

People protest against invasion across the world

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IN the last few weeks I had occasions to travel to Panchagarh, extreme northwest corner of Bangladesh; Chattagram, far southeast of Dhaka; Jossore, far southwest and Jamalpur, mid north. Other than attending some anti-US aggression rally, discussion or preparatory meeting I met and talked people, man-women-children-elders, of different profession and social position, from different religious and ethnic background. I found none, NONE, who thinks in favour of the US position over Iraq or even seemed confused over the issue. Everybody is sad and angry. It is overwhelming to find an extraordinary national and visibly global unity (other than the ruling caste) in position. The message that it carries, only Bush-Blair, ruling network and their creators can ignore.

On the way to every place I found Bush, not bush but the President of the almighty US. That Bush is now everywhere in Bangladesh, thousands. Saddam is also present very near to him. Although Bush outnumbers Saddam, but while Saddam appears in photographs and paintings in a heroic shape Bush everywhere appears in a deformed demonic shape. Beside the highway or rail lines anybody would have difficulty to count number of hanging Bush. Every city, every bazaar, gathering place, school-college-madrasha, every bus stand, even paddy field has a Bush hanging and waiting for getting kicked or to be burned. Hatred does not satisfy even by this.

Like all other cities we find hanging Bush in every corner in capital city Dhaka. In some places the re/deconstructed Bush has *harricane* in his hand, crying to give him oil. In some places Tony Blair got his due position: running with the demon, a tail-fixed appendix etc. Everywhere people built these effigies spontaneously. It would be difficult to find any organisation and groups or even individuals indifferent to the Iraq issue: everyday Dhaka, as well as other cities, experiencing hundreds of protest rallies, demonstrations, cul-

tural programmes, comedy, seminars, film shows, token hunger strikes.

Audiocassette market has been suddenly got number of unscheduled supply of cassettes on Iraq. These are songs tuned in the line of *Jari* and *baul* songs, composed on the Iraq issue arguing against the US terror and cursing Bush-Blair pair and giving encouragement to Iraqi people.

Cartoon, banners, paintings, festoons increased day by day. These have been created to express hatred to Bush-Blair motive, to denounce war and imperialism and to express solidarity with Iraqi people. These creations have changed the colour and mood of Dhaka as well as other places. I met a child last week who loves to engage in paintings. For the last few days her every painting had one single topic: Iraq and Bush. All of her paintings reflected her anger against killer forces of Bush and Blair and love for Iraqi people.

Why people feel so angry?

What made people of Bangladesh across different sections, age and gender, so concerned and involved deeply with Iraq? This is, in a word huge, unprecedented after Vietnam war, in fact more than that. Private as well as public daily lives in Bangladesh have been thoroughly affected. Who can count the number of old and young people passing nights without sleep after war started or number of persons specially women who cried seeing cruelty or children who got scared to see and know the horrific picture of the war?

In every country except perhaps countries like Kuwait and Saudi Arabia people have come to the street in unprecedented scale. One might feel in some parts of the world that it is Muslim identity or solidarity that makes this huge outrage against the US aggression. BBC, CNN may love to portray protests in this frame. But this alone cannot explain the scenario when we note the similar response in non-Muslim countries and again when we see some leading Muslim countries working with the US. The people protesting for days, weeks and months in different part of the world

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are mostly non-Muslim, they are for creating a world without fear and terror. And anybody who dreams for a human world, can not but oppose US hegemony. Because in today's world the US represents imperialism. Angry mass mobilisation around the world is a response of people, across colour, religion, gender, region, against the imperialists, warmongers, plunderers and oppressors. Bangladesh is no exception.

There is more here. From the very childhood people in Bangladesh grow with the stories of Dajla and Forat (in English Tigris and Euphrates), tragedy of Karbala, Imam Hussein, greatness of Bara Pir and also power and pride of Khalifa Haroon-Ur Rashid. Baghdad with its glamour, dynamism, tragedy, drama has been very much alive in people's psyche. People here identify themselves with the pain, glamour and achievement of the age-old civilisation.

