

Iraq war destruction Humanitarian crisis deepening

As the Iraq war is entering its critical phase, people around the world continue to express their grave concern over the humanitarian crisis, which is assuming unmanageable proportions.

With a handful of people working on behalf of international organisations engaged in rescue operations and the quantity of relief materials pouring into Iraq being hopelessly inadequate, the civilians are facing threats of starvation and scarcity of water, besides the devastating war itself.

Both the American and British governments are giving a detailed account of the reconstruction plan, though they do not quite seem to agree on how the job should be done. While the British insist on leaving the matter to the people of Iraq, the Americans want the coalition forces to have a dominant role in the interim administration.

Nevertheless, the UN should continue its efforts to bring the hostilities to an end as soon as possible. And the countries shocked by the attack on Iraq have to take the lead in this regard.

Minimising civilian casualties is high on the agenda of all the nations opposed to the war. But the coalition leaders are unruffled by the wave of protests. It is a harsh truth that they seem greatly concerned about the reconstruction of Iraq but are paying little attention to the sufferings of people now caught in a desperate situation.

A number of charges have been levelled against the invading troops. They are using cluster bombs, a deadly weapon which are causing havoc. The attackers have targeted vehicles carrying innocent people and even hospitals.

The coalition leaders still have the time to stop the war and save the lives of innocent Iraqi people.

Police atrocity in front of parliament

We demand immediate action against those responsible

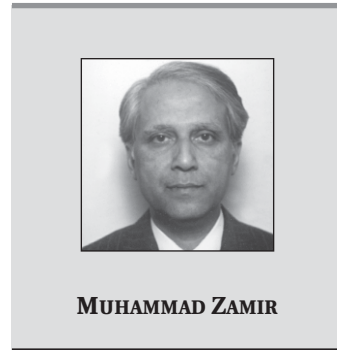
The news of a man being beaten up by some policemen in front of hundreds of people including his wife and two year old child in broad daylight makes us wonder whether the law enforcers are really there to protect us or make us scared of them.

First of all, according to the newspaper report, the policemen were not in their uniform, so we can assume that they were not on duty. Secondly, there is no proof that the two young men posed any threat to other visitors at the premises nor there were any complaints against them lodged with the police.

We are glad that the Speaker of the House took the matter seriously and we hope he would take stern action against those found guilty of illegal action and improper behaviour. But we wonder why the police department itself did not make investigation into the matter.

We hope from now on visitors would be able to roam around the premises freely and without any fear

Anxieties over Iraq



MUHAMMAD ZAMIR

MORE than eight thousand bombs later, into the third week of the Iraq campaign, controversy is the only constant factor.

My attention has been drawn particularly to comments made by Professor Des Ball of Canberra's Australian National University. A specialist in intelligence and defence studies at the ANU's Strategic and Defence Studies Centre, he has pointed out that it did not seem likely that coalition forces would find any substantial quantities of weapons of mass destruction in Iraq.

Recent articles in the British newspapers have also increased our anxieties.

An article this week in The Independent raised some important questions. The report has highlighted how the "obfuscation over the cause of war continues" even though the war started some time ago.

the objective was to remove the weapons of mass destruction, the next it was regime change and the day after that it was a 'war of liberation'.

To this has also been added the query raised by the former Iraqi Oil Minister Essam Shalabi, who has pointed out that potential buyers of Iraqi oil have to bear in mind that from a legal standpoint Iraqi oil is the property of the current regime.



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had since changed, they appeared irritated or bewildered." The tenor of this report tends to suggest that although the means to achieve the goals have evolved with the passage of time, the ultimate aim for the Coalition has remained the same.

This war is inching forward and attrition has become the important word in this conflict. In such a situation, one wonders if the policy planners are giving thought to how the war will end and what will happen in the immediate aftermath.

to overcome a post-war crisis, it might be useful for the coalition to take a leaf out of what happened in 1972 in our war ravaged country.

whenever it does, the real face of war will emerge. The problems will be many. One honestly does not see a scenario both in the short and medium term, of anger, frustration, bitterness and lack of psychological trust being washed away between the contending sides.

Given this climate of suspicion and antagonism, measures and steps to provide much-needed relief equitably to those most in need will face serious challenges.

It will not be an easy task. The United States from published reports appear to be reluctant about entrust-

Cross. This was required in view of the parallel track efforts to receive back more than twelve million Bangladeshis who had sought sanctuary across the border and were now returning to their homes.

In Iraq, after the hostilities cease,

ing any future administration in UN hands. The confusion is further compounded by the fact that the rest of the world considers that any post-war Iraq scenario should be controlled by the United Nations.

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British newspaper, The Guardian, has pointed out that the United Nations will refuse to play a 'subservient' role or act as a 'subcontractor' to the United States in the reconstruction of Iraq.

When the UN Secretary General, like many others in the UN, is apprehensive that the Coalition will try to go around the UN or give it reduced responsibility in terms of status.

Such differences do not harbinger good tidings for the war devastated Iraqi population. This growing disaf-

fection needs to be averted in the interest of the war affected citizens of Iraq.

Another threat of anxiety has risen in the past few days over the treatment to be accorded to the thousands of Iraqi prisoners in coalition hands.

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Plagued by fear, suspicion and shame, in war, the real damage is not the ruins outside, it is the scream in the night, it is the wall of silence, the vacant stare, the debris within.

