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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, 16 June 2014, Monday

1. Dangers for Iraq and Syria!

The al-Qaeda sprinter known as Islamic State of Iraq and Syria (ISIS) has suddenly intensified its attacks inside Iraq leading to death and destruction in many cities. The ISIS aims at redrawing the borders in the region and wishes to establish an Islamic state joining Iraq and Syria, which if realized, would be a major destabilizing force for West Asia. The West is blaming Iraqi President Nouri al-Maliki for failing to maintain law and order which led to the current situation. Iraqi military surrendered meekly before the ISIS. Moreover, he did not take any step to gain confidence of the restive Sunni population. On the other hand, the ISIS has continued make rapid advances and has taken over Sunni-dominated governorates of Anbar and Saladin. Although the situation seems to be improving now with the military gaining some ground and strengthening the security around Baghdad, it remains precarious. Meanwhile, with appeals from Ayatollah Sistani large numbers of Shia civilians have taken up arms and have been deployed at check posts outside Baghdad. It has helped in regaining the lost confidence among sections of population.

Iraq has a mixed Shia and Sunni population; though the majority are Shias, as much as 35 percent belongs to Sunni faith. A successful and acceptable government will have to create a balance with respect to the needs and demands of various people; however, the Maliki government disregarded this aspect and completely marginalized the Sunni population and their demands leading to discontent among Sunni tribes and in Sunni-dominated areas. Nouri al-Maliki was following a narrow and divisive policy at all levels of governance, including appointments in government services, and social services whereby only Shias were recruited in the security forces and police and only Shia-dominated areas received government welfare programmes. Even Kurdish commanders in some areas were removed and replaced with Shias belonging to the ruling Dawah party. What is happening in Iraq at this stage cannot be termed as a mere coincidence; it is a combination of ISIS and resistance by the Sunni population. It is a culmination of years of marginalization of Sunni tribes and the ISIS has now taken control of Sunni areas both in Syria and Iraq. The group has massive expansion plans and wishes to establish a state and expand to other areas in the Arabian Peninsula and North Africa.

The situation in Iraq has become so complex that the Western powers has started to feel uneasiness and is trying to move away from the conflict. They have become concerned about their security after threats of attack inside their borders. Barack Obama is not interested in stationing of the American forces in other countries like his predecessor George Bush but can grant permission for limited military action to deal with the ISIS and al-Qaeda. The US had attacked Iraq in 2003 with the aiming of removing Saddam Hussein, which it achieved and he was hanged while an elected government was placed in Iraq. It destroyed the Iraqi forces of the previous regime and created a new force comprising 800,000 personnel and with an expense of US\$20 billion, before it withdrew its military. Now it has become clear that the military that was prepared by the US cannot stand even an attack from a terrorist group. It seems the US will resort to aerial strikes to weaken the ISIS and confine to aerial strikes because of the domestic political situation. It is also unlikely that President Obama will want to get entangled into the Iraq quagmire again given that he came with a promise to get rid of the problem.

Source: <http://etemaaddaily.com/epapers/index.php?volid=5&issueid=462&date=2014-06-16&cat=General%20Pages&id=8022>



The Siasat Daily (The Politics Daily), Hyderabad

Editorial, 18 June 2014, Wednesday

2. The US and Iraq

The terrible outcome of the US policies to destabilize the Islamic world has started to reveal itself on the people throughout the world. The current turmoil in Iraq has exposed the mistake of US intervention in 2003. The leadership of the US including

former president George Bush, former Secretary of State Collin Powell and President Barack Obama are all responsible for the current turmoil. The current situation in Iraq and Syria are a cause of concern for the entire world together with the Muslim world. In fact Colin Powell had warned in 2003 about the void that would be created in Iraq due to deposition of Saddam Hussein but it was disregarded by Bush. Now when the warning seems to be taking a shape of reality, one wonders why Bush disregarded Powell's warnings. If the US would have heeded to Powell's report, the situation in Iraq could have been prevented from going in the current direction. Another military intervention in Iraq will make the matters worse.

