

Massacre of civilians

The war shows its real face

PRESIDENT Bush has once again tried to portray himself, in his latest speech, as a saviour of Iraqi people and whose only concern is the welfare of the very country that his troops have invaded and his missiles are destroying.

But the ground reality of the battlefields, where Iraqis are fighting desperately to slow down the advance of the coalition troops, is different. The American troops admitted yesterday that they killed seven (10 according to a report of the *Washington Post*) Iraqi women and children travelling in a van, after the vehicle failed to stop at a checkpoint in central Iraq. The US troops, fearing further suicide attacks, forgot, for once, that they were supposed to project themselves as liberators.

Judged from the purely tactical point of view, the troops have ensured their own security by killing those women and children. But if we go by what the coalition leaders are saying, time after time, this is a war of a different kind, with its "objective being to free the people of the attacked country." But if the troops continue to kill civilians, the Iraqis' resolve to fight against the "mercenaries" -- a term used by Iraq to describe the coalition troops -- will be hardened further. That is a prospect President Bush is unlikely to relish.

The massacre of innocent civilians will also lend credence to the popular belief that the Americans are in Iraq to occupy the land at any cost, bothering little about the lives of Iraqi citizens. Besides, there is one additional worry -- more and more people in the Arab world will opt for desperate measures against the attackers. Egyptian President Hosni Mubarak has warned that another 100 Osama bin Ladens might be born out of the rubble of the Iraq war.

The coalition leaders should heed Mubarak's warning. The war has created an opportunity for the extremist groups to find new recruits, seething with anger and hatred against the United States and its allies. The warmongers cannot realistically hope that they will commit mass murder and still maintain peace and order all over the world. It is still not too late for them to realise that the war is going to be too costly in terms of men and material, and, as such, it should be stopped immediately.

Killer virus

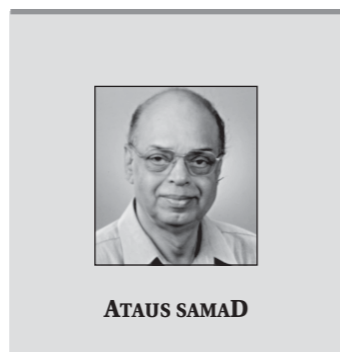
The govt should immediately take precautionary measures

THE mysterious disease that has reportedly infected more than 1600 people in 15 countries around the world and has already killed 59 people still remains a mystery. Ever since it was detected few weeks ago, doctors and scientists have been desperate to find its source and the cure, but so far with no success. Killer pneumonia as it's been called continues to infect hundreds of people around South East Asia. The situation looks more grim in China and Hong Kong, especially in the latter city where authorities have decided to isolate an entire housing block for 10 days in an attempt to control the epidemic. The reason, horrific it may sound -- more than two hundred people were found to be infected in that single housing block.

What is even more worrying now is the new revelation that the virus could be more contagious than first thought and could move freely through the air. Naturally air travel has been hit badly in the region, especially all the flights from the West to the affected countries. Now France had joined United States, Canada, Ireland and Australia in issuing advice to its citizens to either cancel or reconsider trips to the affected regions. Though the largest number of infected people is in this region, more and more people are reportedly being contaminated with the deadly virus. World Health Organisation (WHO) says that at least 11 laboratories are trying to detect the 'causative agent of the virus', but even WHO officials are not sure whether a cure would be found. And that undoubtedly is a very worrying sign.

In this context we would ask the government of Bangladesh to take this matter more seriously. A whole load of passengers frequently travel to Thailand and China from Dhaka every week. We think the authorities should immediately make arrangements to install some detection counters at the airport so that all those arriving from the affected regions could be thoroughly checked. Though there is yet to be any reported case of the deadly virus in our country, but in such circumstances precautions are always necessary. The battle to contain, in doctor's term, the 'Severe Acute Respiratory Syndrome' seems increasingly fraught. We can only hope that the experts working round the clock, would be able to identify the killer virus and its cure -- soon.

