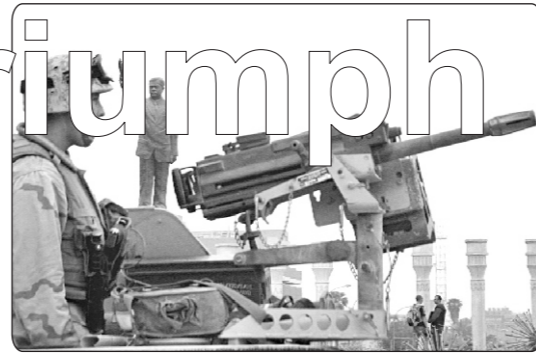
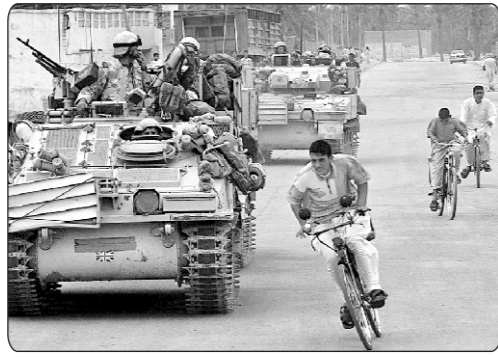


Letters will only be considered if they carry the writer's full name, address and telephone number (if any). The identity of the writers will be protected. Letters must be limited to 300 words. All letters will be subject to editing.



Triumph or tragedy?

"Iraq Invasion"

Your daily supplement "Iraq Invasion" is the finest collection of articles on this subject ever published in a newspaper. These writings should be read by every conscious people to understand the complexity of the crisis and its consequences.

The peace loving people believe that your esteemed daily has been following the right path by writing against the invasion. It is better to be approximately right than being precisely wrong. The Americans await a victory. But only history will tell them what their victory really meant.

Shaheen Mahmood
Gazipur

Who are next?

The US is victorious in Iraq. Or is it? The battle of Baghdad may be over. But is the war over? Doubtful indeed.

And now, as expected, the US tells "Iran, Syria, and N Korea to learn from Iraq" (10 April). The lesson the US offers is for these countries to "behave", abandon their independent stand, toe the line of submission, become defenceless, and seek "protection" by the US, and more directly by Israel- the proxy hegemon of the Middle East.

Be that as it may. But there may just be a different lesson these "unwilling" countries may wish to learn. It is obvious that the US is wary of taking on a country that actually has these dreadful (dreadful to US monopoly) weapons. It is a sure guarantee if you have a few nuclear bombs to the boot. So, as North Korea seems to have learnt, it is smart not to let the UN inspect you, destroy your defence, and then give a green signal as it were to the US to come and get at you. Otherwise, why the UN could not protect Iraq from invasion while the same UN did oblige and compel Iraq to disarm, open its defence installations to intrusive inspections, destroy whatever it had as deterrents howsoever "dreadful" those might have been?

Learning from Iraq episode, what incentive does a country have other than resolutely defend its sovereignty, resist threats and intimidation, secure iron clad guarantees of non-aggression from potential invaders who issue naked threats, and studiously foreclose open ended inspection regimes led by the UN agencies (the UN is totally incapable to prevent pre-emptive attack). Now this has gone on to even more absurd and grotesque limits. Now it is anticipatory prevention of imagined, hypothesised, long term threats.

Rather than seek a stable and just global order, the imperial USA is leading the world into anarchy and lawlessness by its won examples of arrogance and by inflicting fear and anxiety among many countries and

22 days of bloodshed

It has been bloody 21 days for the innocent people of Iraq to tolerate the massacre and the so-called struggle towards freedom. Surprisingly they are quiet unknown that from where the freedom is coming. Primarily the two options they have are USA and UK. These disastrous 21 days had taken nothing but innocent lives. The blood of infant had not quiet seeped through the soil of Baghdad. The USA was the country who spoke loudest for democracy, peace and harmony but when they are the ones indulged in the battle all the rules change and whatever they do is virtuous. They are the ones who spoke so much about the UN but now it seems they are the ones who are dividing it. They were the ones to speak in the name of Geneva Convention but now they are the ones who are violating all the articles and facts.

It will be wise for the countries waging the war to stop this carnage immediately and let the concerned organisations deal with the matter. Iraq or the people of Iraq are no private ownership of any other nation. The citizens are capable enough to decide what is good for them. I guess no personality from the White House has the warrant to play with lives of millions.

Khalid Rahman
Dhaka

peoples.
Hussain
Dhaka

Next stop: Iran!