Why is it that Iraq remains under fire 11 years after US intervention that promised to bring democracy and prosperity in Iraq? Why the peace loving people of the world have remained quite despite this failure? Vice President Joe Biden had advised that since Iraq is suffering from sectarian violence, it should be divided into states on sectarian and ethnic basis. This could be worst outcome and such reports and statements only reinforce the fact as to why the US wants to destabilize the Islamic world. Barrack Obama had taken anti-war stance since the beginning of his presidential bid. He has made withdrawal from Iraq as a major part of his 2008 presidential campaign. Some analysts say that his premature withdrawal is responsible for the current situation. Undoubtedly, the US policy of not taking any concrete measures to tackle the problems in Iraq emerging out of its intervention is responsible for the deterioration.

The US's Iraq policy has now come under strong criticism and Obama too has come under attack for a lacklustre exit plan from Iraq. The people of Middle East are paying with their blood for the mistakes made by Western leaders, while this does not seem to bother any of the global human rights organizations. The advances made by al-Qaeda's affiliates in Iraq have exposed the weak foundations of the state. The regime of Nouri al-Maliki that has ruled over Iraq for eight years now too has failed in effectively dealing with the challenge. It is important to take action to improve the situation and work towards bringing peace in Iraq. The Iranian support should be sought to deal with the problem. The situation is fast moving towards disaster and the violence has not only put the people of Iraq in danger but also threatens the life of expatriate workers including many Indians.

Source: <http://www.siasat.com/urdu/news/%D8%B5%D8%AF%D8%B1-%D8%A7%D9%85%D8%B1%DB%8C%DA%A9%DB%81-%D8%A7%D9%88%D8%B1-%D8%B9%D8%B1%D8%A7%D9%82>



Roznama Rashtriya Sahara (National Sahara Daily), Delhi

Editorial, 22 June 2014, Sunday

3. Indians in Iraq

The strife in Iraq has intensified, which has affected the foreign workers who had taken jobs in the country, including 40 Indians apart from people from various nationalities. There are a number of national and international aspects of the problem. The idea that terrorism will end with the killing of Osama bin Laden has proved to be a pipedream. The current turmoil in Iraq has its roots in the civil war that has raged Syria during last three years. In fact it would not be wrong to say that the responsibility of the strife rests with the US. It is no surprise that countries that remain out of bound of the US influence or those that refuse to follow its dictates fall into civil war and strife. It then provides active support to the rebels who take arms to fight against the hostile regime. This is what happened in Syria and a similar story had been witnessed in Libya and the most dangerous aspect of such help from the US is the provision of deadly weapons.

To keep the flame of war raging, the US provides the rebels with advanced and sophisticated weaponry, which then are sold in black market. For example, the weapons that were supplied to Afghan Mujahedeen were later found to being sold in markets in many Asian countries. There is another important angle; there is no doubt that President Obama truly wanted to pull out of Iraq but the same cannot be said about the administration. They were looking for reasons to intervene in Iraq. After al-Qaeda they were looking for another excuse to continue with their military presence in the Arab-Muslim world. This is perhaps the reason that now we are hearing that the ISIS is responsible for the situation in Iraq, which is more dangerous than al-Qaeda and is led by a person even more evil than Laden, Abu Bakr al-Baghdadi. Strangely, now body had heard of any such individual before. Even if it is not his real name, can it be said that the US intelligence agencies did not have any idea about him? Such individuals who can pose threat to a state and its interest are kept on the radar of intelligence agencies and are asked to keep track of his actions and movements. Nevertheless, the situation has become very complex and it's difficult to predict its direction at this stage. What is clear is that the Maliki government has completely failed in taking control of the situation. Reportedly, the rebels are fast closing in on Baghdad and preparing for an attack on the capital city, which undoubtedly will lead to a raging war.

