

## Iraq invasion: Towards apocalypse?

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THE war on Iraq is not new. Over a decade USA and UK embarked on relentless air strikes on Iraq declaring so-called 'No Flying Zones' covering a considerable stretch of Iraqi territory to deplete the Iraqi military assets. Simultaneously USA and Britain laid a financial stranglehold restricting and controlling Iraqi oil export by the United Nations through series of sanctions. With this oil revenue Iraq could only purchase limited quantity of food and medicine restricting even the purchase of items like lead pencil on the ground that lead used in pencil could be converted into military use. Due to such boya constrictions almost half a million children perished due to starvation and malnutrition.

The corner-stone of US foreign policy remains exploitation of natural resources of the earth for the material and industrial advancement of its own people. To satisfy the huge appetite of its industries US remains oil hungry and highly sensitive to secure and ensure uninterrupted flow of oil at the favourable price and terms. This dictates American foreign policy in the Middle East. For this America sees no scope for any human compassion and political rationality. A militarily formidable Israel therefore is crucial to American interest by which it can control, intimidate and twist the arms of any neighbouring country whenever required to ensure uninterrupted supply of this 'liquid gold'.

The successive presidencies of the USA have rewarded the nation with victories, peace and prosperity. This has created deep and permanent impression, respect, confidence and dependence in the minds of the American people for the US presidential incumbents. Unlike the Europeans, the Americans are more inward looking and majority of Americans consider "USA as the world and the world is USA". This is due to the vastness of the country and the prosperity for which

they do not have to look beyond their country.

The giant American corporate houses influence the American society, culture and even habits of the people. The comprehensive social security, the encouragement to the week-end culture of fun and frivolity keep them deeply engrossed. They unknowingly swing away from the subtleties of soul and self searching and keep rotating in a narrow circle of seeking pleasures. The American corporate houses through cartel control the external resources of the globe and at home huge industrial houses have orientation towards the manufacture of both general utility products and military hardware.

Before the disintegration of former Soviet Union, the American defence hardware producing conglomerates and multi-national corporations touted and prompted USA to provoke and induce the Soviet Union in arms race. That gave birth to star-wars concept. This race was costly, neckbreaking and unbearable for the Soviets and gradually led them to bankruptcy and finally resulted in the disintegration of the Soviet Union.

This disintegration of Soviet Union made USA a single superpower. This changed the global power balance and made the world unipolar. The status quo which earlier existed mainly due to the concept of MAD (Mutual Assured Destruction) acted as a power balance. Once this power equilibrium and balance of power was gone an aggrieved nation could do nothing to withstand the overwhelming military and political might of USA. The inherent strength of human determination against any domination by brute power terrorism became a weapon of expression of disagreement. The US highest office bearers who are virtually on secondment from the huge US corporate houses remain under obligation to act and work in the interest of their former business houses and employers. Obviously these corporate houses are guided by ruthless profit motives at home and abroad.

The US now being the only strongest industrial and military superpower could now easily influence any theatre of war. Against its cutting edge technology, devastating five power and combination of conventional and non-conventional weapons the contesting army has little or no chance. The highly automated system and monstrous killing machines made the war a hi-tech video game detaching the killers from the victims. A conventional war sometimes would create a scenario where the killer would see the victim and the embedded human compassion might overpower hatred and anger. But the present hi-tech approach has made conventional warfare, strategy, courage and heroism redundant.

If we turn back to the recent past the ignominious defeats of the Americans in Vietnam, Korea and lately in Somalia drove them back to their shell. The American defence industries and the associated multi-nationals required a war with minimum acceptable casualties and guaranteed success. This could justify the astronomical defence expenditures and hi-tech equipment development and acquisition. Saddam Hussein gave them the unique opportunity.

The 9/11 terrorist attacks on US primarily on the civilian targets caused unthinkable loss of human lives, broke the American patience and also offered a unique opportunity to the American war mongers who availed of the opportunity. The war in Afghanistan regained American confidence to an extent but it was very costly. America needed another war to offset these expenses and a war which would be in long term American interest.

