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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]



Dawat Online (Invitation), New Delhi,

Editorial, 19 February 2013, Tuesday

1. Hamas-Israeli Talks

The Israeli TV Channel-2 has claimed that Israeli authorities are in indirect talks with Hamas through Egyptian mediation. The talks, according to the channel, have been going on since November of last year. Representatives of Israeli military and Hamas leaders have participated in the talks. The channel has also claimed that this development is part of the agreement that resulted in the cease-fire between Israel and Hamas after Israeli attacks inside the Gaza Strip in 2012. The talks are focussed on putting an end to attacks on Israel from the Gaza Strip and on ways to lift the Israeli blockade of the strip. The report says that talks are underway to open the Rafah borders to bring in construction material supplied by Qatar and to supply agriculture products to Israel. Israel has blockaded the Gaza Strip since 2006 and further tightened the blockade after Hamas came to power. Israel had earlier announced that it could allow for the supply of construction material to the Gaza Strip. The Israeli 'Operation Pillar of Defence' was stopped after a cease-fire agreement between Hamas and Israel. The report also claims that Hamas has confirmed that its representatives have met with Israeli representatives.

Israeli daily *The Jerusalem Post* has additionally reported that an Israeli delegation met Egyptian authorities in Cairo on 14 February and exchanged views on important regional issues. It was further reported that the meeting deliberated upon taking forward the halted

Israeli-Palestinian peace process. According to Channel-2, the meeting is part of earlier meetings between Israel and Hamas. The report claims that apart from Egypt, Turkey is also involved in the process. *The Jerusalem Post* has claimed that Israeli authorities have given the go ahead to Turkey for some infrastructure development projects. It has been reported that Turkey wants to build a hospital in the Gaza Strip, which would be completed within a year's time and would be inaugurated by the Turkish premier Recep Tayyip Erdogan. *The Jerusalem Post* had said that based on a report in the Turkish daily *Hurriyat* it would be the largest hospital in the Gaza Strip. This can also help in bridging the problems that had recently erupted in the Israeli-Turkish relations. Qatar is the third country, which is actively taking part in trying to resolve the problems between Israel and Hamas. This is an encouraging development as it can break the ice in the Israeli-Palestinian peace talks as players like Egypt and Turkey are actively involved.

Source: http://dawatonline.com/Archive_Editorial.aspx?sDate=19-feb-2013



Dawat Online (Invitation), New Delhi,
Editorial, 22 February 2013, Friday

2. The Israeli Stand

Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu has said that the talks between Israel and Palestine can resume but preconditions have to be avoided. According to him, the preconditions put by Mahmoud Abbas are problematic because Israel could never agree to resume talks under such preconditions. He has also made it clear that his stand on the peace talks is completely different from American President's stand, which he disagrees with. The earlier statement was given in response to the allegation by former Prime Minister Ehud Olmert who said that Netanyahu was unnecessarily spending hundreds of thousands of Shekels on security. Responding to the comment, Netanyahu said that any peace talks could not be conducted without strengthening the Israeli position. He said that people who thought that the government was splurging finances on baseless security arrangements were wrong. Notably, there is a clear division within the Jewish people inside and outside Israel, with respect to peace talks, whereby one group wants Israel to take into account the ground realities before taking any step and the other group wants to avoid any such compromise.

As far as the Israeli and American viewpoint is concerned, there are some visible differences. If Israel wants to take unilateral action, the US wants to take other views into account even if in a frivolous manner. The US advocates a two-state solution, meaning it not only recognises Israel and wants others to recognise it but it also wishes to see an independent state of Palestine. Israel was uncomfortable with this idea initially but has accepted it under pressure though Israeli leaders have a completely different view of the possible state. Prime Minister Netanyahu reiterated his stand recently, when he said that Israel will accept a Palestinian state in its neighbourhood only if it does not have an armed military. He also said that Israel will not allow any Palestinian state if they do not recognise Israel as an exclusive Jewish state. Any talks regarding Israeli-Palestinian peace will have to take this stand into consideration. It means that Israel has set the agenda for the upcoming visits of the American Secretary of

State John Kerry and President Barack Obama. This is akin to putting preconditions for the talks. Netanyahu wants to have this right for himself but when it comes to the Palestinian side, he rejects it outright.

Source: http://dawatonline.com/Archive_Editorial.aspx?sDate=22-feb-2013

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