Bangladesh should stand with Iraq for repaying a debt



ATAUS SAMAD

IRAQ was the first Arab country to recognise Bangladesh as an independent state as soon as the cruel and barbarian occupation troops of the Pakistani military junta headed by Yahya Khan were defeated. This is why, if for no other reason, we in Bangladesh should stand beside Iraq and its people when they are being bombed and killed by US-British invasion forces. Just now Bangladesh needs to demand very forcefully the immediate cessation of hostilities against Iraq, complete withdrawal of the US-British forces which have invaded that country, and payment of war reparations by them for the destruction wrought by their military. The Bangladesh government itself, and through the people of the country by mobilising them, must as well follow up through action so that these demands are realised. This is the time when we should remind ourselves that we owe Iraq a debt and this is the moment to make repayment.

It needs to be recalled that when we began to fight back at the Pakistani occupation armed forces in March 1971 for becoming free the time was not easy for us. At the beginning we were virtually friendless although our war of independence was justified and legal. We finally got all kinds of support from India but that came gradually and over time. The then Soviet Union was the lone power in the big league diplomatic arena to support the people of Bangladesh.

USA and Britain which talk big and loud about being champions and

protectors of democracy as well as guardian angels of peace did not help us although our fight was the consequence of a legally and fairly held election. Had the results of that election, held in 1970, been accepted by the Pakistani military junta everything would have happened and would have been worked out peacefully. On the other hand they imposed a war on us unjustly and treacherously in March 1971, because we wanted the result of the elections to be accepted. President

party appeared to be suffering from what is popularly known as "analysis paralysis".

Perhaps they were awed by all that talk by the leaders of Washington and London of finishing off the Saddam Hussein regime in Baghdad in a couple of days if not hours by administering it "shock and awe" with their huge and ultramodern military machine, a machine that now people the world over not only recognise as the real weapon of mass destruction. Indeed,

ter. If the colonising British politicians of Bernard Shaw's days or before took the trouble of finding out at least a plausible excuse to attack and conquer other people's lands, for Tony Blair 'fictitious reasons' (some people are using this term as substitute for lies) are good enough to embark on adventures that surpass his predecessors in the PM's office. And as for George W. Bush junior, head of America incorporated, who is also the president of that country, what he may say in his dream

because Saddam Hussein's government is closer to India than to its arch rival Pakistan. The BBC correspondent said, "Even on Kashmir Iraq government has supported India and not Pakistan."

Meanwhile, the Israeli government has begun to slurp in greed. It has already asked for a share of the Iraqi crude oil. The Israeli government is very satisfied at the US-British attack on Iraq and it will be extremely happy to see President Saddam Hussein

language. The independence struggle of Bangladesh was not based on mere emotion, although indomitable spirit played the most crucial part in the victory of her people. The Anglo-US invasion of Iraq has not only broken down the fledgling world order in which small states had begun to be fail-safe but it is now confronting them with the threat of being conquered and enslaved by alien powers. This is why we need to support Iraq recalling the spirit with which we fought for our independence.

Opposition leader Sheikh Hasina who spoke out before Prime Minister Begum Khaleda Zia did said that there was no justification for this war. She has correctly pointed out that violent repression and political aggression bet more terrorism. Prime Minister Begum Khaleda Zia has said that this war ought to be stopped because it is taking the lives of innocent people and causing hurt and damage to many more. Her observation is correct too. Whatever Mr. Bush and Mr. Blair might have said about freeing the Iraqi people from the tyrant Saddam's clutches and whatever they might have said about not hurting Iraqi civilians their war actions have shown the facts to be contrary. In spite of the lies and misleading information being spewed by the western electronic media, particularly those with global reach and also those having strong national network this truth has come out.

Bangladesh should now, for its own good, make its anti-aggression voice louder. Prime Minister Begum Zia and Foreign Affairs Minister M. Morshed Khan should now talk to national leaders like Mahathir Mohammed of Malaysia to work out ways for resisting the Bush and Blair regimes. They may even consult Chief Minister Buddha Dev Bhattacharya of West Bengal about it because he had the gumption to take part in a street demonstration against the US-imposed war. Hundreds of thousands of people were in that anti-war and pro-freedom demonstration held in Kolkata.