The Americans were only worried that it could not take much casualties, at the least the casualties should be bare minimum. In the psychological war front they needed a hate campaign which should be readily acceptable. The American war planners in fact decided the war on Iraq much earlier and considered the following:

- Consolidation of their military presence in the Arab collaborating countries where medieval monarchies could be easily gained over.
- Political isolation of Iraq from the neighbouring Arab world.
- Depletion of its Army's strength through war with its neighbours.
- Continuous depletion of its defence capabilities through bombardment by declaring no-fly zones covering much of its territory.
- Continuous weakening of the political structures through Shia-Sunni strifes, sabotage by Iran based Al Badar group and Kurdi rebellions.
- Placing economic and financial sanctions to weaken Iraq and to bring it to its knees.
- To eliminate the chances of chemical and biological warfare capabilities USA required to be totally sure that if these weapons existed must be destroyed before they embarked on an invasion of Iraq.
- Sanitize Iraq through the courtesy of Kofi Annan, the United Nation's Secretary General who rather served the American interest by sponsoring Arms Inspectors without any 'restriction and limitations'. Mr Kofi Annan exhibited apparent neutrality and maintained controlled pressure on Iraq and made an orchestrated evacuation of UN inspectors once the mission was accomplished including dismantling of Iraqi defence assets prior to the invasion of Iraq. This obviously decreased if not eliminated the chance of US casualty in case of war.

The long term aims of America may be assumed as under:

- To destroy the present regime and install a puppet regime and a proxy government which will maintain American interest in the Middle East.
- To create a wider safety net of weak Arab states around the state of Israel by creating safe buffer.
- To break the resolve of any Arab state in the region to oppose the American interest in the Middle East.
- Pre-empt Iranian expansion of ideological state and to maintain present *status quo* and safeguard the medieval monarchs who serve the American interest.
- Directly control the relatively unstable and volatile region starting from Syria, south of Turkey, north of Iraq, north of Iran and Pakistan, Afghanistan and Central Asia.

Likely outcome of the war:

- America had the finest tradition for working for the humanity and compassion. For the first time it appears the US government is working for cohesion and not by conviction. The vested interests in US Government would put the American society into turbulence.
- The first casualty of the war on Iraq is the United Nations and the role of its Secretary General has made it questionable. The universal acceptability of this position has been put to serious reservations.
- The main 'shock and awe' was the realisation of the whole world including UK that they have to live under the changed conditions and on dictates of unipolar overwhelming power who would try to resolve issue not through other acceptable international norms and practices but by military might where it has fullest advantage.

The imposition of war on Iraq has given little consideration for the indomitable spirit and determination of mankind against domination and subjugation. This would give rise to the highly organised terrorist groups irrespective of faith and would consider US as their common enemy.

- A new economic and political order is likely to emerge. As the Europe except UK realised the danger of unipolar situation, to protect the economic, industrial and political interest they may re-think the whole Euro-American relationship. A Franco-German-Russian axis might float up.
- With the capture of Iraq, the other likely and declared targets of USA, (the 'Axis of Evil') would likely to increase and speed up their nuclear deterrence and the delivery systems -- taking the lesson from the defeat of Iraq.

Following the similar strategy in Kuwait, the Americans for the time being are likely to give a strong support to Pakistan to use its military bases and to effect an encirclement of Iran. In due course of time Pakistan may be compelled to permit US forces overland and physically involve in future aggression.

As the Americans will be in Iraq for long installing proxy government, immediate neighbors i.e. Turkey, Syria and Iran be very nervous. The "Spawn Over" effect may even spark military confrontation. Syria and Iran may be provoked and drawn in for hostility.

But I have great faith in the great people of US who I am sure will again rise up to save the citizens of USA and the world as they did during the Vietnam war. The defence of a nation cannot depend on a brute strength but on the wisdom of its people.