In Bangladesh, I found, a five-factor combine has pulled people in an unprecedented level to the street against US aggression and in favour of Iraq and Iraqi people. These are: (1) People's strong conviction that this is an aggression, and attempt to colonize Iraq. It is unjust, demonic attack on civilized but weak and innocent country and people. (2) Iraq invasion reminds people the barbaric role of US imperialism all over the world, in the past, including Hiroshima-Nagasaki, Vietnam, Korea, Chile, Nicaragua, Afghanistan, Columbia and Palestine. (3) Places of Iraq, myth and history have strong seat in people's mind here, which are continuously being bombed to destroy. (4) Unlike before, stronger and expanded information and communication network provides the opportunity to know and see the horrible act of occupiers in Iraq directly. (5) Finally, Muslim identity makes most of them feel closer to the Iraqi people.

Despite propaganda war, prior to

and as a part of military assault, global lords could not convince people that one-sided bombing, killing and destruction of Iraq is necessary to ensure global peace and security. For years Pentagon and oil company sponsored propaganda tried to make world people believe that they were for liberation of Iraq. They killed about a million Iraqis in last twelve years. Since 1991 Iraq's economy and military power had been destroyed under the banner of UN. Once that is accomplished US-UK combine threw away the UN and jumped to occupy Iraq and grab its huge resources. As their files-audio-video-lectures-studies grew in piles, people in every part of the world found those inconsistent, full of lies and rhetorical.

Despite their rhetoric, gradually it became clear that their peace means war, their protection means grabbing, security means occupation and their liberation means colonialisation. People started raising questions that if WMD is the cause of attack on Iraq then on the same argument why US

against the conventional idea that the countries like the US represent democratic system and the elected bodies there hold real power of governance. After analysing the interlinkage of big corporate power, non-elected agencies and elected bodies in the USA he drew his conclusion. Russell made it clear that, the effective ruling caste lives within these corporate bodies, which, according to him, "stays in power no matter who is elected to nominal public office", and he continued, "every President finds himself obliged to serve the interests of this all-powerful group." Therefore he found it tragic as well as revealing that, "American democracy has been emptied of life and meaning because the people cannot remove the real man who rule them."

It is therefore important to locate these real men of power who need Bush to head destruction over humanity. Who are they? The shadow, behind over-enthusiasts about war and invasion living in White House, shows the logo of big companies from two

stated that the mainstream western media itself has been integral part of corporate bodies. Not only that, they are consistently obligated to represent international monopoly capital and assigned to sell its development-destruction ideology. Therefore this media itself should be called embedded that looks at the facts through the glass of global corporate bodies. This media lives in the same tent and cannot go beyond the limit set by Generals of global capitalist system.

Generic and brand name of war-mongers

People at large in Bangladesh and worldwide have been confronting the ugly face of US-UK imperialism when it torn down all other 'democratic' 'civilized' masks they usually wear. The Iraq invasion helped people to find their generic identity. But when there is no war, people usually know these forces in brand name, which is tagged to hide their real face. Most of the people are conditioned to think

existence of this demonic war machinery. The gigantic machine became redundant overnight. But the justification quickly reestablished! Came Gulf war to free Kuwait which, after getting 'liberation' virtually turned into a free US military base. Eventually a new threat 'emerged' for the 'democratic west': Muslim 'terrorist'. That became visible on 11 September 2001 and the whole machinery got a big 'justification' not only to exist but also to be fattened.

A big question, however, remains unanswered. Did 9/11 alone cause, as it is generally believed, the renewing mad-efforts to expand war machine? The US Secretary of Defence Donald Rumsfeld's own article goes against this notion they usually like to publicize. In June 2002, he said, that much before the "terrorist attacks" on New York and Washington, they had decided that "to keep the peace and defend freedom in the twenty-first century, the Defense Department must focus on achieving six transformational goals." In order to do that they decided to expand the war machine much earlier than 9/11. The goals he mentioned were, "to protect the U.S. homeland and our base overseas", "to project and sustain power in distant theatres" "to deny our enemies sanctuary, making sure they know that no corner of the world is remote enough, no mountain high enough, no cave or bunker deep enough, no sub fast enough to protect them from our reach" "to protect our information networks from attack" "to use information technology to link up different kinds of U.S. forces so they can fight jointly" and "to maintain unhindered access to space".

