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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 Rashtriya Sahara (National Sahara Daily), Delhi
Editorial, 22 July 2013, Monday

1. Fascination with Israel Fading

Israel has announced that it will release some long-imprisoned Palestinians from Israeli jails. If Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu is to be believed this is a goodwill gesture to restart the peace process with the Palestinian Authority. Is this some kind of change-of-heart? One can believe it only if one is oblivious of the 64 years of Israel's deceitful existence. Extending any kind of concession to the Palestinian or Arab side is like a sin for Israel. It is actually due to the prevailing situation that Israel has offered this olive branch. In fact, one may recall that the American Secretary of State John Kerry had visited Tel Aviv and West Bank to discuss a revival of the peace talks. But he could not find much success because Israel was insistent on starting the negotiation without pre-conditions while the Palestinian side insisted that such talks in the past had failed to produce any result. Palestinian Authority President Mahmoud Abbas wanted Israel to stop constructing illegal settlements in the occupied areas and make a commitment towards the return of these areas to the Palestinians. Israel was not ready for it, thus Kerry's mission had to be abandoned. Immediately before the end of his last visit to Israel, Kerry had issued a statement saying that if Israel did not budge, it could face a very tough year in 2014 and that the European Union countries would soon issue statements condemning Israeli behaviour. The European Union has now issued a statement; it has said that starting 2014 it will boycott all companies and individuals who operate from the occupied lands. It has also been notified that all companies

based in EU countries will break business ties with such groups or individuals from 1 January 2014. It has given exemption to NGOs and organizations that are working for peace between the two sides or are involved in welfare activities including the offices of the Israeli Ministry of Justice. Yet, they would also be required to sign an agreement stating that the land under use by their organization does not belong to Israel. This is another important step after the Palestinian entry into the UN. Israeli anger on such an announcement was expected. Thus, Netanyahu issued a statement saying that the EU has deceived Israel. He also said that at a time when the two sides were about to restart the peace talks this announcement has sabotaged the efforts. This was hilarious given that some days back he had said that John Kerry was wasting his time. The Indian media did not give any importance to the EU announcement but the anger in Israel shows that it is worried about its fading fascination amidst the international community.

Source: <http://roznamasahara.samaylive.com/Details.aspx?id=56135&boxid=31358251>



The Siasat Daily (The Politics Daily), Hyderabad

Editorial, 23 July 2013, Tuesday

2. Attacks on Religious Places in Syria

The Syrian government has committed crimes against humanity and Islam by destroying religious places revered by Muslims. Sometime back, the tomb of Zeinab was damaged in bombings by the military. Now the tomb of the famous companion of the Prophet Khalid bin Walid and the adjacent mosque have been damaged in a similar operation in the city of Homs. It is the duty of the government to protect all religious places in the country. These are disturbing trends and even the rebel forces have damaged many religious places in their operations. It is a matter of great concern for the Muslim community world over. It is condemnable and the international agencies should ensure an end to this humanitarian crisis in Syria. It is also the duty of the Arab countries to condemn and act against such destruction of holy sites. Syria is grappling with this crisis since 2011 and as per UN estimates more than 90,000 people have been killed in Syria. The US is not sure about military intervention in Syria and is busy taking stock of the situation on the ground. After the quagmire in Iraq and Afghanistan it wants to be careful in taking up an external military action. The problem is that a military solution to the crisis will lead to further destruction. Thus, a political solution should be explored and Bashar al-Assad should be forced to hand over power. The problem can also become a major sectarian crisis among Muslims because the Syrian regime is backed by Shias while the rebels have the support of Sunni leadership. It is also important that the international human rights organizations put pressure on all sides to bring an end to violence and the humanitarian crisis. The crisis has rendered a large population homeless, who have been forced to flee their homes and take refuge in neighbouring countries. Syria has a historic place in Islam and it is disturbing that its heritage is under threat. It is important that the two sides come to terms with the fact that there cannot be a military solution to the problem and that a solution can only be achieved through political negotiations. It is important that the international players like the US and Russia and regional players like Saudi Arabia and Iran put pressure on both the sides to shun violence and respect human rights and find a political solution to share power. Syria is experiencing its worst humanitarian crisis and, according to estimates, nearly two million people have been rendered homeless.

Source: <http://www.siasat.com/urdu/news/idr24-39>



Roznama Munsif (The Judge Daily), Hyderabad

Editorial, 29 July 2013, Monday

3. Muslim Brothers will Succeed

Egypt is reeling under the worst kind of killings and death. The military has pounced upon the supporters of the Muslim Brotherhood who are demonstrating against the removal of President Mohamed Morsi. It is unfortunate that the military did not give prior warning to the protestors before opening fire. This has resulted in the death of nearly 200 Brotherhood supporters and more than 5,000 have been injured. The military is killing with impunity under orders from General al-Sisi. The Morsi government was removed despite coming into power with electoral victory. The military has blocked the flow of information to the outside world and is saying that there is no widespread protest against its takeover as only a handful of extremist elements have been protesting. The fact remains that Egypt has witnessed widespread protests against the removal of Morsi.

