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Bush's televised address on war in Iraq

President Bush's televised address of ultimatum to Saddam Hussein to leave with his two sons or face military action has miserably failed to lay out a cogent case for war against Iraq as the speech is nothing short of a corpus of contrived conundrum of lies, deception and hypocrisy.

He said the UN failed because, as he put it, 'some members of the Security Council publicly said that they would veto any resolution compelling disarmament of Iraq'. This is a white lie to mislead the American public and hoodwink international public opinion. It is a common knowledge that France and Russia wanted to veto any resolution which would not allow disarmament through the route of peace by the UN Inspectors but opted for military force. The second resolution on Iraq was withdrawn by its co-sponsors, America, Britain and Spain as it had no chance of support even from the nine non permanent members of the Security Council, let alone, from some of the permanent members including China. It is an irony that after having sidelined and emasculated the UN which represents international public opinion, President Bush should have referred to the UN as a device to prevent future aggressive dictators from destroying peace and security in the world precisely when he can be equally blamed for embarking on such a misadventure.

To justify his military action, he has tried to build up, unconvincingly, the case of a threat to American security from terrorist and al-Qaeda attacks from Iraq without substantiating any such claim of links of Iraq with terrorism. Again, his advice to the Iraqi Army and Intelligence outfit to leave a 'dying regime' and his warning to them of dire consequences of war crimes against them is a mean recourse to psychological war unbecoming of leader of a super power to demoralise and create disaffection among them. He has not said that he will abandon his military action if Saddam Hussein complies with his ultimatum. The world public opinion is most persuaded by his arguments for going to war against Iraq. The move sets a dangerous precedence for future US military interventions in any country, which it disapproves.

This unilateral and unprovoked military action without a UN mandate has no legitimacy and is a brazen act of aggression to whet imperialist ambition for unfettered control over oil resources in Iraq and in the Middle East and to make Israel safe.

Abdul Hannan
Dhanmondi, Dhaka

"Things to come"

I am delighted that you have chosen to include Paul Krugman's commentary in *The Daily Star* ("Things to come", March 20). Many consider him to be one of the best Opinion columnists of today Editor & Publisher named him as the "Columnist of the Year (2002)". His direct and lucid commentaries on Bush's policies are worthwhile reading for all the people holding different political ideology. Krugman's writing should be included in your Editorial Page and published regularly.

The Online readers of *The Daily Star* can look up www.pkarchive.org for more information about Paul Krugman.

Arahm Choudhury
Washington University, USA

"War on Iraq"

In reference to MA's letter "War on Iraq" (March 19), who encourages us to follow Bush, Blair and Aznar, the writer does not seem to care that thousands of lives will be lost in what s/he calls 'this splendid adventure'. When Bush says he has gone to war to liberate the Iraqi people, doesn't that sound like a fox expressing sympathy for the vulnerable chickens? MA does not seem to comprehend the underlying intentions of the fox.

I was touched by Arild Klokkehaug's ("How I will fight Bush", March 19). Arild, I think yours is a magnificent idea and I would like to join you in the fight against Bush. Imagine, every time we take a sip from a Pepsi can, we are contributing to the American cause! From now on, I will try to avoid American commodities as much as possible and purchase the closest substitute. This plan won't work if only one or two people participate, it requires active support of the masses of the world. So I invite anyone reading this letter to join the boycott of American goods and encourage their friends to do so too. This method may have little impact on Bush. But I do not want to be in the guilty role of a mere onlooker when innocent people are killed.

Munasir Kamal
Dhanmondi, Dhaka

There are reasons why Saddam should go

I don't question how Saddam came to power, how he formed the government or how he ran it. That is Iraq's internal affair. But the following matters should be considered:

1. After the fall of Reza Shah Pahlavi when Iran was in a most disorga-

nised shape Saddam unleashed an attack on that country for no good reason. The war lasted for 7/8 years killing thousands of people on both sides. This war produced nothing except for countless widows and orphans on both sides, injured and maimed thousands and enormous depletion of resources.

2. Again he without any provocation or reason attacked and occupied another Muslim country Kuwait. This time the whole world condemned his action, requested him to pull out and again he refused. Ultimately a multi-national coalition forced his army out of Kuwait conceding enormous casualties. Iraq then faced a UN led sanction causing immense suffering to Iraqi civilians.

