the European Parliament of Tony

LATE S. M. ALI

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Rebuilding Umm Qasr

The first sign of rift between US and UK

further question mark has been put on the trustworthiness of the coalition rhetoric -- that its main bobjective is to liberate the people of Iraq-- by the rift between the United States and Britain over how the port of Umm Qasr will be rebuilt after the war is over.

While the Americans want a firm from their own country to handle the matter, the British insist on the port being placed under Iraqi control once normality is restored. Now, this is more than a technical question to be resolved by the two principle belligerentsthe US and the UK. They had long been telling the world that they were not concerned with anything more than elimination of the threat that Saddam Hussein poses to the peaceloving nations. But the latest American plan on the future of Umm Qasr might suggest something different.

The American plan will make the millions of bitter critics of the war, already disgusted with the deaths and destruction in Iraq, even more suspicious. And a British Middle East expert, Patrick Seale, has added to the suspicion by saying that the oilfields in the region have drawn the US into this illegal war, which, he believes, will ultimately turn out to be a disaster for the Anglo- Ameri-

That is a future possibility, but there is no doubt that the war has already been a disaster for Iraqis facing the firepower of the mightiest nation on earth. The nation solely responsible for their sufferings is the United Statesthe champion of democracy and human rights. Americans should acknowledge, that even if they can subdue the stubborn Iraqi resistance, they will end up a moral loser, let alone the losses on the diplomatic and economic fronts. And any breach of the pre-war commitments will only make things worse.

And there are signs that the US administration is showing unusual sensitivity to the happenings in and around Iraq. It has blamed Iran and Syria for what it calls supply of military equipment, including 'night vision goggles, to Iraq -- a charge the two countries have categorically denied. But the international community might just begin to feel uneasy with the accusation, particularly when the war has created the impression that Washington would not hesitate to apply force whenever its interests are hurt, or perceived to be hurt.

Trouble at universities

Administration should play a more effective role

E are deeply concerned about the situations in two leading universities of the country for the last few days. The alleged attack on the student activists of BNP backed Chatra Dal by pro-- Jamat student wing, Chatra Shibir at the residential halls of Rajshahi University and subsequent clashes with police have made the campus extremely vulnerable. However unfortunate it may sound to many, but the university authority had no choice but to call for armed police in the campus. We had expressed our anguish over such necessity in the past for other universities, we do so again. Why should there be armed police guarding a campus of an educational institute? Isn't it a place where youngsters go to gain knowledge? Or should we say that these days there are very minimal differences between students and criminals?

We know that Rajshahi University campus was a stronghold of Chatra Shibir for many years. May be the resurgence of Chatra Dal in recent time caused some ire within Shibir resulting in the alleged attack on rival Chatra Dal. But whatever the reasons, the university authorities should have been more alert and played the role of a mediator more effectively. It's obvious that they failed to do so. But better late than never. The authority has announced their decision to form a probe committee. We hope it would be able to do it's job independently and quickly, otherwise with continuing resentment between the two groups, the risk of the situation deteriorating can't be ruled out.

On the other hand, at Jahangir Nagar University near Dhaka, the teachers have been on strike with demands of resignation of the Vice Chancellors and other administrators. However grave the cause for such a strike is, it is unfortunate that the university syndicate could not come to a conclusion in order to solve the crisis. It is difficult to say whether we support the teachers or not, but if they wanted changes in the administration, may be the best option could have been appealing to the higher authorities. Instead they went on strike bringing the whole campus to a standstill. Here again the university administration failed to do an effective job. According to reports, it did not even make any attempts to solve the problem. We hope all the concerned parties would soon come together on a single platform and put the interests of their students on top of their agenda.

Casualties of Iraq war

KAZI ANWARUL MASUD

HAT the forces of the "coalition of the willing" would only stop after the fall of Baghdad and demolition of Saddam's regime is crystal clear to all. But what is not so transparent yet is the edifice which would also be demolished by this Bush-Blair campaign to "liberate" the Iraqis from the tyranny of Saddam Hussein, many of whom surprisingly are reluctant to be liberated" by the allied forces.

