

FROM THE URDU PRESS

No. 17

13-25 Rabi al-Awwal 1432 Hijri 16-28 February 2011

[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 concur with their accuracy or views. *Editor, MEI@ND*]



Dawat Online (Invitation), New Delhi

Editorial, 16 February 2011, Wednesday

1. Delicate Moment

The commitment and determination exhibited by the people of Egypt has started to show results, first of which is an end to Mubarak's dictatorial reign. People are paying tributes to him but some sections of people are extremely saddened with his departure. They are a concerned lot now, suffering from a variety of apprehensions and are running around to find an audience. They had some problem during Mubarak's period but another problem has captured their imagination after Mubarak left. They were first occupied with the thought of what if this storm blows away others with Mubarak. They made efforts to keep the loss limited. They wanted to control this storm with least possible sacrifice. Their concerns grew with time and they tried to make Mubarak understand the urgency of the moment and accept the demands of people. They knew that it is better to accept the demands of people, as the loss could be as bigger if action is delayed. Even though the closest neighbour of Egypt, Israel, was not ready to face minimal loss; they did not want to see such sad departure to a close friend. So Israel made its differences clear with the world which was advising Mubarak to leave and respond to the people's demand. But

Israel's this wish could not be realised. It threw tantrums like a stubborn child but nothing could be done.

The end for Mubarak was almost certain for some people, but was his departure the goal of this people's movement? The continuation of this movement indicates that it was not the ultimate goal, rather this was the first step, the main goal being the end of repression from the entire region. This suppression would end only with the end of external influence. A political system reflecting the wishes of people should be established. This protest movement in Egypt is an outcome of people's wishes and does not represent any particular ideology. All sections of the Egyptian society are part of this movement. This could not even be divided into minority against minority. Copts stood hand in hand with Muslims in these demonstrations. It is hard to divide them now. The sacrifice, unity and determination of people made it possible for the movement to come out successfully from a decisive phase but have brought it to a very delicate turn of time. There are forces working to derail this movement and this is a delicate moment for this movement. The people and the new leadership, particularly the military leadership, should work for the ultimate goal. The goal is yet to be achieved and the road is long. The real success could be achieved only through consistent efforts without taking a nap of rest and waging through the toughest of the testing times.

Source: http://dawatonline.com/Archive_Editorial.aspx?sDate=16-feb-2011



Dawat Online (Invitation), New Delhi

Editorial, 19 February 2011, Saturday

2. Iran Again on Target

The West is targeting Iran again and wants to prosecute it for Egypt's crime. Iran is a soft target because there is no harm in browbeating it, because nobody will make them accountable for Iran. Iran will not get support from any corner and if it gets it would hardly affect the West. It would be very safe to act against Iran and there would be no need to be careful about the side-effects. So everybody is bashing Iran and pushing the Iranian leadership to the edge. They are being threatened and warned of the outcome. The media and the Western governments all are ready to pounce upon Iran. The US, Britain, France, Germany and the entire West supported the opposition demonstration on 14 February in Tehran and criticized the government for acting against them. The American Secretary of State Hillary Clinton said that the people should be allowed to express their grievances and Iran should give its people the same freedom it advocates for other Middle Eastern countries. The Iranian leadership not only supported the people's movement in Egypt but also said that it has been inspired by the 1979

Iranian revolution. Iran had expressed its desire to expand its revolution and export it to other countries which was vehemently criticized by one and all. Those who admired it also got cautious with such statements. It was obvious that those who could be affected with it were uncomfortable with such plans. The Egyptian revolution has evoked similar sentiments. Incidentally, it was also the occasion of anniversary of the Iranian revolution. The designs to put a brake on this revolution continued and gained momentum when the revolutionary Iran started its efforts to acquire nuclear power, which has annoyed its adversaries.

Since then the enemies of Iran are looking for an opportunity to strike Iran and continuing with their designs to destabilize the Iranian government. They want a like-minded and friendly government in Tehran, which will work to implement their policies. It was tried during the last elections that a 'moderate' group comes to power, and the Western governments together with their think tanks worked to achieve this target. Their propaganda machinery worked in tandem with the Western media. The US, Britain, France and Germany were all working together to corner Iran. All wanted Iran to keep away from trying to acquire nuclear capabilities either through political isolation, economic sanctions or by any means, but they have failed until now. They have imposed sanctions but desirable results have eluded these sanctions. Iran's nuclear programme is dangerous as it provides precedence for others. They have already been termed it as part of the 'axis of evil.' Iran's influence in the Middle East is growing; it has friendly relations with Hezbollah in Lebanon, its influence in Iraq is also growing and relations with Syria are improving as well. It has some influence in Central Asia too. It has some influence in Afghanistan, and it is feared that Iran can alter their steps for its own interest. Now when the wind of change is blowing in Middle East, these fears have grown. They want to keep Iran involved within its boundaries so it should be kept busy inside which can help make their task easy.

