

## No substitute for centrality of UN role

*The US should accede to the demand for it*

As the thoroughly unequal war on Iraq reaches a climactic point, differences are surfacing in the US establishment over a possible UN role in the post-conflict Baghdad. But the initiative seems to be in the hands of the hawkish extreme right in the White House, Pentagon and Congress at whose instance, one can hardly forget, the war was waged in the first place without a UN resolution.

This powerful segment of the US government is making no bones about its agenda for a dominant American role in the administration of post-war Iraq. We expected that after waging a fundamentally unexplained war the hawks will be sensible to try and make up with the doves and, by the same token, with the dissenting world public opinion, by agreeing to the primacy of the UN. But the hawkish image dies hard even when an opportunity presents itself to give some positive impression for a change.

Condoleezza Rice, the close confidante of US President George Bush has made it clear that a retired US army general is to take over Iraq's administration. Even who might that administrator be and what his mandate would be, seem to have been already decided upon in the typical colonialist tradition of, what one would have thought, a by-gone era. But no, it persists, and one could be practically looking at a worse scenario than the dispensation left in Granada, or more to the point, post-Great War Japan. If Condoleezza is privy to Bush's or Dick Cheney's thinking, as she must be, then we have reasons to worry about the doctrine that rejects the primacy of UN role even in a post-war situation.

Significantly, Condoleezza came out with a statement that read like 'a clarification' of what Secretary of State Collin Powell had to say at the Brussels meeting of European foreign ministers. He spoke of a possible UN involvement in a partnership role with the US. Even that 'partnering' appears shrouded in clouds after the latest positioning by Bush's advisor. What seemingly throws a spanner on the wheels of UN primacy is the claim to a predominant US role in the so-called post-conflict Iraq on the ground that America gave life and blood in the war. The question is, such sacrifice as the sacrifice on the Iraqi side as well, could all be avoided if the war was not waged in the first place.

Just look at the plight Iraq has been reduced to. It deserves better than a military government from an occupying power. If it is not truly a conquest of Iraq but an intervention to win the hearts and minds of the people, then the centrality of the UN role must be accepted by the belligerent party. That is the only way to help the Iraqis build a future for themselves.

## Deaths in river

*Why the tragedies are repeated?*

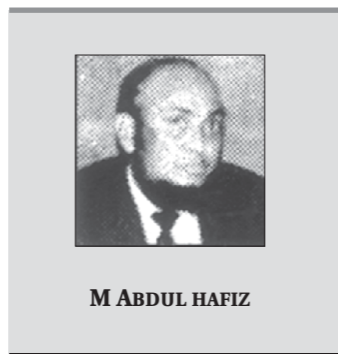
MORE than 60 people, mostly children and women, lost their lives under most unfortunate circumstances, when the boat carrying them sank in the river Surma after colliding with a cargo vessel.

Even when it comes to accidents, which cannot always be prevented, it is not acceptable that people would remain perpetually exposed to the mishaps falling in the avoidable category. A deeper look into the latest boat capsizing will also reveal certain lapses on the part of the boat and the cargo vessel operators. The boat carrying 150 people must have been overloaded. And reports say that the cargo vessel did not have a searchlight, and that must have made it impossible for the boatmen to see the vessel, with visibility at night being poor.

It is, therefore, clear that the mishap did not occur out of the blue the risk factors were very much there.

The government usually responds to such loss of lives by forming a probe body. But seldom do we witness any follow-up measures. The leaders of the ruling party issue routine statements to condole the deaths, and some very feeble attempts are made to help the victims' families. However, the river routes remain as perilous as ever, and no effective steps are taken to enforce the rules of navigation. If it is true that the cargo vessel had no searchlight, and the ill-fated craft was packed with passengers then who is to be held accountable for such gross violation of the rules? Year after year such breach of law is being committed with impunity. Why? Some heads must roll and punishment handed to the guilty to deter its recurrence. And this is the area where the noose must be tightened-- the only way to reduce the number of mishaps is to enforce the rules strictly.

# Battle for Baghdad



M ABDUL HAFIZ

IN modern times, the armed conflicts have since been shorn off its chivalry and the art of war crafted by its great captains forsaken. Instead, today the juggernaut of contenders' war machines collide head long ensuing what becomes modern warfare dominated not so much by innovation or ingenuity but by brutal and bestial force. More so, in an asymmetric war like the one being fought now between the US-led 45 nations coalition of the willing and Iraq. The disparity of strength between the two is so vast that even a comparison is difficult to be drawn. Not only the two key elements of waging and winning a modern war -- the fire power and maneuverability -- are the coalition's monopoly, the battlefield conditions can seldom be better for their optimum application while Iraq is already denuded of its war potentials through a decade of US-led sanctions and UN-imposed weapons inspections. Yet in an expected scenario of the dull drab process of Iraq capitulating to its overwhelmingly superior foe, some of Operation-Iraqi Freedom's finest and most exciting moments and events had indeed been the Iraqi irregulars' heroic resistance -- not anticipated by any one earlier. Even the invaders seem to have grudging admiration for the way they held them back.

