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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, 17 January 2014, Friday

1. Egypt – American Double Standard

The US has indicated that it may resume the aid to Egypt that is under suspension since the overthrow the democratically elected Morsi government by the military. This had been done to give an impression that the US is against military rule in Egypt. The budget for the new financial year has an allocation of US\$1.5 billion for Egypt, which is likely to get the approval of the Congress soon. If the allocation for Egypt is approved then it would be a departure from its demarcated stand.

The American double standard with respect to democracy and military rule is nothing new. It depends on its interest that it will support a democratic government or a military ruler. However, it keeps military rulers under pressure to restore democracy, but the intensity of is dictated by prevailing situation and its interest. The same applies to Egyptian situation. It refused to come to the rescue of Hosni Mubarak at the time of people's uprising because it had read the mood of the people, thus it supported the protestors and subsequent democratic process. The policies followed by Morsi government towards the Palestinian issue and its zeal towards implementation of Islamic system in Egypt, however, alienated the US, but it chose to not make its displeasure apparent. The policies pursued by Morsi government were taken as against the interests of the US and Europe. In fact, many Muslim countries also became sceptical with the way Morsi was working and the Muslim Brotherhood's brand of

political Islam was gaining popularity. The reason was that such a combination of Islamism and democracy set off danger alarms for monarchical and dictatorial regimes in the neighbourhood. This is the reason why none of the Arab countries came in support of Morsi when the Egyptian military illegally removed him from office and took over the government. Although the US was cautious, it did suspend aid to Egypt as a pressure tactic towards restoration of democracy. However, it did not suspend diplomatic ties with the military rule. If one goes by the bilateral visits between the interim military government and the US officials, it becomes apparent that the military has full backing of the US administration. The budgetary allocation of aid to Egypt is part of the same policy. Some observers have argued that this step has been taken after measures taken towards the restoration of democracy in Egypt. The question, however, is that what are these measures? Is the referendum on the constitution draft prepared by the military a step towards democracy? It is in fact a deception strategy of the military government. In such a situation the American decision to resume the aid to Egypt is nothing but a testimony of its double standards.

Source: <http://roznamasahara.samaylive.com/Details.aspx?id=78716&boxid=2829154>



The Siasat Daily (The Politics Daily), Hyderabad
Editorial, 19 January 2014, Sunday

2. Unabated Violence in Iraq

Iraq has witnessed a renewed wave of violence with a number of blast and suicide attacks ripping the country apart. The number of dead, injured and internally displaced people is growing. The sudden intensification in attacks comes after a relative phase of less violence. A number of roadside blasts, attacks on religious and social congregations, suicide bombings have led to large number of deaths. No place, be it markets, religious sites, offices, public transport or even private homes, are safe. Children and women have also not been spared. The situation was not better when US forces were stationed in the country but some observers are saying that the recent intensity in violence is a result of the void created by the American withdrawal of forces. The US, however, has made it clear that it will not bring back its forces under any circumstance but is ready to help the Iraqi government. It cannot be ruled out that some external hands are involved in this renewed phase of violence because it serves their purpose. The Iraqi government has failed in controlling the situation, which is worsening ever day.

The government has not taken any concrete step to curtail violence; in fact it may not be in a position to do anything because of its limited control. Iraq has become a breeding ground for those extremists who are operating in the name of al-Qaeda, while some so called Sunni militant organisations claim to be struggling against a Shia government. On top of it, tribal militias claiming to be fighting in support of the government have cropped up. The government does not have any control over these groups. These groups are apparently supported by external actors who have vested interests in Iraqi instability. The aim is to prevent any reconciliation among Iraqis. These vested interests have sparked old rivalries and fuelled new problems between various groups and factions inside Iraq leading to diminishing possibility of any recovery soon.

The most important task at hand for the government of Iraq is to make efforts to make these groups shun violence and pave ground for some sort of a dialogue among these groups and factions. The bloodshed has benefitted only those external forces who are enemies of Iraq. These groups and their leadership should seriously think about what they have achieved through violence and bloodshed. They will have to understand that by pursuing violence they have made the country vulnerable to external intervention. It is important that all factions and groups think in this direction and the government makes an effort to at least the major groups to shun violence and pursue the difference peacefully.

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The Siasat Daily (The Politics Daily), Hyderabad
Editorial, 24 January 2014, Friday

3. Syria - Peace Talks

Will the Assad government be removed by force, if the ongoing peace efforts fail in Syria? If that happens, it will lead to similar interventions in other Arab countries. Do the countries who support the US on Syria understand the problem? The foundations of the Geneva dialogue to find solution for Syria are based on shaky grounds. Former Secretary General of the UN Kofi Annan had resigned as its special envoy to Syria after failing to achieve any success. Now the new UN representative Lakdhar Brahimi is making effort to meet various factions inside Syria. However, the Geneva dialogue has failed in bringing the government and rebels to negotiations table. The US has maintained its stand that Syrian situation cannot be resolved without Bashar al-Assad quitting power. The current regime is adamant not abandon with the president. Notably, many Arab countries support this stand and wish that the uprising in Syria meets the same fate as in Tunisia, Libya and Egypt. The situation in Syria is similar to Libya. What will happen if Bashar al-Assad is killed like Qaddafi and a puppet government is imposed on Syria?

This will benefit Israel and it will become the dominant country in the region. It is only because of the stand taken by Russia and China that the West has not succeeded on its designs in Syria. The Syrian Foreign Minister Waleed Muallem said during the Geneva Convention that peace will not have a chance until external forces do not stop arming the rebels. It is true that diplomacy and terrorism cannot go hand-in-hand. The West wants to utilize Syrian resources and make it the gateway to the Arab world. Representatives of 30 countries are participating in the convention but the statement by John Kerry has disappointed every one. He said that peace will elude Syria till Bashar al-Assad remains at the helm. The important question is that who are these rebels and from where are they getting financial support and arms? Are they fighting for the rights of the people of Syria or serving their masters sitting outside Syria? Hundred-thousand of people have been killed in Syria during the last three years. The civil-war threatens to destroy an entire generation of Syrians. The urgency with which peace negotiations should be pursued is missing in the external efforts. There is no point expressing sympathy with the situation of the people and not

making all out effort to bring the situation under control. It is important that all parties sincerely work towards a peaceful solution to the Syrian crisis without any preconditions.

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