

FROM THE URDU PRESS

No. 71

16 May-15 June 2013

5 Rajab- 5 Shaban Hijri

[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]



The Siasat Daily (The Politics Daily), Hyderabad
Editorial, 1 June 2013, Saturday

1. Providing Weapons to Syria

President Bashar al-Assad has warned Israel of dire consequences for its unsolicited attacks inside Syria. If the Syrian crisis escalates into a regional war, it will add to the woes of the suffering civilians. Assad is under pressure from regime supporters inside the country to respond to Israeli attacks and if Syria opens a battle front at the Golan Heights, it will bring back memories of the 1967 war. Israel had started using the Golan Heights for domestic purposes since 1981, but it remains an occupied territory. The crisis has led to immense loss of life amidst continuing violence. It is Israel which is responsible for the current situation in Syria. Syria and Israel have been in a war-like-situation since 1948 though Israel has remained muted since it was defeated by the Lebanese militant group Hezbollah. A 1967 war-like fighting will lead to huge loss of life for the people living around the Golan. The international players have thus far remained non-committal on the events in Syria and the US has not cleared its stance, despite heavy loss of life. Geneva peace negotiations have also failed in bringing about any solution. Russia has continued to supply weapons to Syria while the rebels blame Hezbollah for strengthening the hands of the regime. The outcome of the crisis is still unclear though the US hopes that the situation will normalize once the current regime is toppled. Political reforms may lead to change but toppling of the regime looks far-fetched in the present circumstances. The tensions at the Syria-Israel border can be brought down only with the help of a change in Syria. A solution has to follow the guideline chalked out in the Geneva negotiations. The problem is none of the parties are genuinely seeking a resolution while the external players are eyeing their national interest

leading to further complications. The US and Germany know that the supply of Russian weapons to Syria will further prolong the crisis. Amidst Syrian claims of acquisition of missile defence systems, Israel may try to mount further attacks on Syrian targets. The problem is if Syria is forced to open an external battle front, its internal front will be weakened. The situation has become complex and Israel is concerned about the tilting of balance of power in the region in Syria's favour. The most disappointing aspect of the crisis has been the UN's stand. It has completely failed in preventing Russia from supplying weapons to Syria. Russia on the other hand does not want to lose its only friend in the region. Thus, the Syrian crisis can be resolved only through external pressure and efforts.

Source: <http://www.siasat.com/urdu/news/idr2-36>



Dawat Online (Invitation), New Delhi
Editorial, 4 June 2013, Tuesday

2. A New Debate in Turkey

It has been 90 years since the abolition of the Ottoman Caliphate. Every 29 October is celebrated for this 'landmark' achievement and the pioneers of 'modern Turkey' are remembered. The aim of these celebrations is to commemorate the ideals of modern Turkey. People are also made aware of dangers facing the nation. Turkey has witnessed numerous ups and downs during this period. Nevertheless, the people of Turkey have started to rethink the pros and cons of the ideals set in 1923. Meanwhile, some political forces have given prominence to such rethinking though the preservation of the traditions of 1923 are preeminent over all else. The armed forces had been given the task of preserving the ideals of modern Turkey. But it was not easy to completely erase the ideals of Turkish past and they responded to calls for revival of the lost glory from time to time. A lot of things changed but the desire remained in some form and the idea survived.

The debate on revisiting the system laid down in 1923 has been revived recently. Turkey should continue to move on the ideals of 1923 or stop and think about what the nation has gained and lost during this period. The way Turkey has been shaped in the past few years has on the one hand, made some people hopeful while on the other hand, worried some sections about the revival of Turkey of 1923. The raging debate on the Turkish constitution has enraged some sections of people. The main worry is that the Turkish legislature has started the debate and is seeking views and consultations. It can lead to a new constitution for the nation. The current constitution was laid down in 1980 after a military coup. This initiative by the Turkish parliament has not just been welcomed but also appreciated by the people. People's involvement in the debate has further troubled some sections while others have termed it as a danger for the current political system.