Source: http://dawatonline.com/Archive_Editorial.aspx?sDate=19-feb-2011



Roznama Rashtriya Sahara (National Sahara Daily), New Delhi

Editorial, 20 February 2011, Sunday

3. The Impacts of Egyptian Revolution

The US and Israel would not have thought of change in Egyptian foreign policy so soon, but the interim government in Egypt had put both its close friends on a spot by taking independent decisions on two important issues. These decisions look small but the

message is big, resultantly the Israeli authorities are a worried lot. The US and Israeli reactions were also immediate.

The first surprising decision was to allow the passage of two Iranian warships through the Suez Canal. The military sources in Egypt informed that there is a consensus among authorities to allow the passage of Iranian warships through the Suez Canal. The official Egyptian television channel and news agency have reported it without mentioning the source. Egypt has a peace agreement with Israel and neither of them have diplomatic relations with Iran. Before the Islamic revolution Iran had good diplomatic and trade relations, but after the toppling of Reza Shah Pahlavi Iran broke all its ties with Israel and closed the Israeli high commission in Tehran. Later Iran's relations with Egypt also deteriorated because Egypt supported the Shah's regime (the first wife of the Shah of Iran was from Egypt) and the Shah was given shelter in Egypt where he later died. Another point of departure between Iran and Egypt was Egyptian compromise on the issue of Palestine and its peace deal with Israel which made Egypt the biggest friend of Israel in the Middle East. Egypt was against the Islamic revolution of Iran and considered revolutionary Iran as an enemy. Another important thaw in the relations was the respect Muslim Brotherhood earned in revolutionary Iran. The ideology of the Muslim Brotherhood and its founder Hassan al-Banna and Sayyid Qutb played an important role in the Islamic revolution of Iran. On the contrary, the Brotherhood was banned in Egypt and assassination of their leaders was a favourite pastime of Egyptian politicians. The passage of Iranian warships through the Suez Canal was a difficult decision to take, but by allowing the passage of Iranian warships the interim government of Egypt has signalled to the US and Israel what lies ahead as far as Egypt's relation with its neighbours are concerned. It is an indication that the people of Egypt want to have cordial relations with Muslim countries. Expectedly, Israel has termed it as outrageous while the US has termed the Iranian step as irresponsible behaviour. What is outrageous about this step? Warships from all around the world pass the Suez Canal, what mistake has the Egyptian authorities made in allowing the Iranian warships? Perhaps the irresponsible behaviour is that the Egyptian government did not take orders from the US and Israel.

Now the Western friends of Israel are trying to find out whether it is just a small signal or Egypt's Middle East policy will witness a big change after taking over of the interim government?

Another important decision was the opening of Rafah border crossing connecting the Gaza Strip on humanitarian grounds so that the Palestinians in Egypt can return home. The Rafah crossing connects the Gaza Strip, governed by the Islamic group Hamas, to Egypt's Sinai Peninsula. Mubarak was forced to relinquish the presidency and within a week the crossing was opened for the first time. The Mubarak government was helping Israel in blockading the Gaza Strip. The Egyptian government was constructing two underground iron walls to block the passage of arms and goods to Gaza strip. The Egyptian authorities also rarely allowed the opening of borders for people's movement. This decision will certainly worry Israel and it will try to pressurize the Egyptian government.

The people of the Gaza Strip are pleased with the opening of Rafah crossing and take this as a relief particularly after establishment of democracy in Egypt. The Muslim Brotherhood will have

some say in the government which obviously will not follow the old policies, followed during Sadat's and Mubarak's reigns.

Source: <http://roznamasahara.samaylive.com/epapermain.aspx?queryed=9&eddate=02/20/2011>



Roznama Rashtriya Sahara (National Sahara Daily), New Delhi

Editorial, 21 February 2011, Monday

4. The US and Israel

The US has vetoed the UNSC resolution declaring the Jewish settlements in occupied Palestinian lands illegal. Israel has been building illegal settlements since 1967 and has rejected all international appeals and pressure to stop settlement construction.

Since Obama's taking over of the US presidency plots to solve the Israel-Palestine conflict have been scripted. The peace negotiations were part of the same plot. But what progress could be made; is Israel ready to accept a free and independent Palestine; has Israel changed its stance on illegal construction? These questions remain unanswered and are not hidden from the world. Washington reacted sharply when Israel announced the plan to revive the settlement construction after a nine month halt, immediately before the start of negotiations, indicating that it can affect the US-Israel relations. The visiting US Vice-President also had taken strong exception to the announcement of resumption of settlement construction, but later the US Secretary of State Hillary Clinton said that the US-Israel relations would not be affected in any case. The US as well as Europe have maintained that Israel should stop the settlement construction as it is illegal. But the US on the one hand talks about resolving the conflict and rights of Palestinians, while on the other hand it vetoes the UNSC resolution declaring these settlements illegal. The resolution declares the settlements constructed in occupied areas after 1967 as illegal and 14 out of the 15 members voted in favour of the resolution, demanding Israel to stop further construction. But the US vetoed the resolution putting the laughable excuse on table that it will affect the peace talks.