3. Saddam's regime caused death to innumerable Iraqis who happen to dissent his method of running of state affairs. Thousands had to leave the country for the same reason.

4. He ordered the killing of his own son-in-laws whom he promised to pardon for their alleged crime of defection.

5. Lastly, he and his family members have so effectively established a tyrannical administration that no Iraqi can even dream of voicing a demand of regime change not to speak of implementing it.

M.S. Huq, Uttara, Dhaka

A blind with a vision

Monumental hypocrisy



The US has finally waged an illegal war in clear violation of the UN charter and in defiance of the real international community, i.e. the majority around the world. The other day Bush said that Iraq must not use its weapons of mass destruction (WMD), assuming if it has any, but yet the US is poised to use Daisy Cutters, MOAB, Cluster Bombs and "tactical" nuclear weapons. So, Iraq would be committing war crimes in self defence but it is perfectly legitimate for his forces to use any means necessary!

President Bush referred to the liberation of Iraq, are we now supposed to believe that corporate US, and former colonial nations like UK have become charitable institutions, driven by humanitarian reasons, but not for profit, power or oil!

If Mr Bush wants to convince Arabs/Muslims of his good intentions, he could start by liberating the Palestinians, Saudis, Kuwaitis and the Gulf region.

Yamin Zakaria, UK, London

So now President Bush is having another of his visions about Middle East occupation. It seems a bit inefficient and rather illogical to suddenly start worrying about Mid-East, at a time when Mr Bush has waged a war against Iraq! Don't you think this sudden change of heart (sorry, this new "vision") is another artificial and unrealistic garbage? I think so, and for good reason.

Last time Mr Bush needed a little support from his Muslim "friends", he came up with a very promising vision about Middle East. We never hear of that vision any more. What happened? Now again Mr Bush needs a little support from his Muslim allies and bingo, we have another vision! This just shows how useless and foolish Muslims are regarded by Bush administration.

Why is Bush trying to use the lives of some innocent Palestinian children for his career? What happened to all those hi-tech, powerful bombs? But the only reason why you are having more vision about Mid-East is because you need our land, our air-space and our support for your war. Nothing more. In fact, I can see how this new "peace plan" of yours is going to fail. As soon as your war on Iraq is over (or at least halfway) we will suddenly going to hear from you and that war criminal Sharon, that the Palestinians didn't keep their end of the bargain. As a result, the peace plan can't be implemented until the Palestinian authority reforms itself. In other words, give up all their land and leave Palestine forever.

Azad Miah
Oldham, UK

Major component of evil axis

Even having accepted that Saddam Hussein has violated UNSC resolution No. 1441, why Bush is in such a hurry for war? What about the resolutions about Palestine and Kashmir? Is it only oil that matters to morally bankrupt but otherwise wealthy America?

Mr. Blinx and his team reported that there was no WMD in Iraq as

claimed by Bush. Now it seems logical to believe that Iraq is not refunding the WMD which were given by war ideologue the US during '80s (a complaint which has been proven by Mr. Cook's resignation letter). The US must publish the list of WMD it gave to Iraq which will expose the US as a major component of the "evil axis".

M.U. Chowdhury
One-mail

Taxi fare hike

I own a Taxicab, the air-conditioned one. It runs on octane. On average, I earn about 1000 taka per day, excluding the daily fuel cost of around 600 Taka. My gross income is therefore about 30,000 taka per month. I pay about 6000 taka to my driver. Therefore, I am left with 24,000 taka per month, a small portion of that goes for maintenance of the cab.

I am a businessman. Still I believe that the taxi fare is already too high considering the fact that a huge number of taxis run on CNG where the net income is much higher than what I earn. Any rise in the fare will make it almost impossible for a most of the people to afford a taxi ride.

If possible the government should do something to slash the fare by establishing more CNG stations and converting facilities. In any case, there is no reason to increase the fare at the moment.

MA Ali

nobody in the government to give some good advise to the Communication Ministry so that they can feel the pulse of the people, particularly that of the women travellers.

We find it very hard to believe that there is any reasons whatsoever for any such increase when most taxis are converting to CNG and while most of the new taxis have factory-made CNG engines.

Mahi, on behalf of women travellers
Nikunja, Dhaka

We are already quite disturbed in the context of unthinkable policies and actions taken by our Communication Ministry with respect to 3-wheelers and rickshaws while there was no contingency arrangements for other transport facilities.