One of the casualties of the Iraq war has been the growing Russian distrust of American hegemonic attempts to impose its will over the rest of the world. President Putin stressed that the Iraqi war being carried out against world public opinion, against principles and norms of international law and the UN Charter, cannot be justified by any means. He pointed out that Russia "never had nor do we have information to support" of Iraqi support of international terrorism; regime change in Iraq contradicted international law and was the business of the Iraqi people anyway; there was no need for the war to determine whether Iraq has or does not have WMD; and finally resolution 1441 did not give any right to use force but only allowed international efforts to complete Iraqi disarmament. Significantly President Putin warned of "the danger that the current system of international security will collapse ... If we allow international law to be replaced with the rule of fist according to which the strongest has the right to do whatever he wants and is not limited by anything in choosing means to achieve his goals, then one of the basic principles of international law will be called into question -- the principle of the inviolability of a state's sovereignty. Then no body or no country of the world should be safe". Saner elements of the world would be better advised to listen to these words uttered not by a tinpot dictator but by the President of Russia who even in this uni-polar world packs sufficient sinews to be a credible referent for a distorted world order.

Putin's opinion was further

elaborated by a Russian political commentator (Pavel Flagenhauer -Bush's Brezhnev Doctrine March 20, 2003). He wrote that the recent fracas in the Security Council over Iraq was mostly about the limits of sovereignty. He compared Bush National Security Strategy as akin to 1968 Czechoslovak invasion by Brezhnev proclaiming the right of the Soviet Union to invade satellite states in order to support pro-Moscow "socialist" regimes. Now the US claims its sovereign right to invade any country for regime change regardless of the opinion of and the 1991 Gulf War could, perhaps, have been prevented if timely pre-emptive actions had been taken. But to extend the doctrine, as Bush Strategy advocates, of preemption where perceived threat is neither large nor imminent and against acquisition of weapons of mass destruction are inherently discriminatory and implicitly imperial. Besides, repeated unilateral usage of military power, supported by the world in Afghanistan in the aftermath of 9/11, is fraught with danger if the US insists on exclusive responsibility for deter-

rity Council vote, and relying on existing ones, she says "both sides can claim to have the better of the argument over how best to disarm Iraq". The most basic reference to the legality of the Iraq war lies in Article 42 and Article 51 of the UN Charter -- either one is acting in self-defence or acting under authorisation of the UNSC -- neither of which, according to Sean Murphy of George Washington University, has been met by the Bush administration. Not so, argues William Howard Taft IV, legal advisor to the US State sive right to determine whether or not the US engages in War.

It is ironic that the dawn of the new century should witness the gravest crisis of confidence in the UN system. This disproportional punishment being meted out to frag for criminal behaviour of Al-Qaida who may not have had any connection with the Saddam regime before the events of 9/11 is immoral and unjust. In a message to the Catholic military Chaplins Pope John Paul reminded them that the use of war as a way to settle conflicts between nations was

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other UNSC members and the world at large. The assumption by the US of its role as "undisputed world hegemon" has displaced the international order so far based on East-West balance of terror and the recognition of absolute state sover-

Putin's reference to ends and means has been supported, albeit in a different context by John Steinberner of the Center for International and Security Studies at Maryland (Confusing Ends and Means: The Doctrine of Coercive Pre-emption Jan/Feb 2003 - Arms Control Today). Bush's doctrine, he states, would represent a major redirection of policy and a radical revision of established international security rules. The idea of using decisive force against an implacable enemy may be emotionally satisfying but can hardly be termed as a responsible policy. "Pre-emptive actions" he writes "are the result of policy failures, not the triumph of superior virtue or strategic reason". Legitimacy and effectiveness of pre-emptive action could be accepted against an observable and imminent threat of conventional invasion. It has been argued that the Second World War

mining targets to the exclusion of the international community.

