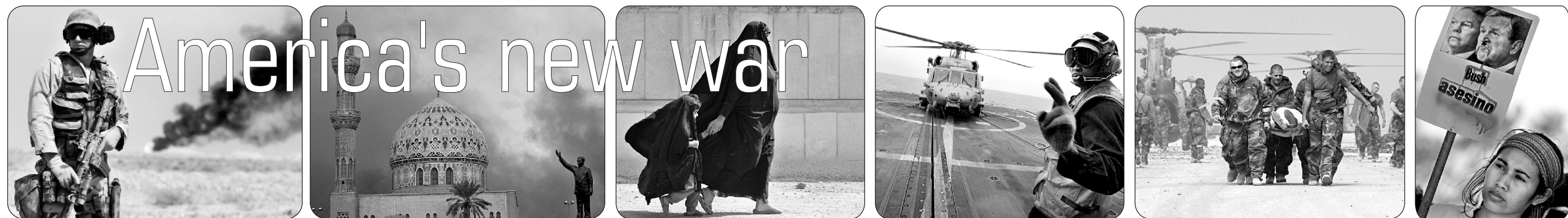


Letters will only be considered if they carry the writer's full name, address and telephone number (if any). The identity of the writers will be protected. Letters must be limited to 300 words. All letters will be subject to editing.



America's new war

Iraq aggression and a few questions



Shoot to kill?

As expected an unholy alliance of the US and UK resorted to naked aggression on Iraq amidst worldwide protest. The troops of the "coalition of the willing" could not take full control of even a single Iraqi city in this week old conflict. The invading army received a jolt when they were resisted at Al Nassiriya and all other fronts. Some were escaping Iraqi assault. Arrested US war prisoners were shown in TV. By violating all international laws Bush is crying for Geneva Convention. Casualties on both sides are at rise at "dramatic" pace. In the prevailing situation, there are few pertinent questions:

1. If the US led army show the WMD

(chemical, biological and nuclear) they carry with them as Iraq's in an organised TV show (as were done regarding false surrender of a division of Iraqi troops) who is going to verify?

2. Why should Iraq respect Geneva Convention (given that all norms and UN charter are blatantly violated by foreign invasion)?

3. Wasn't it desirable that Kofi Annan should resign from his post?

4. Why the Arabs are not refusing to sell oil to the US and UK?

M. U. Chowdhury, On e-mail

Propaganda line

Those of us who oppose the US-UK invasion of Iraq need to exercise caution before joining the clamour now being raised about humanitarian crisis in Basra. It is part of the US-UK propaganda offensive to turn the genuine good will of people around the world to their own war effort.

For several days, almost every story on CNN and BBC has included some reference to the pressing need to deliver humanitarian assistance to Basra and elsewhere. The fact that these two news networks - both clearly in service to US and UK war efforts - are emphasising this theme should alert us to it being part of the propaganda line. The implication is that Basra would be best served if US-UK forces were free to deliver relief. Of course for that to be possible, Iraqi fighters must surrender. If they do not, then the conclusion to be drawn is that Iraq's own military is the obstacle to the humanitarian relief of the civilian population.

But consider the facts. Basra's main supply problem is clean drinking water. The water treatment plant was disabled by US-UK attacks. Red Cross and Red Crescent engineers were ready to repair the damage days ago. The plant is now partially restored to service.

The main reason Basra faces a humanitarian crisis is because it is surrounded by a hostile army of foreign invaders. If the US and UK truly cared about Basra's well-being, they would withdraw their soldiers and armaments. Instead, they will blame the victim.

JB, Dhaka

For the first three days after the start of savage attack on Iraq by Anglo-American forces, people were wondering why there were no casualties on the American side, although there were reports of a number of friendly fires on the British side? Only after the Iraqi TV

and Al-Jazira showed the five captured and the four dead American servicemen western media started to report that.

Last time during America's relentless bombing on Afghan civilians, the warmongers of Washington were mourning that they "lost the media war" because the whole world was shocked by their disproportionate atrocities against an impoverished nation.

This time around they successfully put a tight lid on the flow of information. The Western media is now compelled to broadcast the aggressor's sugar-coated lies and propaganda aimed at to "win heart and mind" too. Anyone surprised? Not at all - because we already know that this is imperative for the murderers to masquerade as the saviour of humanity.

Shukla Mirza, Qatar

Horror in Iraq

The USA wakes up Iraqi children at midnight and invites them to a banquet of death and fear. Some of these children will not wake up again until the day of resurrection, when they will sit in judgement of George W. Hitler, Benito Blair and their gang of war criminals.

