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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, 13 April 2013, Saturday

## 1. 'Permanent Peace' in the Middle East

Simon Peres, President of Israel, had recently visited a number of important European countries. He addressed the European parliament during his visit. During the address, he proposed a road map for 'permanent peace' in the Middle East to the European leaders, natural and typical of an Israeli leader. He put forth some principles in front of the European leaders including that of a policy of non-interference in the internal matters of Arab countries, which could be counterproductive and will be perceived as an external intervention in the Arab world, leading to strong reactions. Thus, the West should explore a different method to make the environment in the Middle East conducive for peace. According to him, the best way would be to utilize the services of the Arab League for such purposes. Although the proposal came in the wake of the Syrian crisis, it was put in a general framework. He also added that rather than sending a UN force for establishing peace, an Arab force should be formed which could be much more effective. This is not a new proposal from an Israeli President; such proposals have come from Israeli side earlier also. The same policy was put

into play when the US kept Israel out of the forces fighting against Iraq during the first Gulf war, as there was a fear that Israeli involvement could change the entire dynamics of the war.

The Israeli President also used his address to EU leaders to send a message to the world community to declare Hezbollah a terrorist organization. Soon after, during his visit to Israel, President Obama nodded in acceptance of the Israeli leader's opinion. Meanwhile, Qatar has proposed the establishment of a US\$1 billion fund for the aid of Palestinians living in East Jerusalem. The proposal came during the Arab League Summit in Doha. This would, according to Qatari Emir Sheikh Hammas al-Thani help in protecting the Arab character of the city. The proposal was approved by the Arab League. Qatar also announced that it would provide the initial fund of US\$52 million, which would be deposited in the Islamic Development Bank. This was followed by news that Bahrain was the first Arab country to declare Hezbollah as a terrorist organization. The *Al-Arabiya* quoted one Bahraini Member of Parliament as saying that the decision was taken in the wake of threats to Bahrain's internal security. It seems there would be more such declarations soon.

**Source:** [http://dawatonline.com/Archive\\_Editorial.aspx?sDate=13-apr-2013](http://dawatonline.com/Archive_Editorial.aspx?sDate=13-apr-2013)



**Roznama Sahafat (Journalism Daily), Delhi**

Editorial, 13 April 2013, Saturday

## 2. Why is Iran in the News in Germany?

During the recent visit of a high-level Indian delegation led by Prime Minister Manmohan Singh to Germany to give impetus to trade relations, the issue of Iran's nuclear programme cropped up, completely out of context. Israel has a huge cache of atom bombs and North Korea has not only tested nuclear weapons but has threatened to have more tests. They did not come into discussion. The Iranian ambitions should not have come into trade talks between India and Germany. It appears that Germany will certainly strengthen trade ties but India needs to clearly announce its opposition to the Iranian nuclear ambitions.

The Foreign Ministers of the two states reiterated their commitment to prevent nuclear proliferation particularly in the context of Iran. Indian Minister of External Affairs Salman Khurshid, who is on a visit of Germany to take part in high-level consultations, said that it is important to continue the negotiations to keep Iran within the community of nations.

During a joint press conference with his German counterpart, Salman Khurshid said that the two countries are concerned with the failure of recent talks between the 5+1 and Iran in Almaty. The negotiations ended with the Iranian announcement that it wished to open more uranium mines and explore new ways to upgrade uranium. He was asked about India's strong

ties with Iran and Indian dependence on Iranian oil and if it meant that India had a different view on the Iranian nuclear programme than Germany.

The minister said that it was a misperception, saying that India did have strong ties with Iran and did partially depend on Iran for oil but that did not mean that Indian and German stands on the nuclear issue were different. The two might be in favour of different ways to resolve the problem but both countries have been working towards the same end. Meanwhile, Indian officials have confirmed that India would not completely stop buying Iranian oil but that the volume of trade had come down.

Salman Khurshid also said that the failure of the Almaty round of negotiations was sad but it did not close the window of talks. He said that India favoured negotiations to resolve the problem. The German Foreign Minister also said that the window of negotiations with Iran was still wide open. He said that Germany was committed towards nuclear proliferation and that sanctions were important to prevent Iran from gaining nuclear capabilities. He noted the fact that India-Iran oil trade had witnessed a downward trend.

The problem is that India is still considered a weak country in the West and such unrelated and intrusive matters enter discussions during official visits of Indian leaders to these countries. Like the Iranian nuclear programme, some journalists asked about the problem of malnutrition among women and children in India. Though the Minister said that India is working towards the elimination of such problems and is progressing in the right direction, such questions merely reflects their ignorance about India.

In a related development, Indian Foreign Secretary Ranjan Mathai said that India's oil imports from Iran have come down due to problems in payments and not because of any external pressure. However, this seems to be an exercise in futility, as it is apparent that India has lessened the volume of oil imports from Iran due to American pressure. It is also true that India was told that it would be compensated for the loss of Iranian oil from Central Asian republics although no developments have been reported in this direction. Another notable aspect is the lack of any forward movement in the India-Pakistan-Iran gas pipeline which has been put on the back burner by India due to American pressure.

**Source:** [http://www.sahafat.org/delhi/April2013/13\\_04\\_2013/p-5-1.htm](http://www.sahafat.org/delhi/April2013/13_04_2013/p-5-1.htm)

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