Basic argument remains that terrorism cannot be fought by actions of terroristic nature as it would serve the interest of the terrorists who want to exploit the target's natural impulse to retaliate. Because of the varied nature of terroristic threats establishment of a comprehensive oversight procedure robust enough to make it dangerous enough to conceal research on weapons of mass destruction or as French Foreign Minister Dominique de Villepin suggested to the UNSC (on 19th March) that the Iraqi crisis had allowed the international community to craft an instrument through the inspection regime which was unprecedented and could serve as an example for the establishment of an innovative and permanent structure, a disarmament body under the aegis of the United Nation, could be seriously consid-

Curiously Anne-Marie Slaughter, President of the American Society of International Law has described Bush administration's Iraq venture "as illegal but legitimate". In avoiding another SecuDepartment, because in an era of rejected by the conscience of a WMD, definitions within the traditional framework of the use of force in self-defence and the concept of pre-emption must adapt to the nature and capabilities of present day threats. The question is how to consummate the two concepts and act beyond criticism. Professor McDougal of Yale Law School sees the answer in the State's ability to determine that "an attack is so palpable, imminent and perceptively destructive that its only defence is its prevention". But, argues Professor Reisman (also of Yale Law School) that anticipatory self-defence being primarily based on subjective perception is open to abuse and criticism. Clearly in the case of the Iraq war the US has failed to establish even a credible case. On the question of legality it may be of interest to note that recently the US District Court threw out a lawsuit filed by six members of Congress that would have barred the US from any attack on Iraq without a declaration of war by the Congress. The Judge rejected the contention that the President must have congressional authority to order American troops

large part of humanity long before the UN Charter was framed and when weapons go into action the need for rules which can make the conduct of warfare less inhuman becomes imperative. The recently held EU Council meeting at Brussels (on 20th March) committed itself to maintain the sovereignty, the political stability of Iraq; to the fundamental role of the United Nations in the international system and to the responsibility of the UNSC for maintenance of international peace and stability. EU expressed their belief that the UN must continue to play a central role during and after the current crisis. Both China and Russia had already declared themselves against any military action outside the UN framework. It is, therefore, unlikely that in the postwar reconstruction of Iraq, both political and economic, the world would let the US a freehand in determining the fate of the Iraqis.

EU Commissioner for External Relations Chris Patten told the European Parliament (on 20t March) of EU's agreement that the UN must remain at the centre of international order. He reminded

Blair's remarks in the British House of Commons that there should be new UN resolutions following any conflict providing not just for humanitarian help but also for the administration and governance in Iraq, which must be done under proper UN authorisation. Chris Patten felt that the best way would be if post-war Iraq was managed under a UN mandate like East Timor, Kosovo and Afghanistan. Admitting that the recent past " has been a very bad passage for the Common Foreign and Security policy, a very bad passage for the European Union as a whole, a very bad passage for the authority of the UN, for NATO, and a very bad passage for transatlantic relations", Chris Patten is convinced that the world would be better served in terms of prosperity, in terms of security and in terms of stability when America and the European Union work together. He felt encouraged by President Bush's personal commitment in implementation of the Quartet prepared road map towards a twostate solution -- Israel and a viable and credible Palestinian State -- in the Middle East without prevarication and procrastination.

All said and done if the US led "coalition of the willing" want to concretise the Azores Summit vision for Iraq and the Iraqi people to build a new Iraq lifted insecurity and tyranny; an Iraq with its rich mix of different people enjoying freedom, prosperity and equality; an Iraq where all would share the national wealth; then close cooperation of international institutions, United Nations, NATO allies and donors would be necessary. Hopefully, all would cooperate in the development of a post-conflict Iraq. International displeasure at US-go-it-alone policy should however continue so that the people of the world are not again put into a pitch-dark tunnel of bleak future. USA must realise, in the words of Jacques Chirac, "no country can set itself up as the world's guardian" regardless of its unmatched military and economic might.