I fully agree with Dr. Murshid's column, "My Crystal Ball." The invasion of Iraq has barely ended and already the hawks and the hard-liners who form George Bush's inner coterie are drawing up plans to invade Iran and "liberate" its oil! Iraq-based US forces are now ideally positioned to attack Iran. Or, they could just as well move west and invade Syria, another of Israel's most bitter enemies.

By this time next year or perhaps earlier, the US media will likely be flooded with dire warnings about the threat to the world from Iran and its nuclear programme. No doubt CNN and CNBC will begin to drum into their viewers how important it is to get rid of Iran's weapons of mass destruction. Israel's American lobby will turn its guns from Iraq to Iran. "Links" will surely be "discovered" between Iran and Al-Qaeda. The step-by-step formulaic pattern that worked so well for whipping up war frenzy against Iraq should work just as well against Iran, Syria, Saudi Arabia or any other Muslim nation and win the next presidential election in 2004 for Bush.

The Muslim nation and the world at large will be hapless bystanders to the next "pre-emptive" action of Bush and Co. I for one agree with Dr. Murshid and condemn Gorbachev for handing over the world to the US!

KJS
Dhaka

American foreign policy

Many Americans and most Bangladeshis, when assessing the situation in the Middle East and placing the blame squarely upon the shoulders of George Bush have forgotten how important history is to the current conflict. I don't think America's policy towards the Middle East has changed all that much.

For years America has supported Israel and supplied high-tech weapons to that country, which Israel systematically and senselessly misuses against rock-sliding Palestinians and their homes in response to the systematic and senseless bombings of Israelis on buses and in markets, clubs, and cafes. For the last decade or more, America has turned a blind eye to this instead of trying to seek a real solution. Bill Clinton tried to track down Osama bin Laden for years and killed dozens of innocent civilians in the process. And America has defied the UN before-- this is not the first time. If you think the current conflict is changing the global image of America for the worse, and if you are blaming George Bush and thinking that Clinton handled things better, you should have been paying more attention to American foreign policy of the past decade.

Just because what Bush is doing is more transparent than what Clinton did does not mean that Clinton was a better President or a better person. Clinton's and Bush's policies on the



End of an era?

Middle East are nearly parallel; moreover it was Clinton who failed in the hunt for bin Laden and who failed to eliminate the threat of Al-Qaeda as well as the threat of Saddam Hussein. Anti-American sentiment around the world has taken a turn for the worse, no doubt, but it was set in motion years and years ago and perpetuated by every relatively recent American government.

Ali
One-mail

We are reading you loud and clear- what are you reading?

In response to the letter by Marian Noronha, 7th April.

May I have the privilege to congratulate Marian. It is terribly exciting to know that people in America have finally begun reading newspapers that do not contain any CNN/Washington Post logos! Iraq has been flouting UN resolutions for the last 10/12 years. But you should realise that a period of 12 years is peanuts, comparing with 50 years. Yes, I am talking about occupation of Palestine. If Americans are so passionate and ready to "sacrifice in no small way" - as you wrote in your letter- for the Iraqi people, then why do we not see the same passion when it comes to Palestine, which has been terrorised for the last 50 years? Instead, America supplies Israel F16s, attack-helicopters, spying equipment and many more advanced weaponry. You give Israel four billion dollars for free every year, which is then used to terrorise Palestinians and build houses on occupied land.

You say this invasion is not about oil. Maybe you are right, but this artificial American sympathy for Muslims would be a lot more convincing if America put even half (or quarter) of the efforts for Palestine, which it is putting for Iraq - and lets be honest here- for Iraqi oil! And while on the subject of oil, can you answer, why all the contracts for repairing oil wells and rebuilding Iraq have been given to American companies "only"? Forget about France or Germany or Britain!

Azad Miah
Oldham, UK

Let facts and reason guide your heart

I am deeply disturbed at the news of violent anti-war demonstrations in Dhaka. I don't know which one is worse, being brainwashed by biased political and media propaganda or being blinded by religious frenzy.

The people of Bangladesh chose to be misled when they accepted the proposition that people belonging to the same religious group would look after one another in 1947. The price of that mistake was a bloody war that took away the lives of 3 million Bangladeshi people.

Good and evil exist in every society independent of religion and race. There are good Americans, there are bad Americans. There are good Iraqis, there are bad Iraqis. Let's not generalise. Let facts and reason guide us, not religion or chauvinism or emotions.