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



Dawat Online (Invitation), New Delhi

Editorial, 7 June 2013, Friday

3. Presidential Election in Iran

The eleventh Iranian presidential election is scheduled to be held on 14 June. Though every presidential election in Iran has been important, the upcoming election gains further significance because of challenges pertaining to the Iranian polity and foreign policy. Iran has always occupied an important position among the Muslim nations. This has not changed and Iran continues to enjoy a pre-eminent position. The Muslim *ummah* had witnessed a division during the first century of its existence; the two groups were identified as Shia and Sunni. Iran has been the centre of Shia Islam though many other countries also have a substantial Shia population, for example, Iraq where they constitute the majority. Likewise, many other Gulf countries have large concentration of Shias. The Shia-Sunni division has been a bitter and sad part of Muslim history. This Arab-Ajam division has had a painful history to it. There is no point in insisting on the right and wrong but it has been a constant desire among the Muslim *ummah* to end this division. The lack of unity among the Muslims has been a cause of their weakness. In recent times, these tensions have further strained. The Arab world fears Iranian ambitions while Iran has doubts about the Arab world. These complaints and fears cannot be rejected out rightly. There is, however, a need to work towards bringing the two sides closer.

The candidates for the upcoming presidential election in Iran include Secretary of the Supreme National Security Council Saeed Jalili, Golam-Ali Haddad-Adel, former chief commander of the Iranian Revolutionary Guard Corps Mohsen Rezaee, Hassan Rouhani, Mohammad Reza Aref, Mohammad Gharazi, Mayor of Tehran Mohammad Bagher Ghalibaf and Ali Akbar Velayati. In the current situation, it is important that the new president has to be a candidate who has a good understanding of world affairs and has a vision not just for the people of Iran but for the entire Muslim *ummah* and can think of the welfare of the entire humanity. The Iranian presidential election has been under scrutiny the world over. The outside world has always wished that the Iranian domestic situation becomes favourable to them. Outside forces have tried to achieve favourable results in earlier presidential elections and they will try to do so again this time. The Iranian leadership must be well aware of these efforts and would have made arrangements to tackle them. It is important at this stage to think whether a path of collision would be suitable? Iran also needs to weigh its options with respect to the Muslim world while pursuing its policies. It would certainly not want to be further isolated and the upcoming elections are significant in this respect.

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



Roznama Rashtriya Sahara (National Sahara Daily), Delhi

Editorial, 8 June 2013, Saturday

4. Turkey - Sick Man of Europe

Turkey was known as the sick man of Europe, the reason being a small part of Turkey lies in Eastern Europe. Another reason is that Turkey has always aspired to be identified more with Europe and not with Asia. Turkey was a German ally in both the world wars. During the time of Mustafa Kemal Ataturk, Turkey became so obsessed with Westernization that despite being a predominantly Muslim country it distanced itself from the Muslim world. Turkey had held an imminent position in the Islamic world. It remained the abode of the Islamic caliphate for a long time. After the dismantling of the Abbassid Empire due to the Mongol invasion, Turkey acquired central position in the Muslim world. Moreover, it was the only Muslim country to have an organized and trained military. Turkish pilots were famous for their aerobic abilities. Modern Turkey, however, took a completely different shape under Ataturk's leadership. It became a secular state to the extent of curbing the religious freedom of the people. It had to face defeats in both the world wars together with Germany. It was so alienated from the Muslim world that even on the important issue of Palestine it took a different stand compared to rest of the Muslim world. Turkey was the first Muslim country to establish diplomatic relations with Israel. Egypt under Anwar Sadat was the second to have diplomatic ties with Israel. Turkish seclusion from the Muslim world seemed to be ending after the AKP came to power. Recep Tayyip Erdogan's government had started to realign its relations with neighbouring countries. Turkish-Israeli relations came to a head due to the Mavi Marmara flotilla raid issue. Diplomatic relations between the two states were downgraded. The AKP is supposed to be an Islamist party. It is important to understand the context of the current turmoil in Turkey. The secular elements in Turkey that are concentrated in urban centres are protesting against some of the domestic policies of the AKP government. A number of demonstrations have been organized including in Ankara where a huge number of demonstrators gathered to protest against the AKP government. The most prominent issue for the protest was closure of liquor sales. The demonstrators alleged that religious reasons are behind the restrictions on the sale of liquor while the government position has been that it wants to restrict liquor sale because drinking is a social ill. The protestors have also had an issue with the government order prohibiting public kissing. The problem, however, was that these issues did not elicit large-scale support because a large section of Turks particularly in rural areas did not have any problem with these orders. Erdogan has a large support base among these rural voters who tend to have Islamic inclinations. Since these issues did not get support from a large section of people, the protests in Turkey could not be sustained.