In the first place the allied forces never thought that the demoralised lot of Iraqi troops and the bunches of sullen conscripts would at all offer a fight and fondly hoped that they could

be persuaded to surrender en masse even before the opening salvos were fired. The coalition forces' disappointments were profound when it proved illusory and they couldn't either trigger an anti-Saddam uprising. The attempts to encourage a mass defection from the government also failed and the poor CIA could not produce a single 'quisling' to collaborate with it in toppling the regime. Neither could it divide the Iraqis on sectarian line. The coalition's ridiculous efforts to win

of the nation to withstand the onslaught. Their blind ire is now directed against Baghdad -- the seat of the regime in pinpointing whom they would, if required, raze the city to the ground. In fact, President Bush started his invasion with a murderous air raid on Baghdad's presidential palace with a chilling intention of 'incapacitating' Iraq's elusive leadership, even if it produced cascading readjustments in US' war plans putting the ground campaign before the widely anti-

ancient civilization of Babylon and Assyria and the sanctity of its holy land where lie in eternal sleep several prophets of monotheistic faiths, many close associates of the holy prophet of Islam, numerous saints as well as the martyrs of the battle of Qadisia. Where is then the conscience of world which was so violently stirred by demolition of statues in Afghanistan? If the coalition's claims are true that they are now in the outskirts of the capital, the savage bombing likely to be further

So far, roughly 100,000 coalition troops have been committed between Umm Qsar and Baghdad and after two weeks' of fighting are exhausted with battle fatigue. Therefore the reinforcement of 100,000 has been moved to join them for advance towards Baghdad.

Although this strength does not provide the invaders the conventional three to one superiority for an offensive action in Baghdad the defenders' advantage, if any, is totally offset by the

well regroup and reorganize to mount a long term guerilla war against the alien occupation forces. The mountainous areas and deserts contiguous to the borders with Iran, Turkey, Syria, Jordan and Saudi Arabia will provide sanctuaries to the Jihadis and the guerillas. The war will thus expand in time and space making untenable an alien presence or a dispensation sponsored by foreigners to serve their purpose. An Anglo-American occupation for Iraq, no matter how just, could soon come under fire from the new generation of Arabs who are fired with a new surge of Anti-Americanism, as being a new colonialism. In the present state of things they can hardly do anything against Anglo-American power but the Arabs aghast at the sufferings, miseries and humiliation of the fellow Arabs will not let the invaders also have their way.

In the weeks ahead the loyalties of the Iraqi tribal leaders could prove crucial. Since the days of Ottoman rule, the fate of every Iraqi government has hinged on tribal support. At least three quarters of Iraq's 24 million people belong to one of the country's 150 tribes and about eight million still follow the ancient ways, carefully obeying the Sheikhs who govern them. Tribes and their leaders were carefully cultivated by Saddam during long rule and rewarded handsomely. It is they who help Saddam in a significant way to maintain his grip on power. US psy-warriors worked hard to break Saddam's authority in southern Iraq where Shia rebels briefly held 14 cities in 1991. The tribes loyal to Saddam did not let that happen. Can they do it this time round? Then what about 100 bin Ladens the rise of whom has been predicted by none other than president Mubarak, the trusted US ally. It is therefore too premature to claim victory, which even if clean, can be pretty messy as it is in Afghanistan. But before that let us watch how things develop around the battle for Baghdad which has begun.

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## PERSPECTIVES

**In the weeks ahead the loyalties of the Iraqi tribal leaders could prove crucial. Since the days of Ottoman rule, the fate of every Iraqi government has hinged on tribal support. At least three quarters of Iraq's 24 million people belong to one of the country's 150 tribes and about eight million still follow the ancient ways... Tribes and their leaders were carefully cultivated by Saddam during long rule and rewarded handsomely. It is they who help Saddam in a significant way to maintain his grip on power... Then what about 100 bin Ladens the rise of whom has been predicted by none other than president Mubarak, the trusted US ally. It is therefore too premature to claim victory, which even if clean, can be pretty messy as it is in Afghanistan.**

over 'the hearts and minds' of the locals by tantalisingly holding out the food and water after keeping them hungry and thirsty for days in besieged cities and the crude method to buy loyalty failed to make any headway. In the meantime the resistance put up by Fidayeene-Saddam and assorted dots of volunteers remained stubborn and compelled the invading Anglo-American forces to bypass the pockets of those resistances in their rush for the ultimate prize of the campaign-Baghdad.