Alaus Samad is senior journalist and columnist

THE WAY IT IS

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Nixon of USA and his administration actually opposed our freedom struggle in quite an active manner. So did China. The Islamic or Muslim majority states, most of them in the Middle East, took the side of Pakistan citing the need for the unity of what they describe as the Ummah. At that time Iraq was the lone exception. Iraq's recognition of Bangladesh as a sovereign and independent state was very much needed at that time because Pakistan was still egging on Arab-Muslim states to put pressure on Bangladesh to rejoin Pakistan or keep some political linkage with it. Iraq helped foil that conspiracy against Bangladesh. So, now Bangladesh needs to be "a friend in deed" to a tested old friend. Unfortunately we took a long time to lift our little finger in support of the people of Iraq in relation to the killings and destruction being carried out in their country by the two western powers.

In the first few days after the US-British invasion of Iraq began the ruling party in Bangladesh, their alliance partners and the main opposi-

tion party appeared to be suffering from what is popularly known as "analysis paralysis".

Perhaps they were awed by all that talk by the leaders of Washington and London of finishing off the Saddam Hussein regime in Baghdad in a couple of days if not hours by administering it "shock and awe" with their huge and ultramodern military machine, a machine that now people the world over not only recognise as the real weapon of mass destruction. Indeed,

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Invasion of Iraq: A critical analysis

BRIG. GEN. GYASUDDIN CHOWDHURY BB, PSC (RETD)

IT is almost two weeks of Anglo-American invasion in Iraq. As revealed by Anglo-American coalition that over quarter million US troops to be reinforced by another 120000 US soldiers along with 45000 British troops, 1000 most sophisticated aircraft with latest weapon systems, 10000 tanks, three Aircraft Carriers with hundreds of naval fighting vessels and onboard Tomahawk missiles having most precision guided systems make a multipoint incursion to destroy Iraqi military. The mission is to oust Saddam's regime and install a government of Mr Bush's choosing. Comparing the firepower of Coalition forces and Iraq's it could be a ratio of 100:1, particularly if we consider the air power.

Mr Bush along with the closest ally Britain and Spain earlier decided not to seek UN vote on new resolution for Iraq, probably knowing well that it could not be passed or if at all passed could have been killed by veto of some permanent members. Today the world opinion against this war includes many Americans.

The reason for going to War in Iraq was to remove Saddam said to have links with al-Qaida involved in 11 Sept bombing. Which could not be proved. Secondly for hiding Weapons of Mass Destruction (WMD) believed to be endangering the world peace. Nothing found so far either by UN Inspection team or by the Coalition force.

Every civilized person condemned the terrorist attack in US on 11 Sept as most heinous crime. World community wants to see the culprits caught and punished. All nations of world extend co-operation for wiping out terrorism in whatever form it may exist, but hate to see victimization.

Motivating factors
The event of 11 Sept. not only shook the US government in power but also the nation as a whole. The credibility as a sole superpower is at jeopardy. The most powerful and efficient intelligence organizations of USA including CIA, having all the resources and

money, totally failed in their task. CIA could get rid of any head of state in any corner of the earth through covert or overt means, but did not have clue that such a devastating operations could be planned and executed by a handful of terrorist within its soil. Now credibility of the greatest nation to be salvaged, if required, through might.

In Afghanistan US government and the military was confident that Osama bin Laden either be captured or killed. But neither he could be captured nor killed, instead all indications are that he is alive. For this failure some one to be punished and Saddam could be one. President Bush managed to motivate his people at home for war in Iraq but totally failed to convince the international community.

President Bush took it granted that he will positively gain the support of NATO countries as well as much of the world community as was the case during Gulf War in 1991. He was also confident that he would get the approval of the permanent members of Security Council. He started mobilizing the military -- man and machine -- to the proximity of war zone. After such massive mobilization including positioning of a number of satellites over Iraq, war was the only option open to Mr Bush.

Weather was also an important factor for selecting period of the year for operation. Months of February and March are the best part of the season for military operations in the desert. In April onwars desert temperature starts shooting up often beyond 120 degree F and dust storms are constant menace. As such the President and operational Commanders could not shift the D-Day beyond March, although France, an important Security Council member, wanted to give the UN Inspection Team time to carry out their job till March.

US economy is fast deteriorating; further delay for salvation may be too late. Unless and until the war with Iraq is over, the comprehensive plan to give attention to economy was not possible. The cost of maintaining the troops in the battle ready position in the war zone was costing US exchequer 2 billion dollar (equivalent to taka twelve

thousands crore) each day.

