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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]



Roznama Munsif (The Judge Daily), Hyderabad

Editorial, 1 February 2013, Friday

1. Egypt needs to come out of Turmoil

Egypt is again facing a critical situation and the opposition groups want to put the entire blame on the two-year old government. The crisis erupted after a court convicted 21 people of arson and murder in a fight during a football match. Seventy-four people had been killed during the violent clashes between the supporters of the two national football clubs last year. Subsequently, there have been another 50 deaths due to clashes between protesters and security forces. While the president has imposed a month-long emergency in three provinces due to the ongoing critical situation, clashes have continued. The Egyptian Minister of Defence and Commander-in-Chief of the armed forces have warned of the security risks if the situation is not brought under control.

Meanwhile, the protesters have demanded (Mohammed) Morsi's resignation and the revocation of the newly instated constitution. The opposition has alleged that the government has failed to improve the condition of the economy and the situation has not changed since the days of Hosni Mubarak. Can an economic mess created over 30 years be resolved in a

few months? It would need a monumental effort and the coming together of all the forces. The problem however, is that the liberal and secular forces have not been ready to accept the mandate of the people. This is why they have continually persisted to protest against the Morsi government. Undoubtedly, the economy is in dire straits, but one of the reasons for this has also been the lack of international support. The US has declined to provide financial aid to the new Egyptian disposition by linking it to its ties with Israel. This is the reason why Morsi, who is currently on a tour of Germany, said that his statement during the Israeli attack of the Gaza Strip was taken out of context.

Morsi, who is on his first tour of Western countries after becoming President, has been accused of being anti-Israel after *The New York Times* claimed that it found a video of Morsi, before his election as president of Egypt, wherein he evoked anti-Semitic sentiments. Morsi, during a joint conference with German Chancellor Angela Merkel, said that his earlier statements had been taken out of context, further stating that Egypt respects all religions and people of all faiths. He added that the criticism was directed towards the use of violence on innocent people, be it in the name of faith or otherwise. The German Chancellor said that Egypt should try to resolve its internal matters through negotiations and democratic means and that the human rights of all sections of the people be respected.

The opposition's call for the dismissal of an elected government is a non-democratic and immature demand and speaks of intolerance. The opposition groups continue to refuse to be part of the national dialogue process to resolve various problems, which again is against the ethos of democracy. The best way to bring Egypt out of the current crisis is by working together and not pointing fingers at each other.

Source: <http://www.munsifdaily.com/epaper/1Feb/pages/page6/news1.html>



Roznama Rashtriya Sahara (National Sahara Daily), Delhi

Editorial, 3 February 2013, Sunday

2. Three Reports against Israel

Recently, Israel attacked a Syrian military convoy near the Syrian-Lebanese border. It led to an international outcry, but was it a deliberate attempt to provoke Syria? Some reports published in the Israeli English (sic) newspapers *The Jerusalem Post* and *Ha'aretz* point towards a deliberate attempt. They have indicated three reports that are against Israel. One is a survey in France, another is a UN report and the third is a report by the International Human Rights Commission (IHRC). The survey conducted in France concluded that 40 per cent of the people in France think that the Jews are the richest people in France and have the largest concentration of wealth; 20 per cent think that Israel is not a victim;

rather it violates the human rights of the people of Palestine, while 40 percent have a perception that the Jews are more loyal to Israel than France. The two newspapers have termed this as a dangerous trend which can spread to the whole of Europe. The second is a UN report, which says that Israel is the largest occupier state in the world and it violates all international laws by building settlements on occupied lands. The third and the latest report is by the IHRC, which says that Israel is violating the human rights of Palestinians in Gaza Strip and East Jerusalem. According to the newspapers, the new Israeli cabinet will have to take note of these reports.

Israel is perceived as a state that is not concerned about international and UN reports. It considers itself to be free to act according to its needs and responds to all criticisms by indicating its existential security concerns, being surrounded with neighbours that wish to eliminate it. Israel also takes the position that international organizations have a bias against it. But such arguments are losing traction because people have begun to recognize their baseless foundations. The IHRC report is significant because the documents, on which it was based, were provided by the International Fact Finding Mission that recently toured the areas where settlements are being built. It has also been following Israeli policies and its outcomes for the past 45 years. Israel cannot deny the authenticity of these reports. The new report is more critical than the Goldstone Report that had found Israel to be violating international norms. The IHRC report has also said that the international community should consider its relations with Israel and has also argued that international companies should revisit their investments in Israel. This is indicative of Israel's declining international support. According to these newspapers, such reports are a matter of concern because they may create problems for Israel despite the guaranteed American support. Notably, such international reports had forced the apartheid regime of South Africa to budge under international pressure.