Muhammad Zamir is a former Secretary and Ambassador

Hope for the time of peace

MEGASTHENES

WE all inhabit -- and function in -- the real world, the one that we have and not a world that we should have or would like to have.

US and British advocacy of an early and apparently punitive war was anything but convincing, and this despite the respect and esteem these countries enjoy, as democracies and even more so as staunch upholders of cherished universal norms and values.

He did not explain and I did not ask if this cri de coeur reflected simply his own sense of frustration at events or if it was pointed to one or more of the protagonists involved.

facile to hold with those who would give familiar human names to the Four Horsemen of the Apocalypse. Why then this war at this time at such human cost?

They themselves contend in vain."

productive though, if the response is such as to alarm friends and allies as well. The US has far more friends than foes, for reasons that are obvious and cogent.

Are we then approaching a post-Sept 11 world order of Pax Americana, with the UN system of collective security rendered almost nugatory? In all its years of existence, the UN has

Prince of Denmark," but none can conceive of Hamlet with only the Prince of Denmark in it. Even in any Pax Americana, there will be countries other than the US in the world, whose legitimate concerns, needs and views cannot be altogether ignored, stifled or wished away but must be addressed.

thing patently superior can be devised, would it be constructive to render it irrelevant? Would an ineffectual UN enhance international peace and security in any manner or be a deterrent to international terrorism?

Iraq has about as much chance of resisting a US-British military onslaught as Foreign Secretary Jack Straw has of surviving one round in a boxing ring with Mike Tyson.

Shakespeare's best-known play is possibly "Hamlet, Prince of Denmark." One has heard the idiomatic expression, "Hamlet without the

History books tell us that Genghis Khan (4860000 sq. miles) -- Alexander the Great, 2145000 sq. miles -- and Cyrus the Great, 2090000 sq. miles, conquered more territory than anyone else in all of recorded history.

The Old Testament assures us that: "To everything there is a season, and a time to every purpose under the heaven. A time to be born, and a time to die; ... A time to kill, and a time to heal; A time to love, and a time to hate; ... a time of peace."

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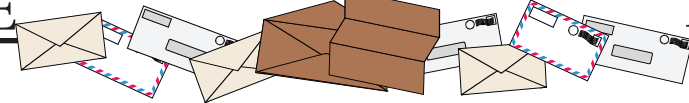
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been able to find any trace of weapons of mass destruction. And the whole world has seen what the US can do with its own weapons of mass destruction at the order of Bush administration. Now my question to the rest of the world and especially to the Americans is, who do they think is a real threat to the entire world and should be removed first?

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TO THE EDITOR TO THE EDITOR TO THE EDITOR TO THE EDITOR TO THE EDITOR



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.

A question of credibility

This is a reply to Esam Sohail's letter of March 28.

I thank Mr Sohail for his clever observation. I am also baffled like him, how come instead of supporting this invasion all those Iraqi dissidents or exiles are now returning home from the neighbouring countries to fight their "liberators"?

Does it mean that the Washington based Rendon Group that got the contract before the Gulf-War to vilify Saddam Hussein is not performing

well this time around? According to Norman Solomon: "the firm (Rendon Group) made a lot of money by contracting with the CIA to do media work for the Iraqi National Congress, an organisation seeking the overthrow of Saddam Hussein." (Ref: War Needs Good Public Relations by Norman Solomon)

We all have heard so many bad things about President Saddam Hussein. But the dilemma is how can we believe Messrs Bush and Blair and their cronies after hearing them uttering so many lies within the last few days? Sifting through the propa-

ganda is not an easy task. It's really 'a question of credibility!' Shukla Mirza Qatar

"Not everyone is against the war"

The letter "not everyone is against the war" (April 2) mimicked the arrogant attitude of America, which they are becoming so (in) famous for. The writer Kim says (or should I say threatened) that after the war is over, America will reward its allies and friends (do they have any left?).

All I want to say in response to that is, just as the Iraqis would rather perish than be invaded by self-serving and mercenary governments, we would also rather die than support this unjust war. Not every one can be coerced or bought, you know.

Kim actually believes that the American government is fighting this war to "liberate" the Iraqi people! This war is not going to make the US secured from terrorism, but only serve the very opposite. And Bush administration's claim that Iraq possesses weapon of mass destruc-

tion! Then why aren't they using it to defend themselves as their soldiers and civilians are dying in tandem? Sabrina Dhaka

"No pictures of dead bodies please, we are civilised!"

This is a response of Azad Miah's letter. The Arab media is doing absolutely the right thing. Their broadcasting of war news have made the role of the major US and British media questionable and proved how biased these news

agencies are. They focused on dead bodies so that people throughout the world know how much brutalities and war crimes are being committed by the invading coalition in Iraq. Their satellite station was bombed and website was hacked and they were even barred from entering an office in the US where they had been serving for long.

George Bush repeatedly kept and

keeps saying that in Iraq, Saddam's regime has stockpiled weapons of mass destruction which is a threat to the rest of the world.

Though being totally unable to prove any such allegation, the US attacked Iraq ignoring the UN and all sorts of protests around the world. In the last two weeks, the US has air raided Iraq almost without any pause causing numerous civilian casualties, wounding hundreds of innocent children and now they are saying that they are far from the end of the war!

In the mean time, they haven't