The coalition's failures on multiple fronts have resulted in deep frustration which when combined with the arrogance that goes with their enormous power produces a dangerous mix -- that of vengeance the syndrome of which we have been witnessing in the aggressors' brazen air attacks -- brought to bear on the country's population, infrastructure and, of course, the leadership to break the will

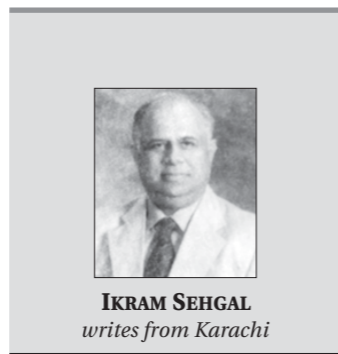
intensified. While the forward elements of the invading forces are nervously probing as to what lie ahead in absence of any ostensible opposition to there advance the world is anxiously awaiting the spectacle of yet another gory phase of so-called Operation Iraqi Freedom. Although the view ahead in the battle field is opaque at the best, it is however learnt that the responsibility of the defence of Baghdad lies with Republican Guards, supported by ten infantry divisions and over 50,000 Fidayeene-Saddam besides thousands of Mujahideen. The total number of combat troops exceeds 3,50,000. The coalition offensive which was to start from the north opening a new front did not materialise due to Turkish refusal to use their territory. During the past few days two of the infantry divisions have been airlifted to the North and West of Baghdad and have linked up with forces advancing from the South.

patented massive strategic bombing of 'awe and shock'. Major bombing raids started a day later when the US administration was unsure about its marksmanship. In last two weeks' relentless bombing the invaders virtually turned Baghdad into an inferno and reduced the fabled city steeped in the legends of Harun-al Rashid and Arabian Nights into rubble. The more they fail to subdue a puny opponent, the more they go berserk resorting to a killing spree and an orgy of destruction. In an indiscriminate bombing of the cities they did not even spare crowded market place and hospital in Baghdad, food godown in Basra and the holy shrine of Najaf where lies buried the fourth caliph of Islam. Baghdad the great seat of Arab-Islamic civilization that had once been the source of inspiration for the renaissance in Europe is systematically pulverised. Also at risks are Iraq's heritage of the

coalition forces' complete mastery of the sky. More so in a situation of the latter's reported capture of the international airport of Baghdad which can now be used unhindered by the invaders for bringing in reinforcements and supplies. Yet, as the war enters its most critical phase the coalition forces are overly circumspect not to be drawn into a vicious urban warfare leaving them with only one option and that is to use the air power with more vengeance, no matter how much death and destruction it will bring in its wake.

In the meantime the post-Saddam dispensation and post-war reconstructions are glibly discussed in western capitals as if the Operation Iraqi Freedom is over and the war is won by the allies who are yet to realise that they have to overcome the several more layers of resistance before they can claim that kind of victory. If the allied siege of Baghdad prolongs the remnants of pro-Saddam forces can

# Shock and woe



IKRAM SEHGAL  
writes from Karachi

PROPAGATED across the electronic and print media of the world, Donald Rumsfeld's blatant psy-war term "Shock and Awe" projected an overwhelming and cataclysmic high-tech strike, its precise and surgical nature meant (1) to take out the regime's leaders, (2) drive raw fear into the psyche of the masses and (3) thus destroy the Iraqi will to fight. Psy-ops is a legitimate weapon of war, if successful the Coalition could have won the war without firing a shot. While the whereabouts of Saddam and his sons Qusay and Uday are still unknown after the one-off surgical hit marking the start of Gulf War-2, the Iraqi regime did not disintegrate like a house of cards as programmed by the Pentagon's computers. The rapid (and spectacular) Coalition ground offensive reached Najaf and Karbala 80 kms on the approaches to Baghdad before being slowed down by determined Iraqi conventional resistance in key urban areas all along the route of advance as well as harassing "hit and run" tactics on the lines of communication (L of Cs). With food, water, fuel and ammunition getting through in far less quantities than the required optimum, US Central Command very correctly opted for reinforcements

(13,000 more US troops) and for shoring up the L of C protection before investing Baghdad. In the meantime battle for Baghdad has begun and Karbala, a holy site for all Muslims, remains surrounded by Coalition forces, some troops have by-passed the city.