Obama has stated that the US will not sit idle, which means that the US is contemplating another military intervention in Iraq. If it happens, it would be completely baseless because even if it is a raging strife, it has not directly affected the US. Prime Minister Maliki has lost his legitimacy and now he is regarded as puppet of the US. One of the solutions being proposed is to remove him and bring Sunni groups to negotiations table. Nobody knows what will happen but what can be said for sure is that if the rebels reach Baghdad, no Arab country will remain free from the flames of the fire. The situation is also a problem for Iran but it cannot afford to make a direct intervention which is what the US wants. An analogy of the 1980 Iraqi attack on Iran can be seen here, and the US statements to stand in support of Iran are just a trap. The US administration wants to give the strife a Shia-Sunni colour and destabilize the entire Muslim world, which should not be allowed. So far as the question of trapped Indians is concerned, we wish the government of India takes required steps to bring them back with safety.

Source: <http://roznamasahara.samaylive.com/Details.aspx?id=98819&boxid=2629359>



The Siasat Daily (The Politics Daily), Hyderabad

Editorial, 24 June 2014, Tuesday

4. John Kerry in Iraq

It would not be surprising if the John Kerry's Iraq visit is accompanied with spur in violence. Kerry who met the Iraqi as well as Kurdish leaders should know the extent to which they can be helpful in dealing with the security challenges. The insurgent groups are well prepared for a long haul. The speed of Islamic State of Iraq and Syria fighters has surprised the world and clearly indicates that they are well trained. On the other hand, the way Iraqi security has surrendered raises questions about the training that was imparted to them by the US since 2003. The ISIS has taken control of many provinces and has captured strategic installations inside Iraq. The US has been reluctant to take action against the groups which indicates that there are some hidden aspects of the issue. Questions have been raised about the military command of the ISIS. The group has gained an upper hand against the Iraqi security forces and has even taken over the largest oil-refinery. It has also gained control of borders with Syria and Jordan. How far Kerry's visit would be fruitful, is yet to be seen. The US certainly does not want to see ISIS take further control in Iraq. However, so far it has remained muted in its approach and looks that it wants to take the negotiations route rather than go for an all out war. The situation in Iraq might not be linked to the events in Syria because it gives an impression that somehow these insurgents want better governance. It would also be wrong to term the ISIS as a small group with a limited approach and not take any action. The way things have developed so far, it indicates that the group has a potential to create more nuisance within Iraq and beyond. The Nouri al-Maliki government too is responsible for the situation which has partially emerged due to its narrow policies. If the situation is left to be resolved on its own, Iraq might never be able to recover from the damage it may cause. Kerry should take stock of the situation on the ground. The situation is turning grave and the US President has also remained non-committal towards taking any concrete action. It is important that the US take proper stock of the situation now and finds a solution as it will become more difficult with every passing day.

Source: <http://www.siasat.com/urdu/news/%D8%AC%D8%A7%D9%86-%DA%A9%DB%8C%D8%B1%DB%8C-%DA%A9%D8%A7-%D8%AF%D9%88%D8%B1%DB%81%D9%94-%D8%B9%D8%B1%D8%A7%D9%82>



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

Editorial, 25 June 2014, Wednesday

5. No Signs of Change of Leadership in Iraq!

The US had proposed a joint representative government of Shias, Sunnis and Kurds in Iraq to deal with the emergent situation. The proposal had gained support of all sections of leadership including Ayatollah Sistani. The US has refused to send its troops to fight the Islamic State rather has agreed to send its military advisor. Later to discuss a replacement for Prime Minister Nouri al-Maliki, US Secretary of State John Kerry visited Arab capitals but it seems that his plan did not get further approval. The main reason behind this could be the fact that the Islamic State has taken control over large territory and it would not be wise to have a compromise at this stage. Nonetheless, a large section of Shias in Iraq also favoured removal of Maliki as he has appropriated power in his hands and in the process sidelined many other leaders.