## The role of Mujibnagar Government in the liberation of Bangladesh

A M ABDUS SATTAAR

THERE cannot be any liberation struggle without some leadership. The leadership has to be organised, disciplined and backed by some moral, legal and popular support. In our case such leadership came from the Mujibnagar Government in 1971. Had there been no such government then, there would have been stray, sporadic and chaotic fightings here and there, bringing in sufferings, deaths and destruction. Such spectacles we have noticed in the countries of Africa and elsewhere in the world.

The Mujibnagar Government was sworn-in at a quiet mango-grove in Baidyanathata in the then Meherpur sub-division of Kushtia District on 17<sup>th</sup> April, 1971, in the presence of at least 50 foreign journalists and a huge gathering. Earlier the government had been formed by the elected representatives to the National Assembly of Pakistan and the East Pakistan Provincial Assembly. The government had been formed on 10<sup>th</sup> April to give legal shape to the Declaration of Independence made by Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman on and to conduct the liberation struggle effectively.

The Mujibnagar Government was constituted with Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman as President (in absentia), Syed Nazrul Islam as Vice-President, Tajuddin Ahmed as Prime Minister, Khandaker Mustaque Ahmed as Minister for Law, Parliamentary and Foreign Affairs, M Mansur Ali as Minister for Finance and Commerce and A H M Kamruzzaman as Minister for Home, Communication and Relief Affairs. Col. M A G Osman was appointed Commander-in-Chief of the Armed Forces.

It was provided in the Proclamation of Independence that in the absence of Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman, Syed Nazrul Islam, the Vice-President, shall have and exercise all the powers, duties and responsibilities conferred on the President. The President was given the power to appoint a Prime Minister and such other Ministers as he considered necessary.

Needless to say that the Mujibnagar Government was a historical necessity. It was the legally constituted authority representing, in the famous words of Jefferson to Governor Morrice, "The will of the nation, substantially expressed, so overwhelmingly, which not many governments could claim to represent, while General Yahya Khan, President of Pakistan, represented nobody. And we have no hesitation in saying that it discharged its functions with great ability and efficiency."

I was involved in the Mujibnagar Government as Political Analyst to the Acting President Syed Nazrul Islam and, therefore, had opportunities of knowing how the government was carrying on different activities. I was at the same time also extremely close to Prime Minister Tajuddin Ahmed. The Prime Minister stayed in a small room attached to his office in the ground floor of 8, Theatre Road, Calcutta, in which the government was later housed. I stayed in the first floor thereof. Tajuddin Saheb used to remain awfully busy throughout the day. At night, however, when he would get off from his work, I used to go to his room and talk to him on different matters.



The Mujibnagar monument at Baidyanathata, Meherpur.

After the treacherous crackdown by the Pakistan army in Dhaka on 25<sup>th</sup> March, 1971, it was India which first expressed its reaction. On 31<sup>st</sup> March, both the Houses of the Indian Parliament adopted unanimously a resolution moved by Prime Minister Indira Gandhi, registering sympathy and support for the struggling people of Bangladesh. There was a loud applause when Indira Gandhi recorded Parliament's "profound conviction that the historic upsurge of the 75 million people of East Bengal will triumph."

Then on 2<sup>nd</sup> April, the Chairman of the Presidium of the USSR Supreme Soviet, N V Podgorny, sent a letter to the President of Pakistan, General Yahya Khan, expressing deep regret at the arrest of Sheikh Mujibur Rahman, the elected leader of the majority party in the general election and other political leaders and making an appeal to put a stop to the repressive and blood-letting measures against the people of East Bengal and to take urgent steps for a peaceful political settlement of the problem.

The tasks before the Mujibnagar Government were gigantic and challenging. It was required to (a) bring the military, non-military and other fighting groups under one central command, (b) demarcate the different battle-fields, put different officers in charge of each sector, chalk out strategies for carrying on the struggle, (c) procure provisions and arms and ammunitions for the fighting forces and supply them, (d) unite all the political forces supporting the liberation struggle, (e) keep the morale of the people inside and outside Bangladesh high and continue and straighten the resistance to the Pakistani forces inside the country, (f)

arrange for shelter and provisions and train up the thousands of boys and youths, who had taken refuge in India and were eager to join the liberation struggle, (g) enlist support of the international community for the liberation struggle of Bangladesh by publicising and explaining the *raison d'etre* therefor, (h) organise powerful media in support of the liberation struggle and (i) work out a strategy for securing the release of Bangabandhu from Pakistan jail.

