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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 Etemaad Urdu Daily (The Confidence Urdu Daily), Hyderabad

Editorial, 1 May 2014, Thursday

1. Egypt Returning to Stone Age

The Egyptian military and judiciary are pushing the nation back to the Stone Age. Egypt boasts of a civilizational heritage older than many existing nations, which finds mention in almost all ancient religious sources. The current situation, however, reflects a different picture. After the fall of Mubarak, the Muslim Brotherhood had come to power through a free and fair election under the new constitution. This was a major achievement for a country that had been ruled by military dictators since it became a republic. The military and judiciary that have been part of the previous ruling elite did not like the newly elected government and waited for an opportunity to throttle it, which came soon after Morsi's government completed one year in office. The elected president was deposed, charged with sedition and put under arrest. Simultaneously, people who demonstrated against the deposement were forcefully dispersed. They were convicted on highly exaggerated charges of rioting and killing and awarded harsh punishments including death. As much as 12,000 were arrested on these charges and a court in the Egyptian city of Mina convicted 529 with capital punishment in March. The international reaction to the judgment was mild and encouraged by this the court convicted another 683 with capital punishment. Those awarded death penalty

Kerry blamed Israel for this lack of progress and said that it can lead to allegations of it being a racist state. The Jewish lobby in the US reacted sharply to the statement and given its influence it can even try to isolate him within the administration. The UN special envoy for the Israeli-Palestinian negotiations Robert Serry has also expressed similar sentiments putting the responsibility upon Israel for lack of any movement in the peace negotiations. At this stage, the Palestinian territory is divided into two pieces of land. Due to a broken mandate in the last parliamentary elections both have a different ruling group; while West Bank is administered by Fatah, Gaza Strip is under Hamas. Israel and the US are very happy with the situation. Hamas is not recognized as a legitimate representative of the Palestinian people. They negotiated with Fatah leader and Palestinian Authority President Mahmoud Abbas who neglected the mandate of the majority of Palestinians and went ahead with the negotiations and cooperation with Israeli and US authorities. Despite this nothing could come out of these negotiations because the US and Israel are not serious about Palestinian state. Now Abbas has announced unity with Hamas. Although there have been efforts in the past such as in Mecca and Cairo to bring the two groups together, it never materialized. Now the situation has come to such that the two ideologically opposite groups with a mutually overlapping goals have announced their intentions to work together.

The unity among Palestinians is disliked by the US and Israel because it has the potential to alter Israeli designs. The unity between Hamas and Fatah is historical. It is also a test for the UN to work towards Palestinian statehood without American influence. With John Kerry reacting sharply to Israeli behaviour, if the UNSC passes a resolution on racist nature of Israeli state, the resolution to the conflict will become easier. Previously, a similar stand against racist states like South Africa and Rhodesia had helped in resolving the conflicts in these states. It is also important that other international groups and regional organizations such as OIC, Arab League and NAM clarify their position on the Palestinian issue. It would be important that these groups use their influence in the UN and isolate Israel given that the US Secretary of State is of the view that it observes racist behaviour. Israel cannot fool the international community for long and is baffled by the unity among Palestinians. Given that the US is also expressing its concerns on Israeli behaviour, it may not be long when Palestine will get its due.

Source: <http://etemaaddaily.com/epapers/index.php?volid=5&issueid=417&date=2014-05-02&cat=General%20Pages&id=7254>

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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