As for those who suggest that we should not engage in violent anti-war demonstrations simply because the US and the UK will retaliate with harsh financial measures, I cannot help thinking whether you are any better than those violent demonstrators! Perhaps the only thing that kept you

away from engaging in riots and looting is the fear of economic loss. Foreign companies doing business in/with Bangladesh can judge whether those violent demonstrators represent the whole of Bangladesh. Expatriates living in Bangladesh will be able to judge it even better based on their own experiences as opposed to misconstrued news reports in the Western media. In the meantime, have self-esteem and build Bangladesh.

Omar Sharif
Simon Fraser University, Burnaby, BC

A question of credibility

This is in reference to Esam Sohail's letter of 28th March and subsequent reply of Shukla Mirza on 5th April. Shukla Mirza's reply is excellent but failed to point out that this unjust war against Iraq was neither legal nor moral but a crime committed against the entire world opinion. Esam Sohail accuses Saddam of gassing his own people but he fails to mention knowingly or unknowingly that these Weapons of Mass Destruction (WMD) were supplied to Saddam Hussein by the then American administration in the early 80's.

The WMD theory to attack Iraq is but a myth. British and Americans only aim is to grab the oil wealth of Iraq by installing an Iraqi Karzai in place of Saddam as they did in Afghanistan. By the way USA is the first and only country to have used WMD (atomic bomb) on the defeated and surrendering Japanese forces in Hiroshima and Nagasaki killing and maiming hundreds of thousands of innocent people. The after effects are still continuing after more than half a century. As such America should be first to be disarmed of WMD as they themselves pose a threat to world peace.

S.Mohammed
One-mail

The tragedy of Iraq: A different perspective

It is only proper, nay, necessary, to shed a tear for the innocent people of Iraq who have to bear the brunt of another war. Reports of casualties are still scanty, but there is little reason to doubt that the dead and wounded will in the end be counted in thousands. Countless others will become destitute and homeless. War is always cruel; it is invariably an abomination. Those who are protesting against the war are rightly doing so.

But it is also proper and necessary to shed a tear for the hundreds of thousands of Iraqis who have suffered at the hands of an oppressive regime over the decades. It is strange that the tale of that regime's cruel torture and brutal persecution of dissent that have gone on for years have been totally drowned out by the questions of morality, legality, and motivations of the present war. The latter questions are certainly pertinent; so are those cruel tales.

The perfectly legitimate sadness and anger over the war should not be fog one's vision of such tragedy. As bombs and rockets started to rain down on Baghdad, it became all too easy merely to decry it as an attack on the people of Iraq. Those multitudes who have suffered at the hands of a dictator for so long are "the people". It is also legitimate to think that a large majority of the people of Iraq do want to be liberated, and may not fully

share the kind thoughts that the outside world began harbouring about them only after the war had started.

The present war, like any other, is vile. But none should claim moral certitude about it. There will of course be time, time to examine the missteps, failures, and arrogance of power that led to it, before the blames are apportioned. Meanwhile, the sooner the devastation of Iraq is over and succour brought to its freed people, the better.

Mahfuzur Rahman, former UN official
One-mail

An open letter to BBC

I write the message from Bangladesh where BBC used to be regarded as a credible source of information for world affairs. At home, I have two options on TV i.e. BBC or CNN. Well CNN has lost its credibility long ago, it has become a part of the US machinery.

So, we are left with one choice and that is BBC. But lately it is also disappointing us! Whenever your two Nicks (Gowing and Childs) appear on TV, the latter appears to be acting as the spokesman for Rumsfeld with the US flag and all that in the background (missing is the US national anthem). I fail to comprehend why a genuine journalist whose objective should be to remain independent and report the facts impartially should be willing to be portrayed with one party in the conflict and be perceived to be siding with it - losing the very independence that he should be upholding and be seen to be doing it too.

As for, Mr Gowing, he is the master in the embedding process trying to supersede Christiane Amanpour. I just watch helplessly when he leads other correspondents in the live broadcasts often putting his own words in the correspondents mouth who are reporting from the fields.

The profession of journalism is one of courage, conviction and report dispassionately the facts without fear or favour. One who does not have the courage to stand up and report the facts should not dishonour this honourable profession. There are still some reflections of brilliant minds in print media but regrettably same cannot be said about present day electronic media or has it embedded itself with its masters?

Khandaker R Zaman
Dhaka

To the Secretary General, UN

I am deeply concerned about the current state of affairs between the United States of America and Iraq. It seems that President Bush's campaign against the "evils" in Iraq has proved successful. So far, so many have died needlessly. All due to the greed of Bush and the stubbornness of Saddam.