While we are convinced that taxicabs are making handsome margins everyday as many of our friends and relatives own taxicabs, it is hard to comprehend how the Ministry can entertain the vested interest of some businessmen by approving their proposal to increase taxi fare. We request the Ministry to take a strong position to safeguard the interest of the commuters.

Z Rahman
DOHS, Dhaka

It seems that our Ministry of Communication, the Minister in particular, is absolutely indifferent at the sufferings of the general citizen.

First, it banned 2-stroke autorickshaws without arranging necessary public transportation system, then banned rickshaws on the main roads ignoring the plight of thousands of commuters. And now they have raised the taxi fare!

We wonder for whom the Communication Ministry works for-- a handful of businessmen, we don't have much to say. But any sane person knows that taxicab business is the most profitable one available in the city now. Moreover, more and more taxicabs with CNG engines are coming. Therefore, there is hardly any reason for this fare hike.

It seems that a section of BRTA and the Communication Ministry is doing a great deal of disservice to the present government by making the ordinary citizen's life miserable.

Zahid Hasan
Dilu Road, Dhaka

We are alarmed at the news of taxi fare hike. This is absurd and makes no sense at all. Anyone with little idea of the taxicab business knows that a taxi owner earns a net income of minimum 700 taka per day. This is quite handsome return and with more CNG stations and conversion facilities in the near future, the profit margin will further increase.

We, the middle-class people, after the scooters and rickshaws are gone, largely depend on taxicab. Mr Minister, for goodness sake, don't make our life already devastated life even more miserable to make a few already wealthy people richer by approving the proposed taxicab fare hike.

Mohammed A Khan
Uttara, Dhaka

"Bangladesh's eastern strategy is excellent"

This is a response to Mr Mudanna's letter (March 12). We appreciate that you read Bangladesh newspaper and keep yourself up to date with Bangladesh foreign policy. However, anyone who knows history will agree that you are terribly misinformed.

First, having an improved relationship in military and other sectors does not mean we are going to be engaged in military conflict with India. Bangladesh as a nation has always been peaceful and our defence policy has always been defensive not offensive.

Next comes the economic issue. You might not be aware of the fact that Bangladesh signed SAPTA treaty with other South Asian

countries. In order to fulfil its promise Bangladesh gave access to a lot of Indian products. What India did it in return? As usual they did not live up to their part of the promise.

As far as Muslims and Hindus are concerned, some sporadic incidents did take place where minority people were treated badly. And we are sorry about that. But we treat the minority not as minority but as a part of the society.

Hasan Mir
Winona State University, USA

I was amused to see letters from Indian nationals defending the actions of their leaders in their propaganda against Bangladesh.

I would like to reiterate that Bangladeshis, like all peace loving people of the world, cherish and desire good relations with their neighbours. But we draw the line where neighbours start behaving like the proverbial 'Big Brother' and expect us to toe the line at the expense of our pride, our national interest, our industries and religious and cultural identities.

It is true that relations between the two countries are at an all-time low and it is to the detriment of both countries. The fact is, India did not act in a spirit of co-operation when it refused to send Bangladeshi criminals back to face justice. Nor are Indian leaders' comments about Bangladesh being used by IST to launch terrorist activities in India particularly neighbourly, especially when they have never been able to provide any evidence. BSF are known to attack both BDR personnel and ordinary Bangladeshi villagers along our common border. The less said about India's recent attempts to push-in Bengali speaking Muslims into Bangladesh the better.

India needs to sort out its own problems without trying to lay the blame on a third party.

F Hussain
UK

A lot of discussion seems to be taking place about the direction of Bangladesh's foreign policy. The answer is clear: Bangladesh should take the policy that best benefits Bangladesh.

Our national psyche always seems to take a bipolar theme in choosing anything. For the most part, Bangladeshis seem to be hung up with two political parties. We seem to favour only two soccer teams. We only seem to think our foreign policy has to be either pro-India or pro-Pakistan. Of course this is an over-simplification on my part, but there may be some merit in realising this characteristic about ourselves. I, for one, think that this polarity is not well suited for a maturing nation. We have other options. Both Pakistanis and Indians look at us with an appalling degree of condescension. Most Indians take it for granted that Bangladeshis will speak Hindi; most Pakistanis think we would speak Urdu.