In this context, he declared that, "over the next five years, we will increase funding for defence of the US homeland and overseas bases by 47 per cent; for programmes to deny enemies sanctuary by 157 per cent; for programmes to ensure long-distance power projection in hostile areas by 21 per cent; for programmes to harness information technology by 125 per cent; for programmes to attack enemy information networks and defend our own by 28 per cent; and for programmes to strengthen U.S. space capabilities by 145 per cent." (Transforming the Military, *Foreign Affairs*, Vol.81, No.3, May/June 2002).

The machine of global monopoly capitalism needs war. Briefly it needs war for at least three reasons: first is to respond to the pressure of integral war economy; second is to provide military support, invasion-war-genocide-environment, to ensure profitable investment, expansion and accumulation of capital; and third to build a permanent deadly threat to counter ever-increasing insecurity of the net. So, war, conflict, destruction is genetic expression of the present world order. This reality demands, from the people's side, sustained rather than temporary opposition to the machine that creates destruction and war. It needs constant struggle with the ideological and cultural invasion justifying war, genocide, discrimination at different level and monopoly power. Obviously, there are more to do to strengthen

initiatives with long term perspectives.

Unity and solidarity: Two ends

When one generally talks about implications of war for countries like Bangladesh goes searching data on export, remittance and FDI etc. The US ambassador in Bangladesh gave a sermon to the people here prior to the US aggression that the poor countries like Bangladesh would not be affected by the war! Very few people left today in the world who trust US version of anything. The countries like Bangladesh are losing export, having more expensive imports and facing erosion of remittances. In the home front people's living has suddenly become more costly. But we need to look beyond these losses. Long-term implications lie elsewhere. The fact is well established that the oil-military industrial complex is behind this invasion. This interest alonwith racist ideology is central to the US war mongering. Afghanistan invasion by the US provided a model of colonisation. The US-UK clique is heading towards implementing worse model in Iraq. Its success will put peripheral countries in a much more vulnerable state on the one hand and the resistance that is growing will multiply in and beyond the region on the other. We should keep in mind the fact that in Bangladesh we are now confronting UNOCAL and other big oil companies.

In most of the countries, including Bangladesh, people's mood and opinion has not been reflected in the government's policy and approach on the issue. It needs no elaboration that the governments of most of these countries are clients of US-led global capitalist system. One old man summarised the scenario well. On 25th March last we in a big procession were marching towards US embassy in Dhaka to registrar our protest against US aggression. Police intervened us about five km far from the US embassy. One old man, who was witnessing the clash between people and police, started shouting: "how can the government behave differently? They are in service of US interest here. If they do otherwise they would lose their job..."

Indeed Islam or Muslim identity did nothing to influence the rulers of even neighbouring countries of Iraq: Saudi Arabia, Kuwait, Qatar, Jordan and Egypt. Moreover, Syria and Iran are behaving ineffectively. Kuwait and Qatar are nothing but US base today. Saudi Arabia, the most sacred place of Muslims, is playing role very convenient for the US-UK occupation project. On the other hand, without Pakistan's support US could not move into Afghanistan. The ruling classes under present global order have different equations amongst themselves, which works across religion. They have been united against insecurity created by people's voice and uprising, they have been united to protect their deadly possession, plunder and anti-human hegemony. That in another way unites people across region and religion to raise voice against them.

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Brazilians protesting against the unjust war.

itself should not be attacked? Why not Israel? If Saddam is dictator than what happened with Kuwait or Saudi Arabia? The closest allies of the US in Arab world all have monarchy. Moreover, US's records do not support the claim that it patronises democratic governments, rather history shows that all despotic regimes have supports, protection and provocation from the US. It becomes, therefore, clear that Iraq's 'crime' is not having WMD or dictator regime but (1) having second largest oil fields that is nationalised; (2) having a regime that is unwilling to be subservient to the US control and (3) having military power that does not work under the US strategic plan. Once people find the real story out of the garbage of the US propaganda, they become angry and vigilant.