Last but not the least oil interest is also deep rooted for USA. Iraq has the second biggest reserve of oil. In the long run Iraq along with other oil producing countries might use oil as weapon as was done in 1973 by the Arab countries. US being the biggest user of oil does not want to be dictated by Arabs. USA could control Middle East having a grip on Iraqi oil. Mr Bush already spelt out his policy to denationalise Iraqi oil after removal of Saddam from power. Iraq has a great strategic importance because of its geo political location. US wants to have further influence in the Arab countries by having physical presence and keeping close watch on the so-called Islamic fundamentalist countries. Historically in the recent past wherever US troops landed they continued to have their presence to keep a grip on the region.

Wrong information and assessments

Anglo-American political and military planners with the help of intelligence think tanks started massing almost three hundred thousand military personnel along with devastating fire power of Air Force and Navy. Twenty-seven million leaflets were distributed from air asking Iraqis to rise against Saddam. This was to frighten Saddam, his sons and closest associates (in total five persons) to go on exile. Proposal was also placed through some Arab neighbours. Saddam Hussein outrightly rejected these proposals.

Devastating precision attack was launched with Tomahawk missiles. Land troops moved along the axis towards Baghdad, but to their utter surprise none came out to welcome and join coalition forces. Instead local population have resorted to guerrilla tactics and started ambushing coalition troops on the way. The predicted outcome of war game came out as shock and surprise to the coalition forces.

Latest generation of high tech armaments have been used over this period. Most devastating bombing and missile firing have been carried out over Baghdad. It could not subdue the

morale of the Iraqis. Instead the sign of nationalism has emerged; instead of uprising strong will prevails to fight the invaders.

Operational planners were very sanguine about enemy's (Iraq's) weapons, its disposition and defence. Half an hour before formally declaring war Mr Bush ordered his commanders to carry out precision bombing of the palace of Saddam where he and his sons were confirmed to be staying at that moment. This was done to achieve surprise from the enemy. Bombing went accurately but none of the leaders could be hit. All those information found to be incorrect. During the advance troops faced stiff resistance at the places where it was least expected. The victory was supposed to be achieved in seven days but even on 13th day the coalition forces were nowhere near Baghdad.

With the heavy bombardment the allied forces expected the Iraqi Army to buckle and surrender as it happened in 1991. But the situation and motivation is different this time. In 1991 when USA along with its coalition forces launched the attack the Iraqi army was with-drawing and were caught in the desert like lame ducks. Iraqis did not have logistic support and ammunition. US air power having total supremacy in 1991 destroyed the troops and equipment easily without endangering their lives at that time.

Today the world is divided; even many Americans and powerful nations including Security Council members vehemently oppose this invasion. This has given confidence to Iraqi people to fight against Anglo-American forces. The people of Iraq as well as many Arabs believe that oil is the main goal. Some anti-Islam propaganda also had deep-rooted effect in the hearts and minds of the people.

Not allowing US Infantry Division to pass through Turkey's territory to Kurdistan is a great setback for coalition forces. Mobilization of 30000 Turkish troops at Kurdish area along Turkey-Iraq border has totally upset Anglo-US plan. Turkey is very much apprehensive about occupation of its territory by Kurds (PUK) with the help of US troops.

Looking beyond Saddam

Although it seems that the victory of Anglo-American forces is far away, but it may come at the end, if the coalition forces could survive the long drawn war. More importantly, the world opinion. At the end wining of the war is going to be very costly for both the parties. For both Mr Bush and Mr Blair their future may hang in balance as outcome is becoming costlier each day.

US government and its allies chalked out plans to replace Saddam with the government of their choosing. Will it be another general, or a civilian government? The following parties are being groomed up to form government and run the show:

Iraq National Forces: The US funded and backed INC is the umbrella organization of Iraqi groups opposed to Saddam's rule. Formed in 1992 by 300 exiled Iraqi politicians, officers and clerics, it combines more than 30 groups, that has a seven-member committee. One Mr Ahmad Chalabi is said to have been nominated as the leader. He is said to have powerful friends in the Pentagon and Congress.

Kurdish Democratic Party: Founded by Mr Mustafa Karzani in 1946 it is one of Iraq's oldest opposition groups for more than four million Kurds. Karzani's son Masoud, now 56, 1991 destroyed the troops and equipment easily without endangering their lives at that time.