Different steps were taken by the Mujibnagar Government to achieve these objectives. It is, however, to be stated here that there was one suspected quistling in it. He was Khandaker Mushtaque Ahmed. His sneaking activities were, however, detected before it could proceed too far.

The struggle for our freedom, however, went ahead unabated. Rather, it grew in intensity, velocity and ferocity day by day. Reports were pouring in to the Mujibnagar Government headquarters about the casualties on the Pakistan side. Reports were also being published in different newspapers to the effect that dead bodies of Pakistani soldiers killed were being dispatched to West Pakistan by aeroplane.

The Pakistan Army devastated our houses and buildings, roads and culverts whatever came their way. They laid waste all over Bangladesh comparable perhaps to the worst-hit parts of Europe during the Second World War. Towns and villages were left desolate. Three million of our people were butchered, about four lakh women ravished. Hundreds of freedom-fighters were either maimed or wounded. But ultimately the Pakistan Army had to surrender ignominiously in Bangladesh. The

instrument of surrender was signed in Dhaka at 16-31 hours by Lt. Gen. A.A.K. Niazi on behalf of the Pakistan Eastern Command and Lt. Gen. Jagjit Singh Aurora, GOC-in-C of the Indian and Bangladesh forces in the eastern theatre on 16<sup>th</sup> December, 1971, in the then Raman Race-course (now Suhrawardy Udyan) at the place wherefrom Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman delivered his historic March 7 speech in 1971 exhorting the people of Bangladesh to face the enemy with whatever everyone had, declaring that "the struggle this time is for our emancipation, the struggle this time is for independence", which was a de facto Declaration of Independence, the *de jure* one coming some time before his arrest on the 26<sup>th</sup> March.

So all the boasts of the Pakistani junta were dashed to the ground by the historic fight put up by the valiant people of Bangladesh, assisted by the people of India, with the diplomatic support of the then USSR, and the moral support of the democratic and freedom-loving people of the world. The leadership of India's magnificent Prime Minister, Indira Gandhi (in the words of Bangabandhu while paying personal tributes at Palam Airport, New Delhi, on his way home from the Pakistani prison) from the time of our seeking her assistance till the final victory including the safe return of Bangabandhu from the Pakistani prison was extraordinary indeed. Our struggle for freedom was converted by Pakistan's wanton attack on India on 3<sup>rd</sup> December, 1971, into a war between India and Pakistan and this accelerated our victory.

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**Dr. Rubaiul Murshed**

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### Around the world

In the US about 40 per cent of severely injured trauma patients die because of shock due to blood loss. When patients arrive at emergency with severe blood loss, finding a blood type match can take up to 45 minutes -- sometimes the difference between life and death.

Parkland Memorial Hospital in Dallas, USA, was recently trialing a new drug which acts like real blood. It is purified hemoglobin solution made from old red blood cells that fulfils a crucial temporary role and buys valuable time. The hope is that this drug will save the lives of many of the patients by immediately replacing blood that carries oxygen-rich haemoglobin to the cells.

When cells are deprived of oxygen they die; blood pressure drops; organs begin to die and inevitably, so does the patient. By replacing lost blood with this product straightaway, doctors can begin to stabilise the patient and reverse the effects of the shock.

#### Did you know?

Testosterone, the male sex hormone, drops 1 to 2 per cent a year in men who are 30 and older. Half of all men between the ages of 75 and 80 have abnormally low testosterone. But, testosterone supplements may not be a good idea - the hormone is known to increase growth of prostate cancer and excess testosterone may increase stroke risk. Men who took testosterone supplements also reported mood swings. The hormone will boost libido but doesn't help performance.

Next: How safe is your weight?