The peace talks were most affected by the continuation of settlement construction, the Palestinian Authority pulled out of the talks on this basis. The PA is pro-US and the most representative organization of Palestinians- Hamas- was deliberately kept out of the talks by the US and Israel. However, the PA not only pulled out of talks on this issue but has expressed its disappointment on the US veto saying that it will harm the peace talks. This is a proof of the American support to Israel. The US stand that it is against the building construction is laughable in the backdrop of its veto. This again proves that the United Nations has just become a front organization for the US and has failed to stand up to its responsibilities.

Source: <http://roznamasahara.samaylive.com/epapermain.aspx?queryed=9&eddate=02/21/2011>



Roznama Munsif (The Judge Daily), Hyderabad

Editorial, 23 February 2011, Wednesday

5. Libya after Tunisia, Egypt and Bahrain

The people's unrest has now spread to Egypt, Yemen, Bahrain and Libya after Tunisia's Jasmine revolution. The people of Libya now want an end to Muammar Qaddafi's 41 year rule and wish for democratic reforms. But unfortunately unlike Egypt Yemen, Bahrain and Libya are trying to suppress this people's uprising. Libya's Muammar Qaddafi is using extraordinary force against his people. The military is using live ammunitions against unarmed civilians. Thousands of protestors have been killed.

Qaddafi is a maverick and is famous for his unusual activities. Whenever he goes on a foreign visit he takes his tent along and stays in it. He has always remained attached to his tribe. He stayed in his tent on his visit to Paris and Rome. It is also said that he always keeps female bodyguards. Qaddafi captured power in 1969 in a coup. He termed himself as true successor of Nasser and tried uniting the Arab countries with the call to defeat the US and Israel.

It is the sixth day of popular protests in Libya. Some religious leaders have appealed to the military to not kill their own Muslim brothers. The people are also up in arms against the brutal crackdown of the Qaddafi regime. Like Mubarak, Qaddafi also wanted his son to succeed him. This revolt has also spread to Bahrain as well as Yemen, however, the bullets have failed to stop the protestors. The number of deaths has crossed 100 in Bahrain, while the protests in Yemen have also gained momentum. Ali Abdullah Saleh is also adamant that he will not leave the seat of power.

The US is most perturbed with the ongoing unrest in the Middle East. The European Union is also worried but it is limited to supply of oil. But the US also fears loss of its political influence in the region. If these revolutions become successful it will change the map of the region. The US would like to replace these regimes with its agents to protect the US and Israeli interest in Middle East. These revolutions could only be termed successful if they could establish true people's democracy in these countries and not puppet governments of the US and Israel.

Source: <http://www.munsifdaily.com/epaper/23feb/pages/page6/news1.html>



Roznama Rashtriya Sahara (National Sahara Daily), New Delhi

Editorial, 25 February 2011, Friday

6. People's Concern in Gaza Strip

Eighty percent of the one and a half million population of the Gaza Strip depends on foreign aid and Israel had blocked the movement of people and goods with Egyptian help which threatened the life of people. But things have improved after removal of Mubarak in Egypt. However, this has created a kind of suspicion among people in the West Bank who think this can lead to assimilation of the Gaza Strip with Egypt. One must remember that the Gaza Strip was under Egyptian control from 1948 to 1967. Some senior Israeli officials had stated that they wish that Egypt again takes control of the Gaza Strip. This can complicate the situation of Palestinians and ease the pressure on Israel.

The new Egyptian government has not completely opened its borders with the Gaza Strip because this would be akin to a complete assimilation with Egypt which is what Israel wants. This border was completely blocked in 2008 when Hamas broke it open and almost half the population of the Gaza Strip poured into Egypt. Egypt, however, has a very tough security system at the border.

The assimilation of the Gaza Strip with Egypt will also weaken the Palestinian movement and benefit Israel. Neither Hamas nor the new government in Egypt would like to weaken the Palestinian movement. Hamas rules over Gaza Strip and Fatah led PA rules over West Bank which has American and Israeli support.

Hamas has gained from the recent unrest in the region both in support and popularity and has rejected appeals from Abbas for a national unity government and elections. Hamas is demanding release of thousands of Hamas activists held in prisons in the West Bank and ending all cooperation with Israel. Hamas has refused to accept the conditions put up by Mahmoud Abbas. There are reports that even Hamas and PA may have to face popular protest like elsewhere in the region. But nothing of that sort has happened till now. A call for 'March for Unity' has been scheduled for 15 March in the Gaza Strip. This would appeal for unity among Hamas and Abbas-led PA. But PA has warned Hamas not to attach much hope with Egypt, while Islamists think that Hamas and the Brotherhood, if it comes to power in Egypt, will have very cordial relations.

Source: <http://roznamasahara.samaylive.com/epapermain.aspx?queryed=9&eddate=02/25/2011>

Compiled by Md. Muddassir Quamar

Md. Muddassir Quamar is a research student at the School of International Studies, Jawaharlal Nehru University. Email: muddassir.2005@gmail.com

As part of its editorial policy, the MEI@ND standardizes spelling and date formats to make the text uniformly accessible and stylistically consistent. The views expressed here are those of the author and do not necessarily reflect the views/positions of the MEI@ND. Editor, MEI@ND: P R Kumaraswamy