SK, Dhaka

Food and medicine for Iraq

George Bush and Tony Blair are very concerned with humanitarian relief for Iraq but only soon after the war they launched. This is hypocrisy that exceeds all limits. By waging this illegitimate and wanton war, they effectively saw to the termination of the Oil for Food programme that brought relief to the long suffering people of Iraq.

We hear much about the "brutal regime" of Iraq that is blamed for all the sufferings of the population. But anyone with factual knowledge and who have read the successive six monthly reports of the UN

Secretary General to the Security Council would know that the Oil for Food programme was never an adequate answer to the long drawn out humanitarian crisis principally brought about the prolonged sanctions regime coupled with the obstruction placed almost entirely by US and UK members of the Security Council which effectively blocked approval of numerous contracts for civilian humanitarian supplies purchased by Iraq under the programme.

Thus it is nothing but utter hypocrisy when one hears the urgent concerns by the US and UK about humanitarian aid to the Iraqi people. There is no doubt that the US led unlawful war without approval of the UN has precipitated the present crisis. It is this principally on the shoulders of UK and US that the responsibility lies. Rather than point fingers at other members of the Security Council, and seek to use the UN at their own convenience and ignore at their will, they should vacate their aggression and open the way for resumption of the Oil for Food programme. That is the least and the most just thing they can do and do so immediately.

Hussain, Dhaka

Anglo-American POW in Iraq

The recent capture and public humiliation of American POWs by the Iraqis and the consequent reaction by the American government and media really is another example of America's double standards in terms of justice in this world.

They are now shouting about Geneva convention for humane treatment of POWs when the war itself has no legality in terms of international law! Even Donald Rumsfeld talks about international law when everyone knows how much respect he has for those. He doesn't even agree that the occupied territories in Palestine by

Israel are actual NOT "apparent"! Not to mention the hundreds of Al-Qaeda suspects in Cuba.

Unless the US gives up this double standard policy pretty soon, no matter how much propaganda about justice and freedom they inject in people's minds, it wont work as they are just too transparent.

Rakin, Mohammadpur, Dhaka

Gorge W Bush and Tony Blair administrations expect Saddam Hussein to treat US and UK invaders according to Geneva Conventions regarding POW! They have suddenly become respectful to international laws forgetting their blatant violations of every single principle of human rights and their killing of UN. They try to make fool of the international communities by hiding their horrendous treatment of Taaliban POW in Cuba, who are still almost out of sight and their fate uncertain.

What the US-UK soldiers are doing in Iraq? Aren't they massacring a foreign land without any provocation, killing its people, destroying its establishments, and making fool of indigenous and international communities and sponging upon them? Is this a war? Does it have Security Council or UN mandate? It is indeed an act of aggression against a nation already distraught with military and economic atrocities perpetrated by the Anglo-American aggressors for the last 12-13 years. The world knows that 20 March 2003 was the official death of UN. All the rules of UN and all other international laws have now become invalid as Bush and Blair administrations initiated the war damming the UN.

The other day, a White House spokesperson said that President Bush doesn't watch that much of TV when he was asked whether the latter was aware of the scale of attack that was going on in Iraq. Well, I sure hope that he starts doing so soon because many men, women and children are lying in hospital because of him. But, I wonder how much good will that do since he's such a cold-blooded warmonger.

Rizwana Tasneem, Uttara, Dhaka

US cannot hope that Iraq would obey those conventions while they are mistreating Afghan prisoners. My urge to Iraqi Government is to determine their position in this regard considering the principles of Islam, the religion of kindness and mercy.

Mostafa Khaleel
Dhaka University

Fallacies and lies in Bush's arguments

The "proud American citizen" and other blind and ignorant supporters of US imperialism here in Bangladesh and abroad should do themselves a good service if they could read this article at <http://www.presentdanger.org/papers/iraqspresp.html>.

Here a US academic very accurately and systematically points out the inconsistencies and flagrant lies made by George Bush in his speech to the gullible American public. The "proud American citizen" would certainly find just answers to the questions and illogical justifications he made in his letter (March 23).

I would also like to thank Mr. Mahfuz Anam for writing such a moving commentary "Cry Justice". The Daily Star has also done a wonderful job so far reporting on the Iraq issue and aptly terming it as the "Iraq Invasion". This certainly is an "invasion" rather than a "war".

MIK, Ramna, Dhaka

Pro-war letters!

You have been publishing plenty of letters in your "Letters Page" column from a bunch of warmongers such as Mahmood Elahi (Canada), Shuja (Canada), Satyajit, Joynto and MA (Bangladesh). Their viewpoints are clear. They love war. But how long are you going to promote the view points of these people? One wonders! It is both tragic and shameful indeed!

As a peace loving Bangladeshi, I find it extremely distasteful to read their savage warmongering viewpoints.