Patriotic Union of Kurdistan (PUK): It was founded in 1975 under the leadership of Jalal Talabani soon after the 1974-75 rebellion collapsed. The PUK and KDP are thought to have at least 4000 fighters in northern Iraq protected by US-British no fly zone.

It is a wishful thinking that the puppet government chosen by Anglo-American axis will be able to run the country. Looking at the outcome and scenario of war Mr Bush has changed his policy on this issue and may try to have democratic government after fall of Saddam regime.

Other countries

There is hardly any support for this war in the Arab world particularly amongst the general public. Even leaderships

are also very much apprehensive about its outcome. The general people of the Muslim countries feel that this war is against Islam. On one hand US government is supporting Israel for occupation of Palestine and on the other, talking about liberating Iraqis from Saddam's rule; it is believed to be a hypocrisy. At one stage Mr Bush said that democracy would be restored in the Middle East after the war. Was it to make the general public happy, so to say that monarchy will be replaced by democracy?

It is evident that there is a major crack within NATO and EU countries. New polarization is expected to take place. Russia has already started exerting its influence and China will not be left alone. This war may bring major changes in world orders. Priorities may shift from military and ideological axis to economic and regional axis.

Many third world countries directly or indirectly receive aids from US government. Lack of support for this war may effect their aids. Recently US government was instructing some countries including Bangladesh to close down the Iraqi embassies and also extradite some Iraqi diplomats. Those sovereign countries ignoring the advice of the US government would be black listed for aids, investments/trade etc. Muslim countries and the Muslims in general will remain in the list of suspects in Britain and US. Their entry/migration to USA will be affected further.

One must agree that Middle East will remain an exploiting ground for all the military and economically powerful nations as long as oil is there. Oil resource and the money will have magnetic effect to exploit the Arabs. Fear and lack of insecurity will be kept alive and embedded in the hearts of the Arab rulers. They will continue to buy most expensive and sophisticated weapons from the producers particularly in USA. The custodian of the peace of the world will keep the arms market alive.

Brig. Gen. Chowdhury who served as Director, Military Operation in AHQs, is a former ambassadors.

Conversation in unmarked grave

M.SHAFULLAH

GOEBBELS in his global tour at these busiest hours revisited Berlin for few moments only to find Fuehrer (Hitler) in angst (anxiety caused by the uncertainty of human existence). Fuehrer had not seen him after 11 September 2001. Not much pleased for his long absence, nonetheless, Goebbels was welcome for exchange of the latest rundown of events that literary shook the earth. Iraq has been under shower of 1000 Cruise missiles and thousand pounders from the sky per night. Goebbels without much audio of the modern day sycophants straightaway congratulated the Herr [master] on the successful transmission of his *lebensraum* doctrine [life space, room for living, used to justify his acquisition of foreign land for Germany] to the Mother and Father of democracies in the 21st century. Hitler thought he was already a fallen leader

much maligned by the West, the Jews controlled media and Hollywood movies, and perhaps his disciple was not flattering him. But then Fuehrer reminded Goebbels his doctrine was for those parts of Europe where Germans live would be Deutschland [Germany]. His principle was based on *realpolitik* [politics based on practical needs rather than moral or ethical ideas]. Hitler is now in angst to view a *Dummkopf* [dumb-head] is set to occupy lands in distant continent on the principle that where there is enough oilfields that would be 'Bush-land'. Hitler confessed his *blitzkrieg* [a sudden strong attack] was unto neighboring countries and would not have gone beyond had then imperial 'axis of evils' not provoked him. His defence was that he had not gone to another continent in pursuit of conquest of 'space' for the Germans.

During Hitler's time Gulf region was under imperial occupation. Hitler was

amused to learn from his faithful disciple that the victorious imperialist powers truncated the region into tiny Sheikhdoms and Kingdoms to manoeuvre at ease to keep oil resources under their complete control. A fabulous life-style blinded the nouveau-riche Arabs turning them to live in almost a never never land. Arabs deposited their billions of dollar fortunes with the Anglo-American financial institutions. An Arab bank [BCCI] was liquidated with billions of dollar assets by Britain in 1991. Under American Patriot Act S 1.74 billion Iraqi deposit in US banks was confiscated the other day and another six billion from other destinations are at command of Bush Administration. An undisclosed amount of Libyan money had already been frozen when that oil-rich country came under sanction in 1992.

