

FROM THE URDU PRESS

No. 81

1-15 November 2013

26 Zihijjah 1434-10 Muharram 1435

[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, 4 November 2013, Monday

1. Pressurizing the US

The already precarious situation in the Middle East is fast deteriorating. Some of the Gulf States are increasingly getting angry with the US. A number of Arab countries are unhappy with the American policy on Egypt and Syria. They have been further alienated due to the American role in the Palestinian issue. Moreover, these countries do not appreciate American efforts at rapprochement with Iran. The stand resonates with Israel, which thinks that the US should not back the current government. However, it is argued that it was also not in favour of the removal of the elected Morsi government because it did not want instability in the neighbouring countries. Notwithstanding the fact that it did not appreciate the change in Egypt, it hoped for the situation to stabilize because an unstable situation would have made it difficult to take policy decisions. Israel knows that it is surrounded with enemies or at least an unfavourable climate, which is the reason for its obsession with security. Any more chaos to the given situation would increase the danger. Militarily none of the neighbouring countries can come close to Israeli power but it still feels insecure. This however is not something new and continues since its establishment.

The situation in Syria is worsening and Lebanon has also become vulnerable because of a number of factors. Israel perceives the two to be threats. The Arab countries however, have a different opinion about Syria. The escalation of the Syrian crisis into a major regional war

cannot be overruled. Syria is not isolated; many major powers have an interest in continuation of the regime. More importantly, the US which was talking about attacking Syria has changed its rhetoric after the Russian brokered deal on chemical weapons. It has announced that it would not attack Syria at least for now. The Gulf countries are angry because of America's soft approach towards Syria as well as its ineffectiveness on the Palestinian issue. On the other hand, Israel is perturbed with the American attitude towards Iran, which it perceives as a major threat to its existence. It's arguing that the matter cannot be resolved through talks and there is need to take strong action. The US and European countries, however, are not ready to heed to Israeli opinion. It is not as if they do not consider military action as a solution but argue that the time has not come for it. Therefore, the US is subject to pressure from both sides. It is not yet clear as to how will it react but there are possibilities for further trouble.

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



The Siasat Daily (The Politics Daily), Hyderabad
Editorial, 4 November 2013, Monday

2. Kerry's Middle East Sortie

Kerry was on a tour of the Middle East with a special mission. He emphasized the need to expedite reforms in Egypt and met the Saudi leaders to assuage their anger. Saudi-US ties have come under stress off late due to American policy decisions regarding Syria and Iran. The US is concerned about the situation in Egypt. It has stopped military aid to Egypt because of the recent developments. The Egyptian military has removed an elected government and taken over the state. The way global powers have acted to dislodge the Islamist government in Egypt will lead to more complications. While Kerry is on a mission to review and improve American relations with Egypt, it would be futile to expect any fruitful outcome because the US will only think of its own interests. Stability in Egypt is necessary for the Egyptian people. It is interesting to note that Kerry could not even claim of any policy achievement with respect to peace and stability in the region. In fact Kerry has a limited mandate and he cannot do much. The most important thing for Egypt is the restoration of democracy. Stability in Egypt is a prerequisite for peace and prosperity in the region. If the US wishes to work together with the interim Egyptian government then there are a lot of tasks ahead. Egypt is going through a tough phase; hundreds of people have died in the military action against pro-Morsi demonstrators. The most important reason behind the removal of Morsi was his Islamist affiliations. Morsi is on trial, which smears of the politics of vengeance. It is important that the people of Egypt be vigilant of external designs particularly those of the US. The outcome of this visit would be clear only after Kerry returns to the US. The most important aspect would be to see if the US-Saudi relations regain its sheen after the visit. It would be difficult because Saudi Arabia wants the US to review its policy over Syria, which seems unlikely for now.

Source: <http://www.siasat.com/urdu/news/idr5-40>



Dawat Online (Invitation), New Delhi
Editorial, 7 November 2013, Thursday

3. The Situation in Egypt

Egypt is in turmoil as the military refuses to recognize its mistakes and take reconciliatory steps. In fact it has been making mistakes after mistakes leading to worsening of the situation. Nobody has been able to establish complete authority while many within as well as outside wish the turmoil to continue. The military has now put the ousted president on trial on various counts. The problem is that both the interim government and the judiciary are biased against the Muslim Brotherhood. Hence, the outcome of the trial would be biased. The whole idea is to prosecute the former president and bring his organization into the net of the judiciary so as to remove any chances of their coming back into power in future. The Muslim Brotherhood has become an eyesore for the military as well as neighbouring Arab governments. Therefore, these governments have come to praise the military and have rushed to provide material help and moral support for the action.

Egypt has become a quagmire for the US, which is being pressured from various quarters. It is baffled with the murder of democracy in Egypt but has been unable to condemn the removal of an elected government for fear that it will anger many of its allies. It can neither support nor criticize the military and thus is trying to save itself from taking an active position. The US now finds itself in a catch twenty-two situation which is evident from its reaction after the ouster of Morsi. It has announced that it will relook the aid to the Egyptian military. On the other hand, it cannot openly support the Islamists. The same dilemma can be seen in the EU's response. It has not been able to find any justification for what conspired in Egypt but some unknown fears have prevented it from coming out in the open against the military action. The US and EU want to see the restoration of democracy in Egypt but are not clear about the kind of democracy they want. If they really respect the wish of the people, then they should cease their support to the repressive military.