Source: <http://roznamasahara.samaylive.com/Details.aspx?id=89850&boxid=22441656>



Dawat Online (Invitation), New Delhi,
Editorial, 4 February 2013, Monday

3. Israeli Action

Israel has finally taken military action against Syria. Israel's involvement had been reported earlier but its 'allies' had been trying to prevent it from jumping the gun on Syria. They tried to convince Israel of the lack of any need to take direct action as they were ready to do the dirty work as done during the Gulf war. Israel however has said that it is not satisfied with the actions of its 'allies'. It has also tried to clearly convey the message that Israel is not dependent on them and their lack of effectiveness will not create any threat for Israel as Israel is very much capable of defending itself. It is troubling its 'allies' only to keep

them on the task and for some strategic reasons which are obvious to them. The ‘allies’ were also trying to make Israel understand that the situation was not so bad to require direct Israeli action. Though the enemy state and the regime of Iraq have been completely crushed, things have not yet become suitable for Israel and the security threat remains.

The external situation has also changed. Its supporters and friends have also undergone change. They have now become less brutal, making Israel extremely nervous. Security concerns have reached extreme levels. The existential crisis to the state of Israel has become deeper. Its non-Jewish friends have started to question its strategies while divisions have also erupted among the Jewish population. The American Jewry has a different view on various issues and there are diverse opinions within Israel about the main issues. One group completely rejects any possibility of peace while another group argues that Israel cannot remain in a perpetual state of war. It has not been able to destroy its enemies despite all its efforts for the last 64 years. It still perceives an existential threat looming large over its head despite support from all international powers. It has to face challenges from Lebanon, Syria and Iran. It seems it cannot depend on its friends anymore and will have to take on its security into its own hands.

Source: http://dawatonline.com/Archive_Editorial.aspx?sDate=04-feb-2013



Roznama Urdu Times (The Urdu Times Daily), Mumbai

Editorial, 6 February 2013, Wednesday

4. Who is an International Threat?

Israel has termed Iran as ‘an international threat’. There cannot be a bigger joke than this as a country perceived to be an international threat by people of its own race, is terming a country that has never attacked any other country, as an international threat. A recent survey in Europe had brought startling results. Twenty-two percent of the European population thought that Israel was an international threat. Anyone studying the psychology and characteristics of Jews could come to the same conclusion.

The Jews not only changed their religious book Torah but also killed a number of prophets. They not just belied Prophet Jesus (peace be upon him) and cast aspersions on the character of his mother, Mary (peace be upon her), but also instigated the Romans to crucify him. They also changed the text of the holy book bestowed upon him by God. None of the divine books that were bestowed before the Quran are available in their original form now. They are the ones who have conspired to instigate wars between Muslims and Christians. Then they created discord among Christian states that fought among each other and were destroyed.

It is the Jews who gave various theories about the world and its creation to belie the words of God and rebelled against the Creator. Now the world suffers from unprecedented chaos and every old system and belief, be it about family, gender, economy or finances or anything else, are in dire straits. All problems facing the universe are because of the Zionists. Ahmadinejad is right when he says that the world cannot become peaceful till the Zionist entity is completely eliminated from the earth. He is also right when he says that if the West and the US love Israel so much why did not they establish it in Alaska? There are huge empty lands in the Northern European region, why not shift the state of Israel there? There would be complete and immediate peace in the world if Israel is removed from Palestine and the land of Palestinians are restored to them. This cancer to the world can only be treated with a surgical operation. The world again awaits its Saladin.

Source: <http://www.urdutimes.net/?edate=2013/02/06&epg=03>



The Siasat Daily (The Politics Daily), Hyderabad

Editorial, 7 February 2013, Thursday

5. OIC Conference

The Organization of Islamic Cooperation held a two-day conference in Cairo to take stock of the situation in Syria and issues pertaining to the Islamic world. The conference was also attended by the Iranian President Mahmoud Ahmadinejad. This was the first ever visit of an Iranian leader to Egypt after the Islamic revolution in Iran. The 57-member OIC works towards the promotion of unity among Islamic countries and is the largest group of Muslim countries in the world. It has also started to work towards getting a permanent seat in the UNSC. The world has a population of 1.5 billion Muslims and the absence of the OIC from the UNSC is notable. The UN has a mandate to work towards peace and security in the world but has failed to deliver on this task particularly in the Muslim world. Currently, the situation in Syria is worth mentioning, where thousands of people have been killed in the fight for political power. The OIC conference contemplated upon the situation in Syria. All efforts by the UN and the Arab league to resolve the crisis in Syria have failed because they were not serious about securing a political resolution.

