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SPOTLIGHT ON MIDDLE EAST

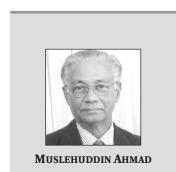
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up of Iraq... The UN must form the peace keeping forces for Iraq and dispatch them without further delay. If the US

does not agree, it may stand aside, but the UN must act as per its Charter. If it cannot act, the present UN should not

function any more. The US itself made the UN "irrelevant". Therefore, it should close down its business in New York.

UN led interim government must for world recognition of Iraq



7 ICTORY does not legitimise a war. The world view is that this war has violated the UN Charter and also the international law that governs the inter-state relationship. The most important reason, apart from US Administration's regime change, for the war was stated to be Saddam's weapons of mass destruction. No weapons of mass destruction have so far been found in Iraq. If it had, Saddam would have used them against the invading army when his collapse came to his doorstep. This was not done -- so reasonable conclusion is that Saddam does not have weapons of mass destruction. Saddam's Chief Scientific Advisor.

General Al-Saadi while surrendering

two days back to the U.S. army said, 'he

did not lie about weapons of mass

destruction; Iraq does not have weap-

ons of mass destruction'. If anything is

Weapons Inspectors will have to be brought back to confirm the correct source of such materials, if any, and also the validity of such claims. Therefore, the most important reason for the war did not exist. The idea of "regime change" is, of course, repugnant to all civilized laws.

President Bush's war-destruction of Iraq in 26 days time indeed dwarfed the wrongs committed by President Saddam Hussein over a period of 24 years. There appears to be some widespread feeling that when mediocrity exists at the top most level of a formidable military power, then this is being taken advantage of by some extremely cunning associates who have some set agenda in mind. This apparently seems to be the case here. The other extreme was, of course, too clever a dictator, a brutal one indeed, surrounded by hosts of greedy companions who ruled the oldest civilization and reaped personal benefits.

Some 150 Americans (some say over 800) died in Iraq, but for what? President Bush may not bother about it but the families know what it means when they lose their loved ones. This war was not necessary at all. Many other dictators like Ceausesscu of Romania, Shah of Iran, Marcos of the Philippines, Suharto of Indonesia, etc. were removed by their people. Why could not Bush wait for a while? What was the hurry? The world would like to

The destruction of Iraq by Ameri-

can war is unimaginable. Reckless bombing by the American and British forces caused very high civilian casualties -- reportedly much higher than in '91 war. The people around the world protested and now they watch with extreme horror and disgust the results of Bush-Blair's ill conceived military actions in Iraq. Many say they cannot even stand the TV pictures showing scenes of deaths and terrible sufferings of men, women, and children in Iraq. Ali -- 12 years' old -- lost both of his arms as American missile sharpnel hit him. His father, mother, sister and the brother were also killed in the same

blast. Same story for hundreds of other

children. Another girl -- 10 years' old --

lost her leg again because of the US

missile attack. Why should Iraqi

people and particularly the children

pay so heavily for removal of Saddam

Hussein? America speaks of Saddam's

war crimes, but US and British lawyers

said, 'they were looking at the possibil-

crimes that their governments might have committed'. "We want to establish regular and impartial procedures to establish whether war crimes have been committed" during this military campaign in Iraq'.

Over half a million Iraqi children already died due to UN sanction and now the circle is being completed by the American and British forces. Practically the whole world including considerable number of Americans went against US's attack on Iraq. President Bush took immense pleasure in watching the TV pictures showing the toppling of Saddam's statue, which was also dishonored by some Iragis. Such events can always be organised for publicity purposes as President Saddam used to do and it was clear that American tank/armored carrier was already there and ready to perform this spectacular event. Well, one does not know whether President Bush watched the TV pictures when his effigies were burned down and

trampled on by demonstrators around the world. The placards and posters showed Bush as No.1 Terrorist and his photos were pasted along side Bin Laden. We also watched them but did not enjoy at all. Unfortunately, President Bush's actions made America a "Rouge" Superpower as was referred to by Bill Scnider while making his comments in CNN some days ago. Many are of the view that because of Bush and some of his associates (apparently State Department was sidelined and was not allowed to play its softer role), America's world stature has suffered irrecoverable damage.

Iraq is a sovereign country. The UN has not yet disowned Saddam Hussein's government. If that is the position, then how could he and his Ministers be declared as fugitives by another government? How can a head of a sovereign country order the assassination of another sovereign country's head? Under what international law? When the war itself had no UN



Human collateral of inhuman war: A 10-year old girl lost her leg.

legitimacy, how can the US and the UK put Saddam and his cabinet and Advisors numbering 55 in the wanted list? These questions will have to be answered before these people are arrested (if not bombed to death already) and treated as criminals. Why is the latest EU meeting in Athens, which talked of the Iraq war and reconstruction matters which obviously interest them all did not raise these legitimate and legal questions? Should the world now accept that any one country having military power can enter into any other sovereign state on some pretext, kill the government and

The same old Iraqi story -- weapons of mass destruction, dictatorship, supporting terrorism, etc. It is seen in the overall interest of the US and Israel to corner Syria so that it loses its capacity and courage to claim Golan Heights from Israel. What about rest of the Arab countries? Some commentators even went to the extent of saying that America seemed set to export its version of democracy to the rest of the Arab world. Is it democracy or something else? Again, many say, Arabs themselves are responsible for what has happened and will continue to happen to them. The force is unilateral

civilized world governments will have

to answer these questions to their

Tension over Syria is mounting. Is it

going to be the next target rightaway?