The US has also lost some of its sheen since 2008 when it had deployed nearly 80,000 soldiers to prevent civil war in Iraq. The US was aware that after the fall of Saddam, the Shia leadership will sideline Sunnis. Before it withdrew its forces, it lost nearly 45,000 soldiers and billions of dollars. This had impacted the domestic public opinion which also prevents the US to take the mantle of global policeman. Its foreign policy has also gravitated from military-cantered approach to trade-cantered. Moreover, it has also lost its economic might to other emerging economies.

The Arab leaders mostly depended on the US to deal with domestic and regional problems in the post-Second World War scenario but things have started to change now. Barack Obama has become so cautious that he wants to commit only 275 personals to Iraq apart from the missile carrier that the US has stationed. The situation is precarious and Iran has also committed all cooperation with the US to save Iraq, which is an interesting turn of events, given the history of the US-Iran problems.

Increasing number of US Congressmen and Arab allies such as Saudi Arabia and UAE are putting pressure on the US administration to stop its support of the Maliki government. They want him to be replaced with a more acceptable leader. He has also lost favour among senior officials whom he seems to have enraged with his irresponsible statements. Maliki has attended a meeting of Shia and Kurd leaders to form a more representative government under pressure from the US but it is uncertain what transpired in the meeting. The US and Arab governments are of the view that it did not lead to any useful result mainly because Maliki is not ready to give representation to Sunni leaders. The situation in Iraq is fast becoming

threatening for the neighbouring countries of Saudi Arabia, Turkey and Jordan as the Islamic State wishes to change the map of Middle East.

Source: <http://etemaaddaily.com/epapers/index.php?volid=5&issueid=471&date=2014-06-25&cat=General%20Pages&id=8176>



The Siasat Daily (The Politics Daily), Hyderabad

Editorial, 30 June 2014, Monday

6. Safety of Indian Expats in Iraq

India needs to be concerned about the safety of its nationals in Iraq amidst growing uncertainties in the country. The Ministry of Home Affairs (sic) has called a meeting of all Indian ambassadors in the Gulf countries and sought to review the safety of Indian nationals in the region specially Iraq. Nearly 10,000 Indians are reported to be working in Iraq at this stage and it will require a concentrated effort of all our envoys in the region to bring these Indians back home safely. It is also important to think of forming a permanent fund for such eventualities in the future. Safety has remained a major concern for people working in the Gulf countries but the government has not taken any appropriate action. It is important that the envoys in the region keep a plan ready for emergency situation given the unstable situation in the region. The Indian envoy in Iraq has not been able to meet Indian workers who are stuck in areas where violence has erupted. It is important that emergency funds are provided by the Ministry of External Affairs to deal with the situation and bring back all Indians in Iraq. It should have been done in the early days when the situation had started to become violent but yet were under control; but nothing was done. It has been reported that nearly 150 Indians are stuck in war zones in Iraq, while other reports say that some 50 were taken out safely. Funds have remained a major constraint for the Indian embassy in Iraq to take proper measure. Moreover, some Indians have been kidnapped by the rebel groups, which is a major concern. The ministry and other government bodies have now shown some activity to take appropriate measures after the family members of those who have been kidnapped approached the central government. Nearly four million Indian workers are reported to be residing in the Gulf and their security is one of the responsibilities of the government. Different government agencies including the Prime Minister's Office should work in tandem with the embassies in these countries to ensure the safe return of Indians. Preventive measures would have been taken to ensure their safety. It is indeed a major challenge for the government. The new government will have to take stock of its policy towards the region to determine its level of engagements with countries in the region. It seems the necessary co-ordination between various departments and ministries of the government is lacking which has led to the current situation.

Source: <http://www.siasat.com/urdu/news/%D8%B9%D8%B1%D8%A7%D9%82-%D9%85%DB%8C%DA%BA-%DB%81%D9%86%D8%AF%D9%88%D8%B3%D8%AA%D8%A7%D9%86%DB%8C%D9%88%DA%BA->

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