Source: <http://roznamasahara.samaylive.com/Details.aspx?id=50419&boxid=24919921>



Roznama Urdu Times (The Urdu Times Daily), Mumbai
Editorial, 9 June 2013, Sunday

5. Syria and Iran

The Zionist embedded media has tried to portray the Syrian conflict as a conflict between Shias and Sunnis and the irony is that some Muslim scholars have jumped into the bandwagon to prove it to be a Shia-Sunni problem.

The problem is that the Syrian issue can never be a Shia-Sunni problem because the Syrian regime is not a religious regime but rather is inclined towards communism and Bashar al-Assad is a rationalist. Since the communists are against imperialism, the Baathist government in Syria is opposed to Israel because of its imperial origin. The Syrian opposition to Israel also flows from the Arab nationalist ideology. Syria supports Palestine because Palestinians are Arabs. Thus Syrian support to Palestine does not flow from Islam rather from its ideological convictions towards communism and Arab nationalism.

Iran has a strategic alliance with Syria because Iran though based on Islamic convictions, is equally against the Zionist, imperialist and nationalist ideologies. Religion has nothing to do with Iran's relations with Syria. Iran wants to ensure that Syria does not fall into the hands of those people who have close relations with Israel as many other Arab countries do. The Iranian and Hezbollah support to Syria should be understood in this context. It should not be seen from a Shia-Sunni division point of view. At least the Muslim intellectuals and scholars are not expected to do that.

Both Turkey and Egypt are currently being ruled by Islamist governments, but both have working relations with Israel. Yet, strangely, it is being propagated that Iran has pulled out its support for Hamas. This is the handiwork of the Zionist propaganda machinery. Muslim countries should avoid the trap to fall into the lap of the Zionist-imperialist designs. It is indeed clear from Quranic injunctions about what should be the basis of relations between nations and states. But the problem is people who do not want to see the truth and remain entangled in lies and deception.

Source: <http://www.urdutimes.net/?edate=2013/06/09&epg=03>



Hindustan Express (Daily Hindustan Express), New Delhi
Editorial, 11 June 2013, Tuesday

6. Presidential Election in Iran

As the scheduled date for presidential election in Iran is approaching, it has become more and more difficult to identify the strongest candidate. The complexity of the situation was further complicated with the Guardian Council's decision to disqualify a large number of candidates. The council is the most important body with respect to presidential elections in Iran as it has the right to limit the candidature based on individual capabilities and reputations. It is important to note that a total of 1,686 candidates had filed their nominations for the election but the Guardian Council cleared the nomination of only eight candidates while the rest were disqualified. The candidates who were disqualified included close aids of Mahmoud Ahmadinejad, Esfandiar Rahim Mashaei and former president Hashemi Rafsanjani though according to reports efforts are being made to revoke their disqualifications. President Ahmadinejad is also reportedly trying to have his way with the Guardian Council. He cannot run for office for a third consecutive term, thus he wants a close aide to take the mantle and Mashaei was reportedly his favourite.