Why? Most likely because we go out of the way to be friendly with our neighbours. India and Pakistan would be deserving of our attention if we were afforded the respect we deserve. We are an independent nation. Speak to us as a sovereign state, not some puppet state.

Wasim Choudhury
New York, USA

Khaleda Zia and the zoo

I am so happy to see that after so many reports in the papers Khaleda Zia finally found time to see the zoo for herself and even made that pithy comment, "why do they look so weak?" (March 18).

I wish the PM had visited zoos in other countries on her travels because then she might have realised that the conditions in our zoo are criminally bad. They are kept in small, damp cages with urchins poking at them with sticks and visitors throwing food or shouting at the animals all day.

By choosing not to fly on Boeing and McDonnell Douglas on any route. Ask for aircraft type. Choose Airbus.

Let 'MADE IN USA' stay in USA only.

Masood Rahman
Gulshan Avenue, Dhaka

Thank you Mr. Arild Klokkehaug for the war he waged against Bush. I am with him and I have to be him.

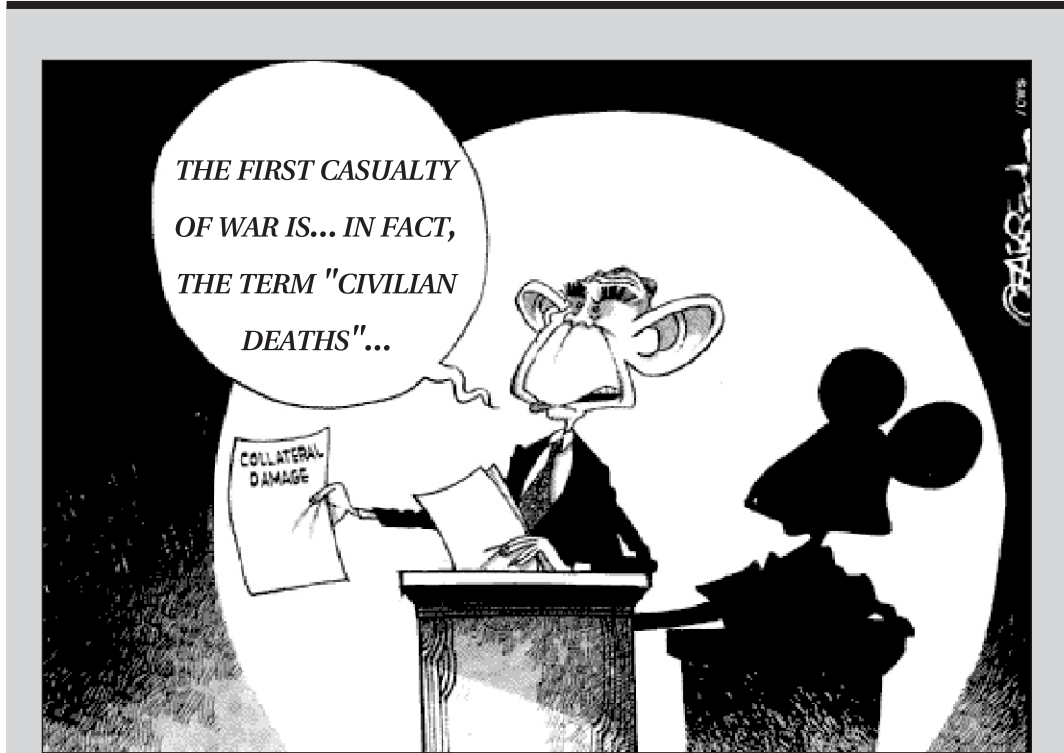
If the US can throw away French wine and boycott all French and German products, then why can't we? We have alternatives to US products, many of them are our own. The key is, just for once we have to determined not to use any US product.

Musfiqur Rasheed
Dept. of Accounting and Information Systems, DU

Arild Klokkehaug states in his e-mail what the entire world should have threatened to do long before.

The best way to ensure that international rule of law is upheld is to initiate sanctions against those nations that support and will take part in the illegal invasion of Iraq. These countries are the United States of America, the United Kingdom, Spain, Australia to name a few. When the businesses feel the pinch, they will turn directly to the White House, Downing Street etc. for answers.

The global market, of which the US dominates, can be used to the advantage of those nations who sought a peaceful resolution to this crisis. As preposterous as it seems, if each and every one of us holds off on products from these nations, then it may final drive a message home.



Today I weep for Iraq!