Who are the most hated?

Who is the most hated person in the world today? Answer is very simple: Bush. Who is the second? Answer: Blair. Who is the third? Guess. Here in Bangladesh to an extent: Kofi Annan, who presided over the death of already crippled United Nations. This man instead of insisting to avert war had apparently given a walkover to the killers. Now instead of making attempts to stop the war or organising war crime tribunal against the US and UK leaders he is trying to unite the 'reconstruction' and 'humanitarian' business people under the UN.

Which state is perceived today as the most deadly threat to the humanity? Again answer is easy: the US. However, the latest aggression in Iraq is not the first of this kind by the US. This empire has accomplished several records of direct or indirect invasions, genocide and destruction of human and material resources alongwith nature's. Therefore, Mr., junior or senior, Bush cannot be singled out for this type of war crime. Rather it can be said that Junior Bush is one of the worst in the series of formal leaders heading world crime. It is well known that this man became the President of the US not through election but effectively by selection. The question is, however, who did select him? Who did need him so badly that they had to tear the regular procedure of formal administration? These are the bodies, though unselected, hold real power in the US.

Who are the real players?

Let me bring in Bertrand Russell's discovery of real power in the US in Vietnam context, about 37 years ago. Confronting horrible experiences of Vietnam War and the ugly face of so-called 'free world', Bertrand Russell, leading philosopher of the 20th century and the liberal democrat in political outlook had an eye opening realization about the world he lived in. He could then look beyond the veil of democracy. He then confidently stood up

strands. These are (a) oil giants and (b) armaments giants. All documents and present and future strategy of the occupiers establish the fact that Iraq invasion is effectively an ambitious long term project of oil-military industrial complex. The (s)election of Bush administration by them about two years back was by no means accidental or coincidental. Look at the club: this administration is full of two species, two-handed body: one has military gene (persons like Generals and people from 'intelligence' agencies) and another has oil gene (persons from or glued to oil companies). President Bush's family has the pride to hold both. Followers are the other big corporate bodies alongwith the World Bank and UN agencies.

Embedded media

The whole world has been amazed to find a new species of journalists after invasion of Iraq. These journalists have been looking through the glass of occupying forces, living in and sending reports from the tent of those forces; they are called embedded journalists. That is meaning that these journalists are placed so close and glued to the occupying forces that they are comparable to, according to encyclopedia Britannica, fossils *embedded* in stone, an integral part. The fact is therefore, beyond controversy. These journalists are placed to play role as spokesperson of, as well as soldiers in propaganda war of, the occupying forces. No journalists were put embedded to the Iraqi forces. Moreover non-embedded journalists working in Iraq were bombed to kill. The 'deviated' journalists were either bombed or sacked.

So, what 'objective' news, reporting we are getting from embedded BBC, CNN, REUTER, AP, AFP etc are the subjective version of the occupying forces, a part of their strategic propaganda. It has therefore been common in these media to present lies, twist, distortion and self-contradiction. Despite their overwhelming domination over news network of different types the 'objectivity' has become exposed to the people everywhere. The people in the west agitating in front of the offices and people in peripheral countries like Bangladesh reject their version with hatred. The strong public opinion against these media compelled local newspapers and TV channels to rely on other sources especially on alternative ones mostly working in Internet.

The term 'embedded journalists' attempts to suggest that this has been a wartime strategy. But anybody, who carefully read the media overtime, would be able to find the fact that the embedded phase has not merely been of the journalists and nor it has been the temporary one. Considering ownership and hegemony it can be

that war is something a deviation from the present global order. But, unfortunately, this is not the truth and this cannot explain the permanent war threat that is integral into the global capitalist system. Economy with war prospered since 1917 till 1990 'to fight communism'. Pentagon and the CIA appeared as the saviour of democracy and humanity.

We find more than five million people killed by the US-led war machinery since Hiroshima, not to elaborate the permanent damage it has done to billions of people around the world and the destruction of resources and potential. Although this whole machinery had always been alert to fight 'communism', the fall of Soviet Union threatened the whole