

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.



In the name of liberation

Keep up the good work!

It was a delight to see *The Daily Star* editorial appearing on CNN (March 27), along with other newspapers of the world. *The Daily Star* is our pride, for only you could represent the Bangladesh flag in the world media.

Keep up the good work.
Michael Ahmad
New Eskaton, Dhaka

A new Bangladesh

This invasion of Iraq by the USA and UK shows how much the respective top persons of those countries believe in democracy. Yes I admit in USA and UK people have the democracy to express their opinion, but if their opinion cannot change the attitude of their regime then what is the value of this so-called free voice of the people of USA and UK.

In this perspective, in Bangladesh we have a great opportunity to show the whole world including the US and UK what democracy is. I earnestly request the Prime Minister and the opposition leader of our country to organise an all party procession and to submit a condemnation letter to the UN protesting this brutal war.

Imagine, a huge procession for peace in Bangladesh, headed by Khaleida Zia and Sheikh Hasina, protesting this war together! Let us present a new Bangladesh to the rest of the world.
Niloy Zaman
Purana Paltan, Dhaka

War information

Boycotting of products and services from the US and UK is gaining weight as a valid protest against US and British action and is for many a sacrifice. From the article "If only there were less news from the front" by Sue Arnold, I believe we can find an additional protest that addresses our concerns with an even deeper justice.

After our marches etc in protest of this Anglo-American illegal war what do we do...go home and settle down to

insightful reports from around the world and combines it with measured commentary. 20-30 minutes with a morning newspaper is sufficient to find the information most of us need.

For those of us able access and use newspapers let us do so; meanwhile encouraging all to at least limit their use of CNN and BBC to being 'informed about' not 'entertained by' this war.
S.J Corlett
A British citizen in Dhaka

Satyagraha

In protest against history's cruelest conduct of Bush-Blair and their associates, I have begun peaceful *Satyagrahi* (Protestor) by renouncing the Western dress and British-American goods.

Wearing a Western dress carries no significance when lives of millions of men, women and children are under the threat of annihilation by brutal forces. It is better to shake off the mask of the so-called civilisation than indulging in uncivilised practices in the garb of civilised outfit. Peace, justice and truth is the need of the hour for mankind.
Syed Abul Maksud
Writer & Journalist

Stop the war

We are really surprised that America is blaming Iraq for breaking Geneva Convention because it showed pictures of some captured American soldiers on TV. How could US-UK government say such things when they are guilty of a horrible crime, waging war against Iraq! Don't they feel ashamed attacking a small impoverished country, which is still under sanction and its people are dying from want of food and medicine? They amassed a great number of soldiers and sophisticated weapons of huge quantity and attacked Iraq defying UN, not giving any importance to the advice of the members of the Security Council

However, we are deeply grateful to

when it fails to prevent this unjust war from taking place! Shame on this so-called modern civilisation!

It is sad to see that UN is so helpless in taking a stern action against the US, since it went ahead and invaded Iraq by violating UN charter. It seems that from now on it is not UN but the US will decide the fate of all the ill-fated human beings in this world! God Help us.
Waheeda Alam
Toronto, Ontario

Say 'No' to US products

We condemn the motivated military aggression on Iraq by USA. But we can do very little to make the US-UK leaders to stop this unjust war. But one thing we can do to protest this war is to boycott the US products. From now on, we should say 'NO' to products like Coke, IBM, Dell, etc.
Shawkat Hossain
Mirpur, Dhaka

Shock and Awe

With the war against Iraq, we often hear the military cliché "Shock and Awe". What is this shock and awe that has caught everybody's attention? This is a secret and relatively new form of military tactics worked out by the US military in 1996 to ensure complete domination on their enemy's force.

I happened to stumble on one of the websites that gives a complete line-by-line description of this new strategic war play. Anyone interested in military strategy or power politics can visit the web page for satiating his/her thirst for knowledge on this subject. The address is www.shockandawe.8m.com.
Shuman Khan
Long Island, USA

A tough time

After reading all the letters on March 28 when I took my launch and felt like having a coca cola, my favourite drink I could not order one (the idea of boycotting US products were spinning around in my head). Indeed it is a silent and peaceful protest against the US led

excesses of our leaders and their families deserves what it gets. The streets are full of anti-American protesters. How many processions did you see protesting the Millionaire Meter Reader?

