Blustering Arab Spring - What next for Israel? (Weekly Pulse)

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After the humiliating end of Qaddafi, Syria and Yemen are likely to become the next casualties of violent change sweeping the region coined as “Arab Spring” by the West. The humiliating end of Qaddafi must have sent ripples of shiver through other ailing monarchies in the region and thus compelling the Arab League to oust Syria from its member states. According to some western media reports, these uprisings had an element of sponsorship from the West, however under the prevailing circumstances, the prognosis of there revolt can be anything but a western dialect. The existing system of injustice, double standards and jingoism fashioned by the West through extending support to autocracies seems to be eventually paving the way for the Islamic forces to fill in the vacuum in the Arab world which could have serious implications for Israel and the West.

Global Muslim community doesn’t exist as a monolithic entity as generally perceived by the West. Despite being strongly united through a common faith and concept of Ummah, Muslims tune on to different socio-cultural frequencies and wavelengths around the globe. However, regardless of these socio-cultural variations, one issue remains at the centre of their heart: “the Palestinian issue”. As a result of this burning controversy, Israel has become synonym to abhorrence and hate for Muslim masses and an extremely unpopular political acrimony for the Muslim governments. A clear indicator of this growing isolation is evident from its deteriorating relationship with Egypt and Turkey. This Israeli isolation is not only limited to Muslim countries, rather there is a growing sense of frustration within the European and US capitals as well. The Israeli brutal, arrogant and ‘genocidal' behaviour toward Palestinians is completely in stark contrast with the so called ‘global liberal democratic values and norms', and thus, has finally started to bother the West.

This persistent stalemate over Palestinian issue since 1917 and the consistent Israeli brutalities under the auspice of the West has made Middle East as the epicentre of global terrorism. This sweeping nature of terrorism has shackled the world economy, and, as a consequence, the global financial system seems to on the verge of a collapse. Despite this turmoil and chaos, Islam still appears to be a resurgent force. Although
passing through a bloody transitional phase, it eventually would reach its zenith at some point and time in future. The Islamic governments in Iran, Turkey and most recently Tunis are the manifestation of this Islamic renaissance, and in future, a similar pattern may emerge in Egypt, Libya, Syria and elsewhere. This domino effect of crumbling monarchies in Middle East is being nervously witnessed by Israel with a deep sense of isolation. On the other hand, its nature of conflict with Iran is becoming more complicated with Russia and China refusing to impose further sanctions after the latest report by IAEA on Iranian nuclear programme. Meanwhile, some sane voices in Israel have started to call for a major policy shift towards the question of Palestinian statehood after reading the ‘writings on the wall’. They realize that the US mawkish support for Israel is waning and Europe too is becoming occupied with its fiscal woes, thus may not be willing to sacrifice its economic interests with the newly emerging pro-Islamic governments in Middle East just to stand high in eyes of the Jewish state.

If the current hardliner Israeli government refuses to heed these warnings, Israel might find itself braced in an unprecedented and a dangerous situation of international isolation, a completely hostile neighbourhood and a galore of Islamic militants galvanized by their comrades’ successes in Afghanistan, and Libya. Under these circumstances, either due to a miscalculation or an accident, the region could slip into a major war with devastating regional and globe consequences (Bashar ul Assad has just hinted about that). A situation so dangerous for Israel, that even the long awaited Jewish Messiah may not be able to manage. For Israel, the powerful non-state actors and militant groups have emerged as a force to be reckoned with. What would be the Israeli response if the unfolding events push region into a major war or if Israel goes ahead with its decision of pre-emptive strike on Iran? And therefore, all the new pro-Islamic states forge an alliance against Israel? Could Israel survive in such a situation and would it consider using the Samson option to risk its own survival at the cost of Palestine and few other Arab states? These questions will have to be explored in Israel.

There is yet another dimension of this emerging scenario. These winds of change blowing in the Middle East and elsewhere also provide a unique opportunity to transform the perceptions of Muslims regarding the US and Israel. If the US plays a role of an honest broker in Middle East by influencing the Israeli government to find a just and peaceful solution to the Palestinian issue, this would profoundly alter Muslim perceptions towards the US and the Jewish state. Recent Israeli-Hamas negotiations for the release of Gilad Shalit and prisoners swap can become an ideal opportunity and a start point for initiating a dialogue towards reaching an agreement over the two states solution. It, in no way, would be an easy task, but moving in the right direction would be the first and foremost requirement. Israel must realize that now, after waging oppression over Palestinians for almost 63 years, time is not on its side. These winds of change in Middle East warrant magnanimity and resolve which has to come from Israel. If this opportunity is missed by Israel and the US, it would become a thorn of repentance as both would emerge to be the biggest losers after the sweeping Arab Spring come to a logical end. The early the US and Israel realize this fact the better it would be for the world and the region. - Weekly Pulse.