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



The Siasat Daily (The Politics Daily), Hyderabad
Editorial, 9 November 2013, Saturday

4. Iran Peace Talks

The election of Hassan Rouhani has improved the chances of softening the stand that the world powers have taken towards Iran. It has also improved the chances of movement towards the resolution of the nuclear problem. John Kerry has arrived in

Geneva in between his tour of the Middle East to ensure successful talks between Iran and six global powers. A change in Kerry's itinerary was seen as an indication towards a positive outcome of the negotiations. The need is to tackle the issues that have prevented a resolution of the matter. Iran is being pressurized to set aside its nuclear ambitions and stop uranium enhancement. If John Kerry works towards minimizing the differences between Iran and the world powers, it would be a good sign. The US has indicated its readiness to ease sanctions against Iran but Iran cannot immediately disband its nuclear programme. It has clarified before the negotiations that uranium enhancement would not be stopped but the talks will certainly help in alleviating the concerns of the global community. It would be upon the global powers to decide the course of action with respect to the negotiations. The six global powers are upbeat about the change of government in Iran. It is indeed a good opportunity for Iran and any positive outcome will be better for world peace. Israel has been a constant source of problem when it comes to the resolution of the Iranian nuclear issue. The Israeli government has long been propagating against Iranian ambitions and the Iranian nuclear programme. They have even used social media to spread their propaganda. The 1979 incidents are being used to spread hatred against Iran. This needs to be stopped in order to create the right atmosphere for peace and security in the region. It is important to find a roadmap for the resolution of the problem. If Iran agrees to put its entire nuclear infrastructure under the IAEA inspection then there should not be any problem in finding a solution. Iran has time and again reiterated that its nuclear programme is for peaceful purposes but world powers doubt that Iran's nuclear programme is weapons oriented. Israel has been the leading cause of the concerns being cast on Iranian nuclear programme. The American Secretary of State John Kerry has advised Israel to change its policy towards Iran and Palestine; otherwise, it will find itself secluded from the international community. On the one hand, global powers pressurize Iran to disband its nuclear programme while they have not acquired similar position on Israeli nuclear programme. The main problem in the Middle East is Israel, which has amassed nuclear and other destructive weapons. It can cause huge damage to the peace and tranquillity in the region. It is important that Israel is disarmed but the global powers seem helpless. Israel has committed humanitarian atrocities against Palestinians but rather than acting against Israel, it is being provided aid for suppressing and making the life of Palestinian people miserable. If the US and other world powers fail to act against Israel, then it would be a failure of the entire world community.

Source: <http://www.siasat.com/urdu/news/idr10-41>



The Etemaad Urdu Daily (The Confidence Urdu Daily), Hyderabad

Editorial, 11 November 2013, Monday

5. Negotiations between Iran and P5+1

The negotiations between Iran and six global powers have continued for long and have ended without any tangible result. Iran has taken a flexible position during the negotiations. The final outcome, however, will not depend on technicalities but rather on political vision. A positive outcome has been the decision to meet after ten days, which indicates that the negotiations have not broken down.

The Iranian position has got a boost due to the participation of Russia and China. The Iranian Foreign Minister Javed Zarif is a respected and experienced politician and has participated in numerous negotiations. He has served as Iran's permanent representative in the UN for five years. Iran's seriousness to resolve the long-pending nuclear issue is reflected in the interests shown by its leaders including Khamenei.

The negotiations were held over long technical sessions but ended without any tangible outcome. Leaders from both sides however, have expressed their satisfaction over talks saying, though a solution is still not in sight, they have made some movement towards it. The EU foreign policy representative's statement that some positive signs were seen during the negotiations is important. However, it can be said that despite differences, the two sides have not lost hope on a final outcome.

The main difference is over Iranian nuclear ambitions. During Ahmadinejad's period things had acquired such a shape that the global powers had become suspicious about the nuclear programme. Though Ahmadinejad did not take any action against any country but his statements had damaged Iranian credibility in the world. Hassan Rouhani on the other hand, is a moderate leader and has the confidence of the Supreme Leader that can help in repairing the damage inflicted by the previous government.

John Kerry has cautioned against being hopeful about the negotiations. Moreover, the Iranian leadership has also said that one needs to be cautious with the negotiations and should not be hopeful of a positive outcome. At the same time, he has expressed his disappointment against hard-line leaders and the clergy who had criticized the government's position on the nuclear issue.

It is clear that Iran will not give up on its rights to continue with its nuclear programme. It has to enhance uranium for medicinal purposes. Hassan Rouhani has stated in the parliament that it would not compromise on its nuclear programme for peaceful purposes. Rouhani knows the Iranian red line in the negotiations. The next phase of negotiations can prove to be successful. Israel has been one of the roadblocks towards securing any positive outcome in the negotiations. Israel wants Iran to be forced to disband its nuclear programme completely while Iran wants to continue with its peaceful nuclear programme within the scope of the limitations of the NPT.

Source: <http://etemaaddaily.com/epapers/?date=2013-11-11>

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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