Morsi had inherited an Egypt that was economically in shambles. It was impossible to improve the situation within a year; only a miracle could have solved all the problems. These issues could have been resolved only through a long-term process. The real problem which the military could not accept was the Islamic inclination of the government. There are international players that also felt threatened with such a situation and the military together with opposition and the media acted in tandem to remove Morsi. Apart from these anti-Islam forces, the support of Saudi Arabia and the UAE is also foolish. The international players who never tire of preaching about democracy are now silent and have not been perturbed by killings that have seized Egypt in the past weeks. The military has also charged the Morsi-led government with compromising national security because it was in touch with the Hamas leadership in the Gaza Strip. It seems that the new government could also crack down on the Hamas leadership that is currently stationed in Cairo.

It is true that Morsi was not guarded in taking actions that angered the liberals and alienated sections of common people, which provided the military with an opportunity to act against it. Morsi should have learned from the Turkish example which took slow but steady steps to improve the economy and establish a wider support base including among the elites. The Arab Spring in Egypt has now been reversed. There are vested international forces who did not want Morsi to continue and they have succeeded in their plan. The problem is it would not be possible to keep the Islamists out of power for long in Egypt because they are a reality and command respect and popularity among the masses. The Muslim Brotherhood is an old movement and has experienced numerous adverse situations in the past. It has always come out stronger and this time too it shall come out stronger and will succeed.

Source: <http://www.munsifdaily.com/epaper/29July/pages/page6/news1.html>



Roznama Rashtriya Sahara (National Sahara Daily), Delhi
Editorial, 29 July 2013, Monday

4. Nile on Fire

The only thing that can be said with certainty about Syria and Egypt is that the people in both the countries are not happy with their respective governments. Though it is impossible to please all and that is where electoral democracy comes into the picture. Yet what is happening in Egypt, Syria and as was earlier seen in Libya is rare. If this becomes an excuse for external intervention then both the ruling elite and the intellectuals are to be blamed as they have failed in finding a negotiated solution. It was tried in Egypt but the ruling Muslim Brotherhood made a grievous mistake. It did not understand that it won the elections not because of popular support, but rather because of a better organizational structure. It should have tried to keep the military and the judiciary in good humour until gaining a strong foothold in governance. But Mohamed Morsi challenged and angered both the judiciary and the military that have appropriated power over a long time. It would be wrong to blame external forces for developments in Egypt. The Egyptian military had earlier dislodged the government in 1952 when the Free Officers enacted a *coup d'état* against King Farouq. If that was a revolution, the people had not participated in it. The popular support was gained because of the nationalization programme and the challenge it posed to the colonial powers. But the military intervention on 3 July was completely different. This time people had been protesting against the government in large numbers and had been organizing sit-ins at Tahrir Square. The only difference from the 2011 Tahrir Square movement was that earlier, people were against Hosni Mubarak and this time they were shouting slogans against Morsi and his policies. This time the military had taken shelter under the guise of accepting popular sentiment and it cannot be entirely doctored as a coup because it immediately began with efforts to form an interim civilian government and made it clear that it was in favour of fresh elections. Yet this cannot justify the military action. Though the clashes started during the massive rallies in support of and against Mohamed Morsi, now it is the Morsi supporters who have been targeted by the military. Reports have suggested that more than 150 people have been killed and as many as 5,000 have been injured in the clashes, majority of whom are Muslim Brotherhood supporters. This is a disturbing scenario and the military should immediately halt the use of force. If the situation deteriorates, Egypt will also fall into a civil war. Both the military and the Muslim Brotherhood should refrain from violence and work towards providing a stable government. The people of Egypt cannot be fooled with religious slogans; neither will they accept a military dictatorship. It is important that the Muslim Brotherhood and other political groups come together and work towards a roadmap for forming a national interim government representative of all shades of political organizations. The Brotherhood should understand that a civil war will not take it anywhere and will destroy Egypt. An unstable and troubled Egypt will only be beneficial for Israel which is waiting for an opportunity to demolish the Gaza Strip.

Source: <http://roznamasahara.samaylive.com/Details.aspx?id=57103&boxid=15859323>



The Siasat Daily (The Politics Daily), Hyderabad
Editorial, 6 July 2013, Saturday

5. Islamists under Fire

Everyone has expressed concern over Egypt but none are serious about resolving the problem. The killings of Islamists by the military amidst continuing rallies in support of Mohamed Morsi have raised doubts about Egypt's future. International observers are also finding it difficult to understand the situation. It is surprising that the military is urging people to come out in its support. This will only lead to further clashes between the polarized groups. The military has used force to disperse the supporters of Morsi and it appears that Egypt is falling into chaos; it will be difficult for the military to guide the country towards a better and stable democratic polity. The tensions between the military and the Brotherhood have escalated into clashes and killings and this can further deteriorate. The military is also guilty of ousting an elected government. The use of force by the military has come under severe criticism from many quarters including from abroad. The Islamists have not been able to evoke much international support though. It seems that the international players do not want to come out strongly in support of an Islamist group and have been muted in condemning the brute force employed by the military to deal with the supporters of the Muslim Brotherhood. There seems to be a subtle international support for the military because Israeli interests would be better protected under the military. If the problem escalates and Egypt falls into further chaos it will split the society and it would become very difficult to bring Egypt back to normalcy.

Source: <http://www.siasat.com/urdu/news/idr30-32>

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

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