America's motive is crystal clear. Their aim is to take over Iraq's oil resources, in an attempt to become a richer nation. News channels are saying that by preserving Iraq's oil reserves, America is saving Iraq's future; but how can they save a country's future by killing their people? How can they do that by destroying families and crushing the lives that everyone had worked so hard to build? Why should innocence suffer because of the hatred of two people?

This world has seen many brutal battles. From my point of view, I feel that it has seen enough. What had happened to our dreams for one single world living in peace? It seems that day by day the nations are drifting further away. Oceans and boundary walls are not the only things dividing these nations. Conflicting ideas, religious and political differences have created such bitterness, such hatred. If we have to live in a world, we should live together in peace.

Malsha Chowdhury
Dhaka

Do we Muslims have any obligation to the Kurds?

The Kurds are a people having a homeland grabbed mainly by Turkey and Iraq and to some extent by Syria and Iran. They have long been struggling for an independent Kurdistan.

The electronic media reporting on the ongoing American-led aggression against Iraq is frequently showing the Kurds siding with the aggressors against the Iraqi fighters, while most other Arabs and Muslims are sympathetic to the suffering Iraqis. Even those who hated the Iraqi dictator Saddam Hussein have apparently changed their minds due to the most unfair way the war was launched by

America and its allies. Why then the Kurds are doing so? Has extreme frustration and hatred driven them to this stand, which we find hard to support?

For long the Kurds have been ruthlessly suppressed by Turkey and Iraq in the Turkish occupied and the Iraqi occupied parts of Kurdistan respectively. Not long ago, the Kurdish leader Abdullah Osalan was captured by the Turks and was destined to be hanged. President Saddam of Iraq also reportedly killed thousands of Kurds for not submitting to his will.

Muslims around the world support the freedom struggle of the Palestinians, the Chechens, the Moro Muslims of Mindanao, the Kashmiris but do not speak in favour of the Kurds. Why? Is it due to the fact that they are oppressed by fellow Muslims of Turkey and Iraq? What harm will come to Turkey or Iraq if a free Kurdistan is established? Only the loss of some territory and may be some oil, but in exchange for lasting peace in their respective countries and freedom to a nation of fellow Muslims. That will be an "Insaaf" to the Kurds which Islam calls for.

RD Qureshi
Uttara Model Town, Dhaka

"Pro-war letters!"

This is a response to the letters "Pro-war letters" by Fatima Ali (March 28) and Shuja (March 31).

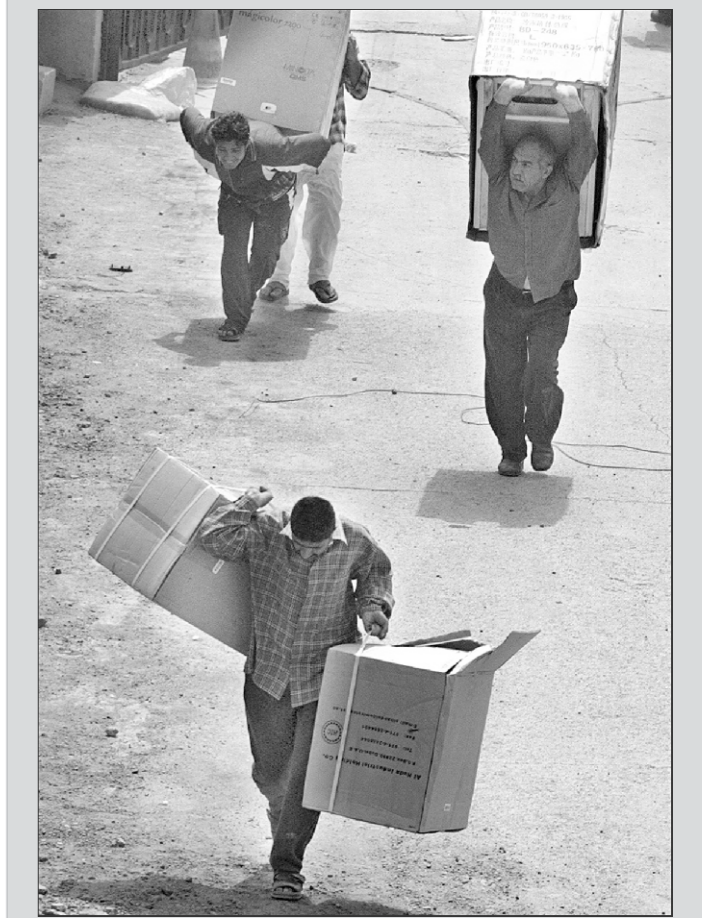
I would like to say that I totally agree over the views of Mr. Shuja and

Well, some might say the Iraqis voted for him, unfortunately, but to tell you the truth if you have a 'gun on the back of your head' you would definitely opt for survival, by any means. It is also very much unfortunate that some people still support this particular person and its regime (or, dictatorship). I also would like to turn my attention to the 'war-protesters' as they think that this war is against humanity. Of course it is, but I would like you to answer me why you were not demonstrating when the Saddam-regime KILLED innocent civilians? Was that in support of humanity? Talk about double standards!