March 20th 2003 is a sad day for the world as we helplessly watch America and Britain defy the UN and the world opinion and attack a weaker and defenceless country-- Iraq.

In an age where "war" become live media events, we watch in horror and utter disbelief, a coalition of the two most powerful nations in the world getting together with its huge arsenal of weapons of mass destruction and armies and waging a so-called "war" against Iraq.

It is like witnessing an execution as CNN, BBC, Fox and Sky News networks give us minute by minute coverage of the destruction caused as the war unfolds.

The prayers of millions and millions of people are going out to those innocent Iraqis besieged and helpless, betrayed by its neighbours, stranded by the UN to face unprecedented sufferings and humiliation.

All though President Bush and Prime Minister Blair insist that they have waged

this war to wipe out a dangerous dictator and to fight terrorism, it is now very clear that they have long-term plan to control the oil resources of Iraq and establish its control over the Middle East.

By attacking Iraq, these two-world leaders will go down in history as one of the most unpopular and detested leaders to come out of the so-called "Free World".

As Sen. Robert Byrd. Said, "Today I weep for my country. No more is the image of America one of strong, yet benevolent peacekeeper. ... Around the globe, our friends mistrust us, our word is disputed, our intentions are questioned. We flaunt our superpower status with arrogance.

After the war has ended the United States will have to rebuild much more than the country of Iraq.

We will have to rebuild America's image around the globe."

Farhan Quddus
Banani, Dhaka

Naushad Amin
Dallas, Texas, USA

Widening of road dividers

After a long period the city roads are being repaired. Along with this good sign there is also an alarming one. City Corporation has started to widen the road dividers. Widening of road dividers will only reduce precious road space. My question to the authorities concerned is what is the need of squeezing the road space, (road safety? beautification?) when you know you can never increase it in future?

Streamlining traffic should include something beyond realignment, redesigning of physical structures only.

Fahad Saleh
Baramoghbar, Dhaka

"Ganguly, the great!"

Mr. Anwar Zahed's letter "Ganguly, the great" (March 18) is basically an abridged version of Nirmal Shekar's article "Giving Ganguly his due" published on "Hindu" (March 15). He simply cut and paste most of that article.

Ranjan Nath
Boston, MA, USA

Bangladesh cricket

After the humiliating run in the World Cup, the Bangladeshi cricketers are now back to the home soil. They are still probably trying to come out of the nightmarish World Cup experience. However the show must go on! Our boys will face another long and demanding season starting with hosting South Africa. It doesn't look like that we have learnt any lesson from our past mistakes. Why is the BCB still silent in naming the probable players? There is no plan yet to pull our team out of this 'mess' and regain some of the pride.

Therefore, I sincerely urge our administrators to do something and not just play around with words! Otherwise our sorrow and humiliation will keep growing exponentially.

Then few weeks later another

aunt took me to Radio Pakistan Dhaka office. My aunt had to step out to do something while I was waiting in the sitting room. And, guess what? Nilufar Yasmeen entered and brightened the room: "Shukla! I am so glad to see you again!" As before she asked the peon to bring some food for me...

Recently, when I was in Dhaka, I wanted to meet Nilufar Yasmeen and tell her that I still remember her. But somehow I couldn't make it. But was determined to visit her the next time.

But before that 'next time', Neela Khala left this world and I didn't even have a chance to thank her and to tell her that I try to emulate her kindness whenever I meet little children.

Shukla Mirza
Qatar

Golam Mustafa the artist and the man

With Golam Mustafa's death, the country's cultural arena will certainly face a great void and probably that cannot be filled up for quite a long time. The performing artist, Golam Mustafa, has left his marks in the fields of cinema, radio and television, recitation and play reading. He had a certain style, charisma and a pronounced mannerism which made him different from the other contemporary artists.

A very impressive man with great learning and literary talent Golam Mustafa will always be remembered by the people who knew him from far and near.

Adib Reza, Paribagh, Dhaka



As for me, I have no choice. I live in the UK but come next election, I can guarantee that I won't be ticking the ballot paper in favour of Labour or the Conservatives.

Abdul M. Ismail
Liverpool, UK

Thank you, Mr. Arild Klokkehaug, for showing us a way to fight Bush. My husband and I have vowed not to use American stuff from now on. I request everyone else to do the same. It is our only way to get back at Bush.

Fahmeena Nahas, Sylhet