Kazi Anwarul Masud is retired secretary to the Bangladesh government an former ambassador.

US damaged more than UN



KULDIP NAYAR

OW to pick up pieces of ▲ Iraq has strewn is the problem facing the humanity. Unquestionably, the image of the UN has been damaged. The world body which is supposed to uphold the independence of countries, however small, has been found wanting. It has been saddening to note that a determined, powerful state can take unilateral action and $none\,can\,stop\,it\,from\,doing\,so.$

Yet America has lost much more. Strong international denunciation of hostilities has been a stunning blow to its prestige. Here is a country trying to depict itself as a synonym for democracy has been exposed roundly. It has been discovered that Washington is devious, devilish and dictatorial when its perceived interests are involved. President Bush has negated all the traditions of liberty and "the general equality of condition" which the nation has been proudly building since the days of President George Washington.

It turns out that America deviously got the Security Council pass the resolution on Iraq (1441). The understanding was that it was confined to disarming the country. There was no authorisation of the attack. But Washington acted

France, Germany and Russiathe three permanent members of the Security Council -- more or less said that they were hoodwinked. They have complained that the understanding given to them was that there would be another resolution if and when it came to war. It seems that even the UN Secretary sheer propaganda. No such weapon has been found. In fact, the American troops had started action without waiting for the final report of weapon inspectors, headed by Hans Blix. Even when it came to issuing the ultimatum it was not about the destruction of weapons. Nor was it about terrorism that bred on the Iraqi soil. Bush said that Saddam Hussein and his two sons must leave Iraq. The

less a challenge. So Washington is a bit defensive. The debate is getting switched to legitimacy, not legality. The point made is that Washington may not have strictly followed the UN obligations but it has done what was necessary in view of the situation in Iraq. Once again the UN is sought to be made relevant. British Prime Minister Tony Blair, Bush's Man Friday, has talked about the post-war scenario with word, regime, was substituted later to sound impersonal. Even after Secretary of state Powell has men-

into combat and ruled that the

Congress does not have the exclu-

when Washington does not want to do anything to make up for the war. This is a situation where a Jawaharlal Nehru is needed, not an Atal Behari Vajpayee who is willing to strike but afraid to wound. After saying that America's war on Iraq was "without justification" New Delhi has fallen silent. It does not want even to condemn America for not only violating the tenets of democracy and human rights but also killing and wounding thousands of innocent Iraqis,

sition of rule on any country or people will fail. In the present circumstances this will lead to a trend which no country, no people can escape. Resistance in the shape of terrorism of the worst type may emerge. Washington should have recalled how Hungary during the cold war demonstrated that the desire for national freedom was stronger than any ideology and could not be suppressed. What happened in Hungary was not essentially a conflict between communism and anticommunism. It represented nationalism striving for freedom from foreign control. America has pitted itself against something similar in Iraq. A country, whatever its credentials or strength, has no

BETWEEN THE LINES

Washington should have recalled how Hungary during the cold war demonstrated that the desire for national freedom was stronger than any ideology and could not be suppressed. What happened in Hungary was not essentially a conflict between communism and anti-communism. It represented nationalism striving for freedom from foreign control. America has pitted itself against something similar in Iraq. A country, whatever its credentials or strength, has no right to tell the nationals of another country how to rule themselves.

General had the same impression when he recalled from Iraq the UN personnel and weapon inspectors.

However, Bush was never torn by any doubt. He was determined to attack Iraq, with or without the UN backing, from the beginning. The entire exercise by America in the Security Council and otherwise to take "everybody" along was a charade. The day when the US troops were ordered to go to the Middle East was the day when Bush decided to attack Iraq. This was long before the resolution was passed. The high moral ground that America tried to occupy in the name of elimination of Weapons of Mass Destruction (WMD) was

days of war, Washington does not feel any need for introspection. It was confident of riding the storm of protests. Public opinion, as the New York Times says, is a parallel super power. But then the Bush administration does not bother about such things. It wants to serve its own interests, ranging from the control of oil to redrawing the map of the Middle East where Palestine is struggling only to have its entity

To cover up aggression, the US still calls the war against Iraq a pre-emptive strike. Nobody buys this argument. America is thousands of miles away from Iraq. Saddam is not even a viable opponent, much

tioned Iraq's reconstruction under the UN charge. It is not yet known how far Washington wants the UN to be associated with Iraq after Saddam's exit. One statement is that the American forces would control Iraq for two years.