We should set our own house in order before we even presume to criticise a country like the US.
Saladin, Dhaka

This is a response to Mr. Shuja's letter. Isn't his letter self-contradictory by itself? He stated that Saddam is a cruel dictator and America mishandled the crisis. Both are correct but he couldn't simply differentiate between them. The underlying danger is elsewhere.

Is Mr Suja more sanguine that after the US led invasion Iraq would not become another Palestine like ulcer in the Middle East? Here's the problem lies with Suja's favourite leaders Mr. Bush and Mr. Blair. They are those kind of political leaders who lack leadership. Does Mr Suja think it is sufficient to perform a complex brain operation having only sophisticated surgical equipment? Not it at all, the surgeon must have the combined profound knowledge, precision capacity, far-sightedness, and accurate sensitivity. In this univocal world, handling crisis like Iraq is more critical than a complex brain surgery. Suja only managed to see the lighter side of the coin, but couldn't go through the darker side of it.

Mr. Bush has unveiled a new kind of democracy. This is "imposed democracy", invented solely by the US and exclusively for Iraq. Democracy cannot be imposed, rather it should emanate gradually from the system within. Please, try to understand the so-called Middle East "Peace Road Map" hinted by President Bush himself just before invading Iraq. After overt massive press attack from Israel and covert political pressure from Zionist lobby Mr. Bush retreated silently and now completely tightened.

Shaheen Mahmood
College Road, Gazipur

This is my response to the letter of Mr. Shuja. In the letter he has used some adjectives to describe us Bangladeshis. He said we are poor, I agree to that. But we do not migrate to other countries just to escape our consequences. He also said we are intolerant, and we are often violent but I think we have to accept the fact that we are all the citizens of a democratic country and we have the courage to agree what we are. Unlike many people we do not try to neglect our duties and do not forget to utilise our rights. Then Mr Suja said that we are "crippled" by religious sentiments. But we were successful to retain secular and religious harmony for 32 years without having a communal feud or riot. May be not all but the majority of the people of our motherland are peace loving.

Every one has a democratic right to freedom of expression and he has expressed his thoughts about the ongoing war. Now I guess it is my turn. Suja said that this war would bring a better future to Iraq. But if there are no Iraqi survivors, who will enjoy this bright future?

In the UN councils and other meetings it was said repeatedly that there are other alternatives to war and this crisis could have been solved in a peaceful and negotiable manner. I agree when you say Saddam is a dictator but the Iraqi people knows what is best for them and they can take their own decisions. USA or any other country doesn't have the right to indulge in their personal affair.
Khalid Rahman
Dhaka

"W" is for whine

Before the invasion of Iraq, Bush told Saddam, "You've got till sun-up to get out of town". After the invasion Bush has transformed into George "Whining" Bush. Some of his better known whines include:
"Why aren't the Iraqis fighting fair?"
"Why don't they (Iraqis) surrender?"
"Why is Al-Jazeera TV showing distressing pictures?"
"Why are you journalists asking difficult questions?"
"Why is the whole world opposed to my invasion?"
"Why are they burning my effigies and not Saddam's?"
"Why does everybody hate me?"
Stop whining and leave Iraq!
Omar Chowdhury
Utara, Dhaka

Muscle flexing of America!

Iraq is now the focus of global attention drawing people from all walks of life including leaders, intellectuals and average citizens to watch the devastation often live and discussions goes on in the internet, cafes, street corners and not to mention in *The Daily Star* Letters Page. Most of those who decided to write in this Page are educated and conscious but it is not the same when you visit some of the Internet discussion forums.