One of the major issues in the Middle East today has been the issue of Palestine. The Jewish state has accelerated its attempts to harm the Al-Aqsa Mosque and Jerusalem. The OIC will have to work towards countering the Jewish designs to destroy the mosque. World powers and international organizations have been blind towards Israeli behaviour. A seat in the UNSC for the OIC is important for the voice of the Muslims. The Zionist state has occupied Palestinian lands and is trying to swallow them by building settlements. The OIC has yet to achieve its primary goal for which it was created in 1969. It is the second largest international organization in the world after the UN. The Cairo summit was aimed at bridging the gaps between Muslim countries and is a step in the right direction. It also needs to work towards

countering the propaganda to smear Islam by labelling it as an extremist religion. The OIC will also have to work towards countering international campaigns and designs to instigate Muslims by abusing Islam and the prophet. The OIC should work towards securing a seat in the UNSC and gaining support from the international community in order to achieve it.

It is also worth noting that Pakistan is a member of the OIC while India which has the second largest Muslim population in the world but has not been given membership. The OIC should think about the issue and invite India to become a member.

Source: <http://www.siasat.com/urdu/news/idr8-27>



Dawat Online (Invitation), New Delhi,

Editorial, 10 February 2013, Sunday

6. US President to visit Israel

It has been reported that the US President Barack Obama will visit Israel during his second term. The report was confirmed by a White House statement. It is expected to take place next month and would be Obama's first visit to Israel as president. He did not visit Israel during his last term. But this is not his first visit as he had visited Israel in 2008 during the presidential campaign. His views and statements on the Israeli-Palestinian conflict are also well documented. During his first term, all meetings between him and Israeli leaders took place in Washington. This cannot be a coincident. Yet in his second term he is going to start his foreign tours with Israel. Even though he visited Thailand after the election, it was before taking the oath of office for the second term. According to British newspaper *The Telegraph* the American president is going to Israel on an important mission. However, it is not yet certain what that mission is though there has been a lot of speculation.

The American and Israeli sides have both given a lot of attention to this news but it is certainly equally important for other sides, especially because of the present situation under which the visit has been organized. Elections were held in Israel recently and the process for formation of a new government has begun. The elections results have not provided a clear majority to any political party. Though President Shimon Peres has invited Benjamin Netanyahu to form a government, he is yet to gather enough allies. This could be the mission for Obama's visit, though both the White House and the Israeli government circles have out rightly rejected such speculation. The Middle East peace process is in an uncertain situation. The US also recognizes that the peace process is not making any headway because of lack of Israeli flexibility. This could also be part of the agenda. Another issue could be the Syrian crisis. The Israeli government is concerned about Syria's chemical and dangerous weapons. Moreover, Iran is also a major concern for Israel. It is understood among pro-Israeli circles

that the balance of power in favour of Israel is tilting against it due to Iran and Syria. These are some of the major issues that could be on Obama's agenda during his visit and according to analysts, Israel wants guarantees from the US on these issues.

Source: http://dawatonline.com/Archive_Editorial.aspx?sDate=10-feb-2013



The Siasat Daily (The Politics Daily), Hyderabad

Editorial, 11 February 2013, Monday

7. Iran-US Talks

The US and the West have increased pressure on Iran to stop seeking nuclear weaponization, though Iran has consistently maintained that it does not seek to develop a nuclear arsenal. The issue of its nuclear programme and talks with the US remained the focus of debate in Iran during the celebrations of 34 years since the Islamic revolution. President Mahmoud Ahmadinejad has said that Iran is ready to talk to the US on the condition that the West stops putting pressure on Iran. The issue cannot be resolved with one side taking the other side hostage to economic sanctions. The Iranian supreme leader Ayatollah Khamenei has also clearly stated that any negotiation will have to take place in a friendly and conducive manner. Ahmadinejad is about to complete his presidential term and thus wants to bring back the issue on some road to resolution though domestically it is understood that he does not have the mandate of the supreme leader. His election in 2009 was challenged by the opposition who had alleged that the elections were rigged. Though he cannot run for presidency for a third consecutive term, he wishes to continue with his influence by having a leader from his group, though the Khamenei group is not eager on any of his supporter's candidacy. The Iranian leadership want to achieve a way forward in the nuclear talks because Western sanctions are hurting its economy. Negotiations are the only way out from the problem. The US policy on the Iranian nuclear issue is pretty clear; it does not want any powerful challenger to Israel in the region. The Western sanctions are unjust because Iran has maintained that it is not pursuing nuclear weapons and its nuclear programme is meant only for civil purposes. It has always allowed international experts and agencies to visit and inspect its nuclear installations. These agencies had given a clean chit to Iran with respect to its alleged nuclear ambitions. All sanctions should have been lifted after such reports but more sanctions were imposed on the basis of speculation. Obama has also begun his new term in office and if he tries to resolve the issue through talks than threats then things could move forward in a positive direction. Any confrontational attitude has to be avoided to resolve the issue which can lead to dire consequences. The US should respect the freedom and sovereignty of other countries and should not become a slave to the Jewish lobby. If it is serious about negotiations then it should lift sanctions as has been reiterated by the Iranian supreme leader. If the upcoming talks in Kazakhstan on 26 February make some headway for Iran-US direct talks, it would be a major achievement.