ASyed
Baridhara, Dhaka

American protest!

When the founders of the US authored the US Constitution that sets forth the federation's guiding principles, they made certain provisions to guarantee the US national's individual rights and freedom. But most of the US nationals behave selfishly by not using their rights to condemn their leadership in the office that unleashed a rein of terror worldwide by invading Iraq that is a violation of many international laws, conventions and civil, diplomatic and military practices. Most of the Americans are not claiming their liberties to protest at the very moment when their armed forces personnel are committing crimes in Iraq in the name of 'liberating' Iraqis. The whole American nation is in crisis now but



Aftermath?

Covering the crime

The mass media is actively vindicating the crimes committed by the Anglo-US invasion forces by televising the "celebrations" of the nationalist Kurds with a handful of demonstrators in central Baghdad, which has a population of five million. Suddenly the innocent civilian victims of this war have already been forgotten altogether, as they are about to become statistics (collateral damages) with invisible faces for the victors. So where are the WMD? The only WMD experienced so far was the "Shock and Awful" destruction of Baghdad, along with the indiscriminate carnage.

Now we are told that WMD "will" be found. I do believe they will be "found" not because they exist but because Bush/Blair are so adamant on this issue! It does not matter if it is a few buckets of chemicals or bombs, as long as the spins can be generated to create the "Fog of evidence". Alternatively under the pretext of searching for WMD, the ever-compliant mass media would gradually lose focus on the issue as it fade into distant memory.

Yamin Zakaria, UK, London

also would like to condemn on the statement of Fatima Ali when she referred Mr Shuja as a "warmonger". Of course, war is dangerous, but sometimes the consequences of not going to a war are even more dangerous. Let's face the facts, first of all. We are talking about a 'dictator' who has killed approximately 1.5 million innocent Iraqis and its neighbours. We are also talking about a person who has killed about 4000 people (Kurds) instantly in 1988 by using its lethal Weapons of Mass Destruction (WMD). We are also talking about a person who is the world's second richest leader (source: Forbes Magazine) and 60 per cent of its people are living (or dying, rather) in poverty. It is extremely sad to even think that such a person could rule a country for over 20 years.

the Americans do not claim their rights to protest against what some of their leaders doing in Iraq now.

The Americans should ask their President as to whether he gave diplomacy a chance. Or, why, for the last ten years, Iraq has been their sworn arch-enemy, when during the 15 years preceding it they traded freely in armaments and military aircraft with Saddam Hussein. I simply can't understand why do most of the free and enlightened Americans not asking their President to answer as to why he is killing innocent civilian Iraqi women and children in the name of 'liberating' them when they have no known interest of violating human rights?

Sirajul Islam
Shyamoli, Dhaka

Boycotting US products!

I have seen a number of correspondence relating to boycotting US/UK products.

Let's evaluate:

I woke up this morning and began my day by shaving with Gillette shaving foam (made in Turkey); brushed my teeth with Close Up toothpaste (made in India), took my shower with Pantene shampoo (made in Thailand), put on my Dockers trousers (made in Mexico), my Hush Puppies shoes (made in Malaysia), my Ralph Lauren shirt (made in Sri Lanka), grabbed my Motorola cell phone (made in Korea), my Palm-top (made in Mexico), had my breakfast with Kraft cheese spread (from Dubai) and went to work. There I turned on my computer which has a Pentium III processor (probably assembled in China) and decided to write this e-mail on a software most likely developed by Asian IT professionals. As I contemplate lunch, I'll probably have a Coke/Pepsi that has been bottled in Bangladesh.

So next time you decide to boycott an "American/UK" product, chances are, you are really hurting the already exploited/underpaid worker who is trying his/her level best to maintain a basic level of subsistence. The net effect: The CEOs of these companies will still get their multi-million dollar stock options and severance benefits, while 80,000 jobs will be curtailed in countries like our very own.

A. Farjad Ahmed, Dhaka



Protest in a proper manner