The eight candidates who are running for the office are Foreign Minister Ali Akbar Velayati, Mayor of Tehran Mohammad Bagher Ghalibaf, Secretary of the Supreme National Security Council Saeed Jalili, former chief commander of the Iranian Revolutionary Guard Corps Mohsen Rezaee, former speaker of the parliament Gholam-Ali Haddad-Adel, Hassan Rouhani, Mohammad Reza Aref and Mohammad Gharazi. Iran follows a complex election process. The centre of power is not the president or the parliament but rather the office of Supreme Leader. Polling is conducted for local councils, assemblies, parliament and the president. A 12-member high-powered committee plays the role of coordinator between the offices of the Supreme Leader and the president. The Supreme Leader is assisted in his work by two more committees; the consultative committee and the committee of experts. The President forms a cabinet from among the 290-elected representatives in the parliament. The Supreme Leader makes appointment of the judges, military commanders, and Imams of mosques. The office of the Supreme Leader also has significant influence in matters of intelligence and foreign affairs.

Currently, the Iranian economy is going through a tough time. Mahmoud Ahmadinejad had come to power with promises of economic growth and poverty alleviation but at the time of demitting his office the economic condition in Iran is far from healthy. Major economic indicators show that the Iranian economy has suffered due to international sanctions. Inflation has reached 30 percent, while rate of unemployment has touched 12 percent. Moreover, the growth rate has plunged to less than zero. The Iranian economy was growing at a rate of 7 percent when Ahmadinejad became president. Despite its economic problems, Iran is fighting on several fronts. Washington wishes to see leaders who have a soft corner for the US to come to power, but the Guardian Council has disqualified all pro-West leaders. The eight candidates whose nominations were cleared for running for elections are mostly anti-America.

Source:

http://dailyhindustanexpress.com/gujashtah_shumare/june2013/11_06_2013/epaper/page_5_large.htm



Inquilab (The Revolution), Mumbai
Editorial, 15 June 2013, Saturday

7. Syria and the UN

According to a UN report, as many as 93,000 people have lost their life in Syria since March 2011. The report emphasizes that nearly 5,000 people are being killed every month. This is a large number and in fact the number of casualties in Iraq had been lesser for the same duration. The report also says that the condition in Syria is extremely dangerous and is fast deteriorating. Moreover, the number of internally displaced people and refugees in neighbouring countries is also huge. People are forced to live in extreme poverty and dangerous circumstances. According to UNICEF, as many as 4 million children need immediate medical and nutritional attention. The condition of women, old-age people and refugees is also deplorable.

The international community has been complacent in taking action on Syria. A large population of Syrians is suffering but the so called human rights champions have not been moved by their plight. Whilst the international media has highlighted the excesses of the Bashar al-Assad regime, they have mostly avoided commenting on the loss of life and the suffering of the people. The human rights angle is mostly missing from most of the commentaries. Most of the journalists have been found speculating about the situation and mostly avoid going to the ground and looking at the facts. Even the UN has been complacent in its actions on resolving the problem in Syria. It has tried to resolve the political crisis but what measures have been taken to end the genocide of innocent people both at the hands of the military and the rebels? It has been found lacking in taking action to stop the humanitarian crisis.

The irony is that the UN does not lack the means to resolve the crisis, rather it lacks the will to stop the killings of innocent Syrians. It should take immediate measures to stop the killings and initiate investigation through the International Criminal Court to enforce the rule of law. It is the responsibility of the international community to bring an end to the crisis in Syria. Though the UN has lost its impartial position, it still has some credibility and should work towards bringing an end to the humanitarian crisis in Syria.

Source: <http://epaper.inquilab.com/epaperhome.aspx?issue=15062013&edd=Mumbai>

Compiled and Translated by Md. Muddassir Quamar

Md. Muddassir Quamar is a Doctoral Candidate at the School of International Studies, Jawaharlal Nehru University, New Delhi. Email:
muddassir.2005@gmail.com

As part of its editorial policy, the MEI@ND standardizes spelling and date formats to make the text uniformly accessible and stylistically consistent. The views expressed here are those of the author and do not necessarily reflect the views/positions of the MEI@ND. Editor, MEI@ND: P R Kumaraswamy.