Mazen had addressed the rally organized to welcome the Hamas leader. These developments are indicative of receding differences between Hamas and Fatah. Israel always enjoyed the difference between the two movements. Israel had recently attacked the Gaza Strip and had named it operation 'Pillar of Defence', but this has provided an excuse for Hamas and Fatah to come together and work for common goals. The rally however did not garner much

attention in the Arab media though the Israeli media reported extensively pointing to participation of a million Palestinians.

Source: <http://roznamasahara.samaylive.com/Details.aspx?id=86430&boxid=2333933>



The Siasat Daily (The Politics Daily), Hyderabad

Editorial, 7 January 2013, Monday

5. Bashar al-Assad's Policy

President Bashar al-Assad has rejected the international demands for his exit and has proposed a new peace plan which includes the national integrity conference. It is expected that his speech will help end the turmoil in Syria which has claimed more than 60,000 lives. The president urged the people to stand against the rebels and demanded that international powers stop providing arms to the rebels. He supported the Syrian army by saying that the army has the responsibility to protect the country and the people from the invasion of outsiders. Though this tough talk by Bashar does not evoke any hope for peace. Bashar should know that it is the duty of the ruler to create atmosphere for peace. If the national unity dialogue does not provide any framework for peace then what is the point in such a dialogue. It is the people who have suffered the most due to the crisis. The rebel forces have taken control of many areas in Syria. The regime is losing control and wants to gain some time through these negotiations. On the other hand, the rebels are also in no mood for any dialogue. Recently, the Arab League envoy Lakhdar Brahimi said during a visit to Egypt that the condition in Syria has deteriorated and needs immediate attention. He also said that if the situation does not improve it can lead to more killings. Saudi Arabia and Egypt suggested President Assad to consider the international demands for peace in Syria. The regime should work towards a political solution to the crisis. A large number of population under his regime is suffering and is restive over the situation. Countries like Iran have supported Syria and thinks it is stable. Iranian deputy Foreign Minister has said that things are improving in Syria. But, in reality, the country is on the verge of a deep humanitarian crisis. It is also important that the regime does not put pre-conditions on negotiations because that would defeat the purpose of the talks. The fall of regime may lead to some kind of respite from the sufferings brought on the people by the Syrian security forces. Countries like Iran, Russia and China should also come forward and try to work towards peace. These countries have supported the Assad regime but completely rejecting international demands for change is not a solution. The supporters of Bashar al-Assad do not want the regime to fall and so have not allowed him to resign, but by doing so they are killing their own people and pushing the country to the verge of collapse. If the regime wants peace it should stop threatening the opposition. The Assad government needs to work for peace for the sake of the country and its people.

Source: <http://www.siasat.com/urdu/news/idr8-26>



The Etemaad Urdu Daily (The Confidence Urdu Daily), Hyderabad
Editorial, 9 January 2013, Wednesday

6. Grim Hope for Peace in Syria

The crisis in Syria is going on for two years and there is no solution in sight. Bashar al-Assad has become a major problem and is adamant to not step down which has prolonged the crisis. Sixty thousand lives have been lost till now. The regime is blaming outside forces for the crisis rather than looking for a solution. It has avoided the question that why it is that international players are thinking of intervening in Syria. Who gave the outside forces an opening to meddle in the internal matters of the country? The crisis has not remained an internal matter anymore and has become a regional and international humanitarian crisis. The regime is launching scud missiles on the opposition. Syrian officials have anonymously confirmed the use of scud missiles and have said that the use of missiles on its own population is unjustified.

The war inside Syria has entered into a psychological phase where both sides want to demoralize the other side. The regime adopted a two-way strategy to gain an upper hand. It is launching scud missiles on the opposition to break their resolve and on the other hand it is talking about peace and national dialogue so that if not all then some of the opposition come forward and be part of the process. In his recent speech, Assad has proposed talks with the opposition, but has termed the rebels as ‘puppet’ of the West. He also proposed a framework for talks on new constitution for Syria that will pave way for a participatory government. However, in the current scenario, the first step towards peace has to be resignation of Bashar al-Assad. There is a consensus in international opinion about it and it is understood that if the fighting continue it can spread to the neighbouring countries.

The use of scud missile on the opposition groups cannot be justified in any terms. Even Muammar Qaddafi used scud missiles only after active NATO intervention on behalf of rebels. According to Riad Kahwaji, the founder and CEO, Institute of Near East and Gulf Military Analysis says that scud missiles are only used if any government is start losing control over land. He also said that inside Syria there is scope for storing scud missiles within civilian areas near the cities of Damascus and Latakia.

The Syrian regime’s insistence on keeping the religious elements out of talks reflects the bankruptcy of its politics. The regime faces two groups as opposition but has termed one as the puppet of the West and the other as al-Qaeda elements giving it as a cause for not talking to them. This has further complicated the matter rather than help resolve it. It can be said that Syria’s peace plan is not acceptable to any country except Iran. The problem is the regime wishes to continue in power. Syrian allies Russia, China and Iran are also finding it difficult to justify their support for the regime, though these powers have vetoed any international proposal on resolving the Syrian crisis. It seems time is running out for political resolution of the crisis in Syria.

Source: http://etemaaddaily.com/EtemaadArchive_files/Jan/09/editorial.html



Inquilab (The Revolution), Mumbai
Editorial, 11 January 2012, Friday

7. Another Mediation by Morsi

President Morsi has taken over the presidency in Egypt recently but has continuously hogged international highlight because of his active involvement in the regional politics. Though some of his decisions, particular about acquiring unprecedented powers for the presidency, has harmed his reputation that also led to some of his advisors abandoning him but that also was a result of his active involvement in domestic politics. This confirms at least one thing that he is an honest politician.

It is because of this that led him to actively get involved in the efforts to help stop the Israeli attacks on the Gaza Strip. Unlike the leadership of other Arab-Muslim countries he did not confine himself to symbolic actions but ensured that both the sides enter into a ceasefire agreement. Morsi's effort to mediate between Israel and Hamas also gained praise from the US President which is a certificate for the good work done by Morsi.

Mohammed Morsi has now moved a step further and is trying to bring Palestinian factions together. It is important because unity among Palestinian people is more important than even the status accorded by the UN. The people of Palestine who never gave up their struggle for independence have been weakened especially after the 2007 incident that led to sharp divide in the Palestinian leadership. The Palestinian struggle has also been weakened because of the divide and rule policy pursued by Israel. However, new hopes are emerging due to the friendly relations between Hamas and Fatah that is being mediated by Egypt. Therefore, if President Morsi succeeds uniting the two Palestinian factions then it would be a historical day for the struggle for Palestine.

The hope for Morsi's success has gained weight because of the attitudinal changes between Hamas and Fatah towards each other. If the efforts lead to genuine rapprochement between the two movements then the order by PA President Mahmoud Abbas to rename it as State of Palestine will be more meaningful and will lead to more success in future.

Source: <http://epaper.inquilab.com/epaperhome.aspx?issue=11012013&edd=Mumbai>

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