The Iraqis will to fight is the real surprise, the effectiveness of their "low-tech" war against an overwhelm-

The protestations of the US hierarchy notwithstanding the war plan has been suitably adjusted in keeping with ground realities. Pentagon planners had originally asked for overwhelming force (400,000 troops) as espoused by the "Powell Doctrine" developed in pursuance of Gulf War-I. The Iraqi rout in Kuwait in 1991 (a virtual "Turkey shoot") and the Taliban opting for the mind-boggling military strategy (for

"reserve liability" till 1975 but didn't get to go to Vietnam. Neither did US President George W. Bush, Jr, who after graduating, remained an F-102 flier with the Texas Air National Guard. The only one in with experience of shots being fired in anger, US Secretary of State Colin Powell, was widely ostracised by the "hawks" for having delayed the war by choosing the UN-route and being sidelined had no input

garded or over-ruled the militia's strong moves in the war game. Amend Clemenceau's saying to read, "War is too important to be left to generals, computer experts or those without combat experience". The factor of "suicide bombing" could not have been foreseen, battlefield procedures and tactics will have to be adjusted to this new threat. Almost a dozen women and children were shot dead in a car by

weather. With the help of Iraqi dissidents and informers, the Coalition will (1) keep on trying to eliminate Saddam Hussain and (2) subvert the loyalties of mainline Iraqi units as well as security services. Not having planned to fight urban warfare in any other Iraqi localities except Baghdad, the Coalition was surprised in Basra, having expected the port city to fall by way of a spontaneous Shia revolt. With civilian casualties rising in number, the resolve of even Saddam-haters among the Iraqis is hardening against the Coalition.

Rumsfeld's threat to Syria and Iran, labelled as "megashore diplomacy" to quote some unnamed British sources, is a dangerous development. Colin Powell later confirmed that this was not an off-the-cuff comment but a considered US policy statement. Syria has no time for Saddam and neither has Iran but the embarrassment of the public US warning could goad them into assistance. The war could possibly widen to include Israel, serious complications thereof if Egypt and Jordan are forcibly drawn into the conflict.

Decision-makers must keep their cool, backdoor diplomacy is recommended rather than open-ended public threats that may be difficult for countries like Syria and Iran to swallow, their leaders will soon feel the pressure from their own streets. The "shock and awe" strategy has spread "shock and woe" among the general population of Iraq. If the war drags on, which it will if Saddam remains in power, the backlash of this "woe" may well make the streets of Arab and Muslim countries boil over in frustration and rage.

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## AS I SEE IT

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ing superior "high-tech" force is another. There are many lessons to be learnt here for our own Armed Forces i.e. of course if they want to learn them. Muslims all over the world were badly demoralised by the apparent lack of courage personified by the Iraqi rout of 1991 and the Taliban collapse in 2001. Even those who did not care one bit for the Saddam regime, the born-again Iraqi fighting spirit is a matter of some satisfaction. Saddam allegedly a monster whose excesses require his vestiges terminated with extreme prejudice, is winning the "reverse" propaganda war. The US will have successfully converted a villain into a hero. If they find the smoking gun of "weapons of mass destruction" (WMD), it may sway western audiences, it will cut no ice with the mood of the streets of the third world.

guerillas) of fighting conventional warfare, occupying fixed lines in defending cities such as Kabul, Mazar-i-Sharif, Kandahar and Herat providing "photogenic" targets for precision-guided munitions (PGMs), delivered by high flying B-52s, B-1s and B-2s, had given a wrong perception to Coalition war planners. Their sudden collapse (though in differing circumstances) in the face of superior high-tech fire-power made battle analysis projections of the Iraqi morale and ability go haywire.

US Vice President Cheney was Defence Secretary during Gulf War-I, neither he has nor the other "hawks" in the Bush Cabinet, Dick Cheney, Donald Rumsfeld, Ms Condoleezza Rice, Paul Wolfowitz and Richard Perle, have any combat experience. A naval aviator between 1954 and 1957, Rumsfeld had

in the planning stage. In emphasizing civilian control over the military, French PM Clemenceau once said that "war is too important to be left to generals". The comment of US battlefield Commander in Iraq Lt Gen William Wallace of US 5<sup>th</sup> Corps, "the enemy we are fighting is a bit different from the one we war-gamed against", was telling.