The first thing that Washington has to do is to legitimise what it has done. The question of authorisation of war does not arise. France and Russia have made it clear that they will veto any resolution that seeks to justify America's unilateral action. It will be difficult to unravel the situation in the near

The question facing the world is how to revive the prestige of the UN

including women and children. Pragmatism, the word used by the Indian Prime Minister, is a good policy to adopt when the issues do not suppress principles. Here the question is that of naming the

Britain and France tried to appropriate the Suez Canal through their joint military action in 1956. But Prime Minister Nehru was able to shake the world's conscience. So loud and wide was the criticism that both the powers had to withdraw from the Suez in humiliation. What the Anglo-Saxon powers fail to understand is that the world has arrived at a stage when the attempt of forcible imporight to tell the nationals of another country how to rule themselves. In this context, I was shocked to hear the views of former Pakistan Foreign Minister Gauhar Ayub during a TV programme from Islamabad. He said that a big

neighbour like India could do little in terms of military action against Pakistan which had its cantonments on the border and the troops at hand. India was handicapped because it had to bring its men from Ranchi and other far off places to station its force at the border. There was no need of dragging in India when the discussion was on America's aggression against Iraq.

Gauhar, a political leader in Pakistan, could have suggested that the countries in the region should join hands to develop a viable défence against such powers which might be on the prowl after

Kuldip Nayar is an eminent Indian columnist.

TO THE EDITOR TO THE EDITOR TO THE

national, think again The front-page picture of a baby with a burned face speaks volumes of the USA's human rights conformity. This so-called World leader is nothing but a hypocrite. He is a money hungry politician who had nothing better to do. If you don't agree with me, then how do you explain an individual like George W. Bush being the President of the

He is a decent businessman who has so far made some really bad buys. First of all, the media he has purchased is now confused as to what stance they must take. Bush's partner in crime, Tony Blair, his passionate" speech at the House of Commons was more like a speech to ensure their support after a deal had been struck under the table. And to think that we are the most corrupt nation in the world, think again and think hard. Mohammad Isam

most powerful economy in the

War of "liberation"

Dhanmondi, Dhaka

Transparency Inter- or reconstruction?

As the war of "liberation" continues, the war of reconstruction seems to have emerged between the "coalition" and the EU. Central dispute concerning as to who should be in charge of Iraq in the post-Saddam era, and some are esenting that the US companies have already been awarded the lucrative reconstruction contracts to repair Iraq. Why the arguments? Surely we are constantly being informed that this war is fought primarily for humanitarian reasons to "liberate" the people Iraq, so that they would have genuine self-rule. Hence such matters of authority and reconstruction of Iraq should be left in the hands of the Iraqi population. It is difficult to reconcile the above points, unless of course, the notion of "liberation" in reality is nothing more then a veil to cover the shame

namely power and oil. Iraq will certainly need to be reconstructed, and costs will be paid by its oil. In the process Iraq will lose its natural resources at a price determined by the new US

of the hidden colonial ambitions,

friendly "administrators" of Iraq, and in return it will be "forced" to receive the services from the US based Multinational companies. The silent sponsors of this "liberation" war. Ultimately the cost of the war will be recovered, perhaps with a little profit at the end, like the previous Gulfwar in 1991.

Yamin Zakaria

The war of hypocrisy

The United States, possessing the world's largest armoury of intercontinental ballistic missiles and undeclared nuclear and biochemical weapons, has NO right to push the disarmament of any

This is sheer hypocrisy. Despite global dissent, the unilateral attack on Iraq's sovereignty by the United States must be regarded as "international terrorism" and condemned accordingly.