The fact of the matter is, Iraq has been used again and again in the interest of Western world. First they were used to fight against Iran in the emergence of Islamic revolution which the West and the despots in all Arab countries wanted to crush or contain. The West wanted to establish their total control over oil in the Persian Gulf and the despots wanted prevention of spreading of the revolution (the kings, the princes, the sheikhs, the emirs and their dependants could not imagine a life without the shameful luxury if the revolution spread and they were thrown out of their make-belief world). It is the same West that aided Iraq to develop chemical and biological

More excuse and more destruction



The life goes on

The US-UK invasion of Iraq is increasingly showing itself to be a war against a nation. Bush and Blair have tried mightily to portray their aggression as a conflict with the regime, not with the people of Iraq. But they overlooked that that is not for them to decide. Day by day, the Iraqi people are showing that they have decided the war is on them.

Blair and Bush know this and are desperate to hide the truth. The inordinate attention CNN and BBC have given to the paltry deliveries of 'humanitarian aid'

promised by the British in Basra and Americans on the northern front is a major part of the propaganda war effort.

The truth has filtered through the lies, but it is not easy to discern. It is obvious that the pitiful shipload of supplies the British have laboured so mightily to deliver has almost nothing to do with alleviating suffering in Basra, and everything to do with providing film footage for the propaganda message. It is equally obvious that, with another 100,000 troops steaming toward Iraq, securing Umm

Qasr had little to do with relief and everything to do with reinforcing the invading army. Indeed, we now know that even the ship carrying 'humanitarian relief' is half-filled with military equipment!

Where are the open-armed welcomes, the jubilant Iraqi citizens throwing flowers at the invading troops? The US-UK leadership, Donald Rumsfeld leading the way, must resort to the most ludicrous lies and empty speculation to explain their absence. The fact is that Iraq has armed its entire nation

No pictures of dead bodies please, we are civilised!

Some good people appear to find the pictures of dead soldiers broadcast by Arab media offensive. Yet these same people find it very normal to illegally invade another country and kill its people -hey, we are gentle people and killing is okay, but seeing the picture is not!

They say the 'Prisoners of War' must be treated according to Geneva Convention. Yes of course, only if those soldiers were POW. This is not a war, this is an invasion and that makes those so-called POW the 'Prisoners of Invasion'. But then again, this is a Muslim country that is being invaded and as we are all being reminded every day, that Muslims are not permitted to think what is right or wrong. They simply are not civilised enough for such tasks. For that, we have the peace-loving, democratic and civilised politicians in London and Washington!
Azad Miah, Oldham, UK

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weapons who today want to disarm Iraq of the same since it no longer obeys the masters.

Secondly, failing to achieve the goal, the West wanted to ensure that they do not end up losing their influence in the Arab states and their wealth. The only way to do so was to formulate a trap that will result in Arab states to cry for military help thus facilitating the permanent deployment of US troops in all Arab countries. So, they gave the green light to Iraq to attack Kuwait. The rest is all history.

The Gulf War in 1991 served two or rather three purposes quite conveniently. The US secured total and complete control over the deserts in the Arabian Peninsula and the natural resources the countries possess with exception to Iraq.

The retreating US forces from Asia e.g. Thailand and Philippines found homes of rather luxurious living standards in the Gulf States.

And finally, the war games pushed the arms sale to an astronomic proportion with principal beneficiary being the US of A.

The present crisis is nothing but muscle flexing in order to discipline the pupil who had decided to break ties with his masters.

The fool learned but learned by paying a huge price thrice. Whether this learning can stand against the brutal force of the coalition of the willing or rather unwilling is a matter to be seen.
Khandaker R Zaman, Dhaka

Not everyone is against the war!

Anyone reading *The Daily Star's* coverage of the war wouldn't be amiss in thinking that the whole world is against this war including Americans. Thankfully that is not the case. Newspaper coverage of this conflict varies a great deal. *The Daily Star*, for example, is die-hard anti-war. *The Daily Star* studiously ignores any reports by many news sources that give a positive spin to the war.

Rebuilding Iraq

The invading US forces tightened their grip on Iraq's southern oil region and began contract-outing US firms to rebuild and operate Umm Qasr port and restart export of oil wealth of Iraq. Only the northern oil hub Kirkuk remains out of their grasp, slowing Washington from its declared goal to 'safeguard' the country's billions of barrels of oil reserves. Already a rift between the US and the British emerged as to who would get the lucrative contracts as the Americans vow to grasp everything alone leaving the British mere onlooker only.