Fatima Ali
On e-mail

War could be avoided

I happened to get a copy of Daily Mirror of London of the 24th March. Most of the news in this newspaper is against Bush and Blair. In one news item it says "George Bush, meanwhile, said he was "feeling fine" with the way things are going. Then he launched an attack on the Iraqis for flouting the Geneva Convention by parading PoWs on TV.

Pretty rich from the President who sanctioned the release of photos of Afghan PoWs in their hoods and shackles at Guantanamo Bay... Everyone in this country hopes and prays they (the British soldiers) all come home safely.

But Tony Blair should not try to use this sentiment to coerce us all into backing a war that is already a dreadful bloody mess and only promises to get worse.

Most Britons think this is wrong.

Defying the UN Security Council and protests from all over the world, it's been almost a week that the US-led war against Iraq has started.

The weapons inspectors should have been given more time to search for WMD. If the world could wait for so long, then a few more months would not have made such a big difference. But the warmongers- the Bush Administration and its 'devout follower' back in 10 Downing Street just couldn't wait. They were going to attack Iraq one way or the other. The inspectors and all that talk about taking UN approval was just to show the world that they wanted to legalise the war.

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Rizwana Tasneem, Uttara, Dhaka

War is not the answer

I have no language to condemn the barbaric act of the coalition force and the way they are bombing and destroying Iraq and killing innocent men, women and children.

Any sane human being would be moved at the plight of the Iraqi people. I don't know what these warmongers want to achieve by this senseless attack! But I am sure at the end it would reap nothing but hatred and curse. Killing unarmed innocent people with all kinds of sophisticated weapons and bombing them from the aircraft is no heroism rather should be termed as a dastardly act.

I hope and pray that sanity prevails upon Bush and his allies and these type of inhuman aggression never takes place.

Mohammed Sohel Hara
Tophkhana Road, Dhaka

Who has given them the responsibility?

Despite having UN, despite all the protests against the war around the globe, I just want to know who has given the USA the right to free the Iraqi people from Saddam Hussein's regime.

Marilin Farzana Ahmed, Dhaka

"Anti-Americanism"

Kim's letter of March 25 deals with a serious matter. It is in our own national interest that the export lifeline is kept open.

Unfortunately, our government's stance does not seem to be transparent or above board. The fact of the matter is that militant fundamentalism is slowly but surely gaining ground which in truth is against the ideas and concept of Islam.

The recent developments in northern district is an eye opener. How could such a set up go so far and how could its mentor escape. It points to tacit connivance and cover up somewhere. Has this been identified and firm steps taken to climate it or is it slowly being dusted under the carpet?

The current unfortunate events in the Middle East is a boost to activities of this type which is detriment to our national interest. I too along with Kim worry what will happen to our vital economic interest in the coming days.

Sam, Dhaka

This is in response to Mr. Kim's letter. What Mr. Mahfuz Anam is doing through his esteemed newspaper is extremely normal and laudable. I think most newspapers all over the world are condemning this senseless war waged by Bush and his so called Foreign Minister, Blair.

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Most Britons think this is wrong.

The Mirror will not shirk from saying this loudly and clearly every day until it is over.

I don't think most Bangladeshis have anything against the average American or Briton. Most people are against the two notorious characters and that's the main reason behind "violent emotions" that are churning in the minds of lots of people around the world and not only among the Bangladeshis. Please tell your American friend to come to Bangladesh by all means. But, before that ask him to try and prevent Bush from getting the 75 billion dollars for war costs and to fight to remove him from power.

Fahmeena Nahas
Sylhet

"Children in terror"

The report "Children in terror" is just sensationalism. Of course children will be hurt in this war. That's why it's a war. But the casualties are far less thanks to the efforts on the part of the allies. Where in this piece of stellar reporting by the Star Desk, does it mention the fact that Saddam has

How dumb can one be? The holy cities of Baghdad and Kerbala are of monumental importance to Muslims all over the world. What good is it bringing to the US by hurting the religious sentiments of Muslims worldwide? How would they feel if Jerusalem was reduced to rubble? I can't seem to find an answer.

Fuad Bin Rahman
One-mail

True colour

So the true colour of Mr Blair has finally come out. In his speech to British people after he hijacked them into this illegal American war, Blair has -for the first time- said the objective of this war is to overthrow Saddam and to destroy Saddam's WMD (if there is any).

Until now, Blair has always cleverly maintained, that the objective of this war is only to destroy Iraq's WMD. But as soon as the war started, he revealed his true cynical intention. I guess Saddam is not the only liar the world has to deal with!

Azad Miah

humanity stands for?

Rahat Bari Tooheen
Hatirpool Dhamondi, Dhaka

"How I will fight Bush"

Though I'm not a supporter of war against Iraq and the autocracy of President Bush. But I really applaud the letter of Mr. Masood Rana (March 25).