Goebbels after reincarnation became faithful to facts and almost sanguine that his progenies in the

Western media and elsewhere would also undergo similar transformation in their turn. Quoting from US sources he apprised Hitler that Anglo-American troops outnumbered the native Arab population in those tiny Sheikhdoms spread from Oman in the south, to Kuwait in the north. With assets in Anglo-American banks and neo-imperialist troops on native soils the oil-rich kingdoms are but virtual prisoners of their wealth.

Hitler wondered how under democratic dispensation countries go for blatant occupation of foreign territories. Neither the president of America nor the prime minister of Britain can be accused of being dictator like him. Or are they? To calm Fuehrer, Goebbels said they were not. In fact one is a child prodigy and was re-elected and the other became president by court verdict. Goebbels provided the Anglo-US rationale to station troops in far away lands in the Middle East. First, to

protect the Gulf states from another invasion from despotic Saddam regime that invaded Kuwait in 1990. Fleeing of Gulf states to the point of bleeding to maintain US troops under duress started from day one of the first Gulf war. Second, to liberate Iraqi people from tyranny of dictator Saddam even if through indiscriminate bombing of the country. Third, democracy which is flying on the wings of B-52 bombers and cruise missile warheads will be transplanted in the desert of Iraq to be emulated by the Kings and life time Presidents and leaders of never ending Revolution in the Arab world. A reform agenda with a tunnel vision for the Middle East is coming out of the barrel of the gun. Fourth, Anglo-US troops will 'water' the plants of democracy as long as necessary to take roots in the desert climate. Fifth, Iraqi oil reserve which is 112.5 billion barrels, the second largest after Saudi reserve of 216.8 bb, to be used for the welfare and reconstruction

of Iraq ravaged to O-ground in resisting 'liberation forces'; American oil reserve of 30.4 bb lifted at the rate of 7.7 million barrels per day is fast depleting. US are the world's biggest user of oil. Despite their oil-hungry Anglo-American occupying forces will rein in their temptation and greed to be custodian of the Iraqi interest.

Sixth, Kurds will not be betrayed unlike 1991 Gulf War. Their legitimate national aspiration for a State will be met by carving out territories of Iraq, Iran, S Syria and Turkey. Iran crossed swords with US in taking hostage of American diplomats in 1979. Tehran must pay for it in good time, which is now. Syria has been endangering Israel's security in insisting withdrawal from Golan Heights. Further dismemberment of Damascus is in order. Seventh, with US annual three billion economic packages and two billion security assistance and daily wanton violence against the Palestinians in the

occupied West Bank and Gaza, Israel is insecure because of Yasser Arafat. He lived too long against the wishes of mass murderer Ariel Sharon. Arafat must be brought to heel immediately after Saddam. Washington's road map for Palestinian State will end up in Tel Aviv.

Hitler, apparently pleased with the turn of events, changed side in his debrief-filled grave and asked, "What's next?" Goebbels read out to him recent statement of Ramsfeld which says "World will witness the scale of destruction and devastation of war in Iraq which it never ever saw before." Hardly Goebbels had finished, Fuehrer made an attempt to jump out but tons of broken pieces of bunker were on him from head to toe. Nonetheless, heaps of debris could not stop his gift of the gab: "My records in Europe have been dwarfed in Vietnam, in Afghanistan and now in Iraq. Out of the ashes of the Second World

War the Charters of the United Nations was proclaimed on 26 June 1945 in San Francisco, which reads in part 'We the peoples of the United Nations determined to save the succeeding generations from the scourge of wars. . .'. The very country that hosts UN edifices shattered my records. Have they saved succeeding generations from war after my fall? Have I not been vindicated by the democracies? Could not I then ask for a stone on my grave?" Goebbels nodded and said, "Fuehrer, you deserve something more than that." "What is up in your sleeve?" Hitler shot back. Goebbels replied, "You may even come out for a tour", Hitler enquired, "Will not the Jews hang me in public for crime against humanity?" Goebbels reassured "Before that I will take you to a Texas saloon to remove your moustache and for a cowboy haircut.

M.Shafullah is a former ambassador.