If this arm-twisting goes on, then the sovereignty of any nation weaker then the USA would be at

Dr. Patrick E. Gallagher

England tour in

in Dhaka on 8 October.

Cerritos, CA, USA

Bangladesh The tourists are scheduled to arrive

The first Test will be played there starting 21 October, followed by the second match in the southern city of Chittagong beginning on 29

The two sides will also meet for three limited-overs games on 7, 10 and 12 November.

It will be the first time the two teams have met in Tests since the Tigers were given full International Cricket Council member status in

Their only previous meeting, a one-day fixture in the 2000 ICC Knockout Trophy in Nairobi, resulted in an eight-wicket win for England. Bangladesh have not won a Test

or one-day match since gaining Test status in 2000. They have lost 15 of the 16 Tests they have played, with a rain-

affected draw the other result. Skipper Khaled Mashud tendered his resignation following Bangladesh's abysmal World Cup campaign.

The Bangladesh Cricket Board will have to find a replacement in time for a triangular one-day tournament, taking place in Dhaka from 11-20 April, involving South Africa and India.

The Tigers will then face South Africa for two Tests on 24-28 April in Chittagong and 1-5 May in the

Abdul M. Ismail

Mossley Hill, Liverpool, UK

About the war

Despite worldwide opposition, the war found its place on the cycle of history as a geo-political reality of our time whether we like it or not. However, I dare to make some honest comments to all Bangladeshi readers as a resident of USA, and who happened to be able to talk with several US military personnel--both officers and enlisted ranks.

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. My summary is: a good soldier and any good general always try to avoid war. People are dying in Iraq, children and civilians are suffering. In a sense America seems to be the ultimately responsible and a lot of discussion will continue in the generations to come about the whole mess. But I advise my fellow Bangladeshis to research and analyse before making any assumption about America just based on this war.

> As the media of our third world countries depict, American soldiers are NOT heartless brutes. Yes, they kill as their profession dictates; at the same time, they have strict orders to avoid civilian casualties. Yes, they were not successful always, but I strongly believe they tried to save civilians whenever they could and they did whenever they can.

Although America's war is unjustified, yet it should not prompt us to consider Saddam and his regime as something better. It's very odd that we find great joy in criticising America's astrayed missile hits in civilian area (which is a terrible thing to happen, no

doubt), but we never spoke about Saddam's torture, and terror on his own people.

EDITOR TO THE EDITOR TO THE EDITOR

Many readers will use post Sept 11 prisoners from Afghanistan as examples of American brutality (and it was brutal in strict humanitarian contexts). But also understand that they were treated much better at the Guantamamo Bay prison cells that they would have been by any war lord in their home country

So the summary is: war is bad, but that does not mean Saddam is good. And the American soldiers are fighting a bad war does not mean they are animals, irrespective of what the media says. As for Mr. Bush, I hope he will try to use wisdom of the world, rather than that of the White House. Again, that's not the point of my letter

Tirtho Mahmood Berkeley, USA

"How I will fight Bush"

I will do the following and encourage others who are filling The Daily Star Letter Page with their strong

Anti-American rhetoric to do the

1. Boycott all American/British food products including American

beverages. 2. Refuse to accept any remit-

tance coming from USA and UK. 3. Ask our family members who had migrated legally/Illegally to US/UK to return home. 4. Stop interfering and nagging about US registration policy aimed

5. Boycott all American/UK aid in the forms of charity for the poor. 6. Stop applying in millions for DV lottery.

at catching Illegal immigrants.

7. Stop watching English movies and start watching Arabic ones.

8. Students should not apply for nigher education in USA, ŪK, and Australia (all part of the coalition!). 9. In case of any future natural

accept any US/UK help. 10. Stop dreaming about coming to USA.

calamities, God forbid, refuse to

Noori Mostofa Louisville, Edison, NJ