Source: <http://www.siasat.com/urdu/news/idr12-39>



Inquilab (The Revolution), Mumbai

Editorial, 13 February 2013, Wednesday

8. Israeli Knesset Elections

Benjamin Netanyahu is all set for a third term as Israeli Prime Minister despite an unconvincing result in the parliamentary elections. However, the domestic media has speculated that he could prove to be more successful in his third term because of a lack of clear majority to any of the other parties in the Knesset. The situation could also be different.

It is perhaps the first of its kind of result in the history of parliamentary elections in Israel that a new party (*Yesh Atid*) has emerged as the second largest party. It has surprised many analysts who had projected not more than 5 seats for the newly formed political party led by Yair Lapid. *Yesh Atid* won 19 seats with its slogan for new politics. Lapid was a popular media personality who jumped into politics after leaving the media profession. The party had an eight-point political manifesto focusing on current concerns pertaining to Israeli society and moving away from traditional issues including a promise for peace with Palestine. The massive success of *Yesh Atid* is an indication that the people of Israel want a change and are not happy with their present political leadership. The question is can this new party temper the hawkish policies of the current political disposition?

Meanwhile, one of the newly elected members of the *Yesh Atid*, Ruth Calderon, posted on her Facebook page that Israel should change its national anthem because the Arab population of Israel did not like to sing it. She called for the national anthem to be inclusive and reflective of the feelings of all the people of Israel. The statement has sent shockwaves in the Israeli political landscape. Former Minister of Interior Affairs and Shas party leader Eli Yishai has reacted sharply to the comments saying that it was infuriating. He also said that it seemed the *Yesh Atid* wanted to change the basis of the state of Israel.

It might prove to be just a bubble, though in the long run, a party that advocates an inclusive state in Israel could prove to be a major headache for the hawkish Israeli executive.

Source: <http://epaper.inquilab.com/epaperhome.aspx?issue=13022013&edd=Mumbai>



The Siasat Daily (The Politics Daily), Hyderabad

Middle East Institute @ New Delhi, www.mei.org.in

Editorial, 15 February 2013, Friday

9. Syria in a Critical Situation

The situation in Syria continues to deteriorate. Bomb blasts, firings, arson have become routine with massive loss of life on a daily basis. The problem is that Syrians are fighting amongst themselves. The opposition is actively instigated and provided with material help by the West, rendering them to be unwilling to accept any compromise. The government is also not ready to budge and bring an end to the violence. The number of deaths and those injured are piling up. The two parties are not ready to understand that they are killing their fellow citizens. The need of the hour is to shun violence and resolve the matter through political negotiations conducted in a peaceful manner. At this stage, none of the two sides can be blamed entirely for the crisis as they look equally responsible for escalation and hold equal responsibility to restore peace. The government should work towards responding to the demands and complains of the opposition. Similarly, the opposition should stop attacking government installations and come forward for negotiations to achieve their legitimate demands.

The government needs to think about the demands of the opposition. In fact Bashar al-Assad did offered a formula to the opposition to accept their legitimate demands so that things could move forward in a peaceful manner, but the opposition rejected and termed it as too little too late. The problem is that the opposition groups are not united and various factions are playing into the hands of various international and regional players who want to exploit the genuine demands of the Syrian people for their own interests. Syria is not doing itself and its people any good in the current situation. It is the people of Syria who are at loss and a beautiful country has been converted into rubble. The Bashar al-Assad government has lost the confidence and support of a large section of the population and if he wants to restore that support, his government will need to work for the welfare of the people and make changes in the political system to be more inclusive and responsive to the people's wishes.

The Syrian government and its people need to work hard to bring normalcy back as the situation is worsening every day. External forces are trying to extend their interests by taking advantage of the current turmoil. Any resolution will not be possible until external forces stop supporting one or the other group and internal players become serious about a political resolution. The ongoing bloodshed in Syria needs to end immediately.

Source: <http://www.siasat.com/urdu/news/idr16-43>

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