The present conflict was war-gamed on computers, Fred Kaplan says that "militia fighters" did play a critical role in the US \$250 million "war game" called "Millennium Challenge 2" which was conducted in July and August 2002 involving 13,500 Armed Forces personnel in 17 simulation centres and nine line-force training sites. The scenario was designed to stimulate combat in a fictitious Persian Gulf country resembling Iraq. Pentagon officials disre-

edge US soldiers, other such incidents have followed.

The focus of the Coalition will be to (1) build up an overwhelming ground force in the southern sector, (2) reinforce the northern front with more troops and equipment to make the threat credible, (3) continue massive air strikes for degrading Iraqi command and communication centres, as well as regular army formations, particularly the Republican Guard defending the Baghdad, (4) consolidate L of Cs by increasing protective detachments and air cover to reduce the threat from Iraqi irregulars, (5) rotate US Armed Forces personnel, particularly those at sea, who have already been in the "Theater of Operations" for six months or over and lastly, (6) prepare the troops (and logistics thereof) to continue fighting in hot

# Invasion of Iraq: Challenges for the future

AKHTER HUSSAIN

FOR the last more than two weeks, war has been raging in Iraq. Everyday we see in the media, both electronic and print, the devastations caused by the war. The alliance consisting mainly of the US and the British forces is masterminding the onslaught on the Iraqis giving a blind eye to the opposing world opinion. It seems that the alliance is bent upon in conquering Iraq at the cost of no matter what. Everyday scores of innocent unarmed civilians are being killed and still the alliance is unheeded to the call of the humanity to stop the war. Iraqis on their part are putting up stiff resistance with whatever is left with them after the prolonged UN sanctions. However, whatever may be

the outcome of this war the world community will have to meet certain challenges in the coming years as a consequence of this conflict.

The acceptability and effectiveness of the United Nations as a world organization for resolving crisis peacefully will be in question forever. It seems that the UN has become in reality a club of the rich and powerful nations. Though this notion has been put forward by many nations in the past. But now it will get wide acceptability among poorer developing nations in particular. The UN has proved to be powerless and ineffective when the interest of the powerful nations comes into question. It has time again miserably failed to protect the interest of the relatively poorer nations against the interest of the rich and militarily powerful nations. The

way the UN has been bypassed by the US and the British led coalition to wage war against Iraq is a manifestation of the above fact. The other im-

One led by the US and the other by the Soviet Union. During that time, the countries of the free world, mostly west European, north Atlantic and

ment among them led by France and Germany. Disagreement among them in the UN was also manifested in the European Union and the NATO. This

**To poorer developing nations, experience of the Iraqi crisis will give rise to increasing sense of insecurity with respect to preserving their sovereignty and resources, especially vital natural resources... The other important consequence of the war in Iraq will be the increasing alienation of the Muslims from the mainstream world politics... There is the likelihood that terrorist organizations will spring up in different countries -- not confining to one single country or region.**

portant fact that has emerged in the course is that even the so-called veto power holders of the 'Security Council' are also powerless at the whim of the most powerful nation of the world, the United States of America.

During the cold war period, the world was divided into two camps.

beyond seas (Australia and New Zealand), used to put up united front under the leadership of the US. There has always been wide consensus among them on different world issues. But for the first time, with regards to military options for the disarmament of Iraq there appeared sharp disagree-

brings out the fact that now some of the major European powers want to curve out a new role for them outside the US hegemony. In the coming years, this tendency is going to intensify with the further strengthening of the European Union.

To poorer developing nations,

natural resources. As many of them view that the current war going on in Iraq is just for gaining control over oil resources by the rich and powerful nations, the US and the British. This growing sense of insecurity will make them further vulnerable to the whims of the militarily powerful nations.

The other important consequence of the war in Iraq will be the increasing alienation of the Muslims from the mainstream world politics. The Palestinian issue, recent past crisis in the Balkans and the present one in Iraq will add fuel to that tendency. Muslims in increasing numbers will develop the understanding that to their just causes they will not get fair treatment from the world community dominated by the developed countries having mostly Christian population. This will give rise to a wave of fundamentalism across the Islamic world. The liberals in Muslim countries will find themselves in increasingly difficult positions to combat this phenomenon in their polity.

The above alienation and distrust will also give rise to increasing terrorist activities throughout the world. There

is the likelihood that terrorist organizations will spring up in different countries -- not confining to one single country or region. The world community in the coming years will find themselves increasingly engaged in combating both in-country and cross-country terrorism.

The above are some of the perceived consequences of the war in Iraq. These will shape up tomorrow's world. It will be interesting to see, in the coming years, how the world community faces or lives up to these challenges.

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