Before the war, the entire American exercise of accusing Iraq in possession of WMD (that launched the weapons inspection by the UNMOVIC, and subsequently unveiling the American presence) was viewed with widespread suspicion by many whom saw the exercise as a US bid to grasp Iraqi oil wealth. Now the suspicion of many becoming the truth and it's just a matter of time how quickly oil starts to flow from what appears to be largely undamaged wellheads. It's the matter of reconstructing the delivery infrastructure only. A US firm Boots and Coots International Well Control has been awarded the contract to do the job already.

But a Saturday-Sunday USA TODAY/CNN/Gallup poll shows that overall, 70% of Americans favour the war, virtually no change from the past week even as news reports on the campaign's progress became more and more negative, and as speculation arose that Pentagon planners might have underestimated the enemy's ability and resolve to fight.

Seven out of 10 say the war is morally justified; opposition to the war holds fairly steady at about one in four, with little sign of gaining as anti-war demonstrations continue at home and abroad.

And more than eight of 10 say the goals set by President Bush - freeing the Iraqi people, ridding Iraq of weapons of mass destruction and making the United States safer from terrorism - are goals worth fighting for.

Contrary to what a *Daily Star* reader might think, this war is supported by people in America. When this war is over, America will reward its friends and allies. I wonder where Bangladesh will be on that list.
Kim, Dhaka

If this is democracy....

We are witness to a bizarre sight of democracy. When "warriors" (of democracy) are waging war to force democracy, to change regimes at will, and even use government agency to undertake covert assassination. It is bizarre also to see Prime Minister of UK survive on the vote by opposition Conservative as his own Labour Party is in revolt; when he acts without any compunction against the will of majority of public.

The leader of the most powerful country in the world, elected to Presidency on technicality, is bent upon frittering away recklessly and relentlessly, the best traditions and values that the American people have been conspicuous to defend. Freedom and justice are thrown to the wind; love and admiration are giving way to hate and fear. The founding fathers of the American Constitution must be turning in their graves. What a tragedy!

Don't kill the children



Innocence and uncertainty

The crisis in Iraq is heightening everyday. The international media has already smudged the information and that makes the situation worse. With the war, the world economy has been pushed to a greater turmoil than what happened after the September 11 situation. The May 2003 O and A Levels exam could also be delayed by one month or more depending on the state of affairs. That means a batch of students would suffer through no fault of their own. Who am I kidding? The Iraqi children are getting killed everyday.

Of course both the coalition leaders are

taking every security precaution necessary. Sniper attacks are imminent from anyone who would see the pictures of injured children everyday on the front pages of newspapers. Their families are perched safely in the White House and Downing Street. Just think of the little boys and girls that are butchered and mutilated. Just think about the parents who are still living but their children are no more. Just think of them Tony Blair and George W. Bush and put yourself in their place.
Mohammad Isam
Dhanmondi, Dhaka

the people around the world who are protesting vehemently against this unjust war, it must be stopped now. For its own good America should listen to the people because anger, hatred and dislike is growing fast in people's minds all over the world against America.
Nur Jahan, Chittagong

US not UN!

This war waged by USA and UK is creating havoc daily, needless to say scores of civilians are being killed everyday in a horrific and gruesome manner, which is neatly sidelined by the US government mouthpiece CNN (you will not get the details from them as it is too 'SHOCKING' for the viewers as if they will not know from elsewhere!).
But my question is what is the need for an organisation like United Nations

war hopping it would make an impact on this superpower before whom the whole world is helpless. But isn't it Anti-Americanism?

So, when this war is creating a hatred for Americanism, it is a tough time for those who believe in humanity, equality and diversity. Let us hope the American people will soon lead their country to the welfare of the humanity and the rest of the world will again start using the US brand.
Shaheen, Tongi

"Pro-war letters"

I think Shuja (March 31) is absolutely right when she says that we are poor, weak, ignorant, often violent and crippled by religious sentiments. That is exactly what makes us a poor third world hellhole.
We deserve our poverty as well. Any country that calmly accepts the

