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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]



The Siasat Daily (The Politics Daily), Hyderabad
Editorial, 19 October 2013, Saturday

1. Saudi Decision

Saudi Arabia has decided to refuse the temporary membership to the Security Council to express its displeasure with the US on its Middle East policies, particularly over Iran and Syria. Saudi Arabia has taken this step to expose Western hypocrisy when it comes to the Islamic world. The UNSC has been a target of criticism from many quarters for some years now. India and Saudi Arabia are two strong contenders for a permanent seat in the UNSC. Both represent important regions and have the support of a large number of states. Western countries however, have remained silent on the issue, which reflects their double standards. The UNSC has lost reputation in the past few years; it has not been able to play a positive role in resolving some of the recent crises such as in Syria. Moreover, it has completely failed to find any solution for the people of Palestine who have suffered due to Jewish occupation. Saudi Arabia had been accused of human rights violations to prevent it from being offered a temporary seat in the Security Council. By refusing the invitation to take a temporary seat, Saudi Arabia has clarified its position. Five permanent members—the US, Britain, China, France and Russia—and the ten non-permanent members who are elected for a two-year term constitute the UNSC. Saudi Arabia was elected as a non-permanent member. Saudi Arabia has been actively voicing its concerns over the situation in Syria. The Saudi decision has come at an appropriate time; it highlights the need for the reorganization of the UN. An important issue that had kept Saudi Arabia out of the international organization was the country's exclusion of women from its public life. Recently, Saudi Arabia nominated women members in its Shoura Council and announced that they will be allowed to take part

in municipal elections. This has alleviated the concerns of international community over the issue of freedom for women in the Kingdom. An important issue that hampers the functioning of the UN is financial problems. An organization that is not financially autonomous cannot be expected to work in a neutral and independent manner. The Western nations have maintained their financial hold over the UN, thus influencing its functioning. Saudi Arabia is angry over Western and UN inaction in Syria. Russia and China have also played a dubious role on the issue. The Syrian situation has been a blot on the human rights record of the entire world and the countries that have been critical of Saudi human rights record have remained silent. It is indeed reflective of their double standards. Notwithstanding these issues, Saudi Arabia needs to review its decision as it can play a productive and positive role inside the UNSC. The UN should also try to find ways to alleviate Saudi concerns and ask it to review its decision.

Source: <http://www.siasat.com/urdu/news/idr20-42>



Inquilab (The Revolution), Mumbai
Editorial, 21 October 2013, Monday

2. Saudi Arabia, United Nations and the US

Saudi Arabia has shocked the world by refusing to accept a seat in the Security Council as non-permanent member. The US has been muted in its reaction because the country in question is an ally. Russia has expressed its discomfort with the Saudi decision. France has criticized the move but expressed solidarity with the Saudi cause. What are Saudi concerns; is it the UN's double standards? If this is true, then one is compelled to ask whether this is something new. The UN has never been a neutral or just organization. It has been partisan in its structure and approach since its establishment. In fact, a number of experts have observed that given the way it functions, it could meet the same fate as its predecessor, the League of Nations. As far as reforms are concerned, it is an old demand that has never been taken seriously. Saudi Arabia could not have refused a chance to be part of the UNSC for the first time based on such issues. The real reasons are different and are not inexplicable to the world. Saudi Arabia has been worried about the changing American policy in the Middle East. Moreover, it has been infuriated with the American overtures to Iran and has not appreciated the American stand on Morsi's government in Egypt. Riyadh has been disappointed with Washington's lack of action on Syria. In fact, the Saudi Foreign Minister Saud al-Faisal had refused to address the UN General Assembly to show the Kingdom's displeasure with the US.

One can make a difference by being part of the UNSC and initiate measures to resolve a number of problems. Moreover, it is not easy to be elected to the Security Council. Saudi Arabia could have utilized the opportunity to be part of it and raise issues concerning the Islamic countries. Therefore, it would be better if Saudi Arabia reviews its decision and takes the opportunity to work for the betterment of the world community in a non-partisan manner.

Source: <http://epaper.inquilab.com/epaperhome.aspx?issue=21102013&edd=Mumbai>



Roznama Sahafat (Journalism Daily), Delhi

Editorial, 26 October 2013, Saturday

3. Saudi Arabia and the US

Amnesty International has expressed its concerns regarding the human rights situation in Saudi Arabia. Philip Luther, its Programme Director for the Middle East North Africa region said that the kingdom has not delivered on any of its promises.

On the other hand, the Saudi intelligence chief has stated that the monarchy will review its relations with the United States because of the latter's inaction against the Syrian regime and its moves to improve its relations with Iran. Prince Bandar bin Sultan had expressed these concerns while addressing a gathering of European diplomats and had said that Saudi Arabia is concerned because the US has failed to resolve the Palestinian crisis.

The Saudi stand has an uncanny similarity with the Israeli stand on these issues. Both have been infuriated with the change in American policy towards Iran. It is understandable that Israel is not happy with the developments but the Saudi stand is surprising and unfortunate. It would not be wrong to say that the Saudi monarchy is going against the spirit of Islam. The problem is that Saudi Arabia does not want Iran to be friendly with the US. It does not see any problem when the US destroys Muslim countries but threatens to review its relations when it tries to have better relations with Iran. In fact, the monarchy is completely dependent upon the US for its security and existence, hence is aggrieved because of the changes in American policy in the region. The US-Saudi relations have remained strong since the foundation of the Kingdom in 1932 based on strategic dimensions.

Saudi Arabia wanted the US to intervene in Syria and remove the Syrian regime. However, the US President is not sure about taking such a step. Palestine has never been an important issue for Saudi Arabia, which has always kept a distance from the issue. The monarchy will not act against the US because it depends upon the US for its security. Nevertheless, the people of Saudi Arabia are not happy with the monarchy and feel suffocated with the way they have governed the country. The day this volcano erupts, nobody including the US, will be able to save the monarchy.

Source: http://www.sahafat.org/delhi/Oct2013/26_10_2013/p-5-1.htm

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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