Did people who are calling hartal, burning effigy of Bush and asking other people to stop using US and UK brand have thought about what will happen if America and Britain stop importing products from Bangladesh!

People in our country should really think about it.

Andrew Simon
Uttara, Dhaka

Shame on you Mr. Bush (and Blair)

"We live in the time where we have fictitious election results that elect a fictitious president. We live in a time where we have a man who's sending us to war for fictitious



Break time in battlefield!

A question of credibility

Notwithstanding the impassioned comments of some readers, it is a testament to your and your staff's commitment to plurality that letters reflecting several sides of the Iraq war continue to appear in these columns. When seen in the context of the strong editorial stance and the sensitive public, such commitment is largely unique amongst South Asian papers. We all owe you a vote of thanks on that count.

With interest and intrigue I have read the well-written essays of our former ambassadors and the sincere outpourings of ordinary citizens criticising the commencement of Operation Iraqi Freedom. It is a hallmark of our hard-earned democracy and attendant freedoms that such voices are raised and debated without fear or favour. Unfortunately, the people of Iraq have not had that freedom that we take for granted in these pages.

As someone who abhors violence both by teaching and instinct, I cannot but empathise with the sincerity of many of my

placed troops and weaponry in civilian areas? Where does it mention that Iraqi troops are attacking allies dressed in civilian clothing, which is a move designed to put innocent civilians at risk?

It is very difficult to get even handed reports on this conflict. I would suggest a visit to websites run by exiled Iraqis (www.iraqifoundation.org) to see how Iraqis are taking the war and not just the opinion of staff correspondents with their own agendas.

Saladin, Dhaka

A stubborn Bush

The invasion of Iraq in the name of disarmament really has left this world in shock and awe. I, personally, have went through innumerable articles in leading dailies and spent hours watching the live coverage of this war but I am yet to come across any valid reason behind such atrocities of George W. Bush and his henchmen. It's no secret that all of these heinous acts are nothing but a front for taking over the rich oil deposits of Iraq and establish world supremacy of the Americans. But at what cost?

Despite the continuous lambasting by various ministers of Iraq in press conferences the shameless stubborn forces behind this movement is still sticking to their guns.

Oldham, UK

A lost battle

Bush is losing the war in Iraq because the real battle is being fought in the hearts and minds of six billion people. The only way he can weasel out of this situation is to sway the tide of public opinion in his favour, and the only way he can do that is to unleash chemical and biological weapons on his own troops and blame it on Saddam (note the way the Bush administration keeps advertising through the media that Saddam "may" have authorised his troops to use WMD if necessary). Thereby Bush can justify his unilateral preemptive strike to the rest of the world, then France, Russia, China and Germany will be compelled to support a UN resolution to disarm Iraq, which is the only way the heroic Iraqis will abandon their brilliant guerrilla warfare strategy and surrender.

Omar Chowdhury
Uttara, Dhaka

Bush's war

I just want to ask the President of the United States one question regarding his "war". How many widows and orphans will it take on both sides of the border before he realises that the war is unjust, and goes against everything

reasons. We are against this war'... Oscar winner Michael Moore

Mohammad Salahuddin
London, UK

At the recent Oscar Awards Ceremony, film director Mr. Moore shouted out his condemnation of Mr. Bush's aggression on Iraq, saying the President was leading the American people to a "fictitious war", just as he had assumed presidency under fictitious votes.

It is shameful that the country we all looked towards as a symbol of democracy the United States of America has crushed every principle of democratic norms by not listening to the voices of its own people, leaving alone the rest of the world. Where is the concept of Government of the people, by the people and for the people? The American government has surpassed the entire totalitarian regime anywhere in the world by its foreign policy of state terrorism, stock piling of WMD and using of these in Vietnam, South America, and Japan.

Don't preach us Mr. Bush, you are a hypocrite and devoid of any humane sensibilities. May the People's Justice witness your punishment some day.

Parveen Ahmed
Dhaka

Worthless world bodies!

Ultimately America and Britain coalition forces attacked Iraq. They did not give a damn to the Security Council Resolutions. Then what UNO is for? It appears that the purpose of the UN is to provide world leaders with a platform to deliver fruitless speeches.

Same is the case with SAARC. If the leaders of the South Asian countries do not even shake hands in the formal summits, what is the purpose of SAARC? NAM is again an organisation that our ruling party did not hesitate to call a "dead horse" although our Honourable Prime Minister attended the NAM summit in Malaysia (which was supposed to be held in Dhaka). If the world bodies cannot serve their purposes, these organisations should be dissolved. There is no justification to bear such huge expenses at the cost of the taxpayers. Picnics can be arranged in different ways.

Hasan Tarek
Mohammadpur, Dhaka