Jack Straw said -- no, but does Bush

Administration bother about what

Jack Straw or even Blair says? The case

against Syria is being built up quickly.

and irresistible -- even UN could not stop it. The region is in far "serious" trouble and may undergo imposed political metamorphosis leading to grave changes in the strategic balance.

Anyway, Iraq today stands devastated because of Bush-Blair's military actions against Iraq and its people. Many Iragis say, with Saddam we had peace, now it is all death. chaos and looting! No water, no electricity, no food, nothing! History will apportion the blame, but Iraq must have its government 'for the people and by the people'. There is no scope of the U.S. doing it alone. How this should be done can be decided only by the recognised world body -- the UN. The heads of France, Germany and Russia said in Petersburg last week that only the UN can give the legitimacy to any government that would be installed in Iraq. If the US sets up the government according to its own will and interest, the UN cannot, under its Charter, give any recognition to such a government. France, Germany and Russia and others should continue to insist on the "Central Role" of the UN. Indeed, the matter should go to the UN General Assembly for the purpose of bestowing the sovereign status on devastated Iraq and its government to be formed Iraq's sovereign status in the international community can be restored only by the UN General Assembly.

Only the UN can set up an interim government that may stop the present political chaos that may lead to even break up of Iraq. As the US and the UK are the involved parties they cannot command confidence and respect of Iraqis; only UN can do it. Within the shortest possible time, election should be held under the authority of the UN. The US and the UK forces must leave Iraq as soon as the UN peace-keeping forces reach there. The UN must move

The UN must form the peace keeping forces for Iraq and dispatch them without further delay. If the US does not agree, it may stand aside, but the UN must act as per its Charter. If it cannot act, the present UN should not function any more. The US itself made the UN "irrelevant". Therefore, it should close down its business in New

Muslehuddin Ahmad is a former Secretary and

ity of an international inquiry into war Another 100-year war?

The war on terrorism and war on drugs compared

RON CHEPESIUK

N its pursuit of the War on Terrorism the Bush administration has downgraded the War on Drugs as a priority, while trying to link it to the War on Terrorism. In August 2002, the U.S. Office of National Drug Control Policy began running $advertisements\ that\ urge\ Americans\ to$ stop buying illegal drugs like cocaine and heroin because that can help fund the terrorists who are trying to destroy America. "If you quit drugs, you join the fight against terror in America,' President George Bush declared.

That message is debatable, but President's Bush's aggressive move to link the War on Drugs to the War on Terrorism does raises an interesting question: Is there anything to be learned from the long history of the War on Drugs that can be applied to the war against international terror-

Since the mega terrorist events of September 11, 2001, President George Bush and his advisors and allies have repeatedly told the nation that the U.S

is involved in a conflict unlike any other in its history. The War on Terrorism does not have opposing battalions, large numbers of troops and sophisticated technology and the enemy can be anywhere. So fighting a new type of war requires new strategies, as well as new sacrifices from the American people, if it is to be victorious

But the War on Terrorism, as it has been fought so far, is not new. In fact, it's much like the old War on Drugs, which has consumed America's attention, money and resources for the past two decades. To show you what I mean, let's look at some of the interesting parallels between strategies used in the War on Drugs and War on Terrorism as it has been fought so far.

From the beginning of the War on Terrorism, the U.S. has followed a doctrine of preemption to attack the supply side of conflict. The war in Iraq an application of this doctrine. "Preemption," said Secretary of State Colin Powell, "has always been part of any national security strategy because when the U.S. sees something, we should take action to stop it."

Central to U.S.'s preemption strat-

egy has been the belief that following an aggressive policy to eliminate Osama Bin Laden and his top lieutenants in his terror network will substantially curb the supply of terrorists and the demand for terrorism. The U.S.'s preemptive strategy that is targeting the big names or kingpins in international terrorism is the type of strategy that has followed in the War on Drugs.

to using terrorism to achieve their criminal objectives and who ran organisations based on the terrorist The tactics of Colombia's Pablo

During the past two decades, the U.S.

has tried to eliminate the high profile

kingpins of international drug traffick-

ing, some of whom where not adverse

Escobar Gaviria, the most famous drug



Growing poppy in Afghanistan: Clandestine or public?

trafficking in history, even lead to the coining of the term, "narco terrorism" to describe the use of indiscriminate terror by drug traffickers. In addition to killing thousands of police men, judges and government officials, Escobar had a domestic airliner on a flight from Bogota to Medellin blown up in 1988, killing all 88 passengers aboard. As a cold blooded killer, Escobar had no problem taking the lives of 87 innocent people to kill the girl friend of a rival drug dealer, who had deafened Escobar's daughter in an earlier narco terrorist act.

Escobar was hunted down, trapped and finally killed in 1993 in one of history's biggest manhunts. But by then another group of Colombian kingpins headed by the Cali Cartel had already supplanted Escobar's Medellin Cartel as the world's most powerful drug trafficking organisation. By the time the last of the Cali Cartel godfathers went down in1997. Mexican drug kingpins had made Mexico the new epicentre of the Latin American drug trade.

The lesson is obvious: even though drug kingpins keep falling, the supply of drugs has flowed unabated to the streets of the U.S. In fact, drugs like cocaine and heroin are cheaper and more plentiful today than they were in 1982, the year Ronald Reagan launched the modern War on Drugs. Today, the U.S. spends more than \$20 billion annually on the war, but it has little to show for it. When Reagan declared war on drugs in 1982, a handful of Latin American counties were involved in drug trafficking. Today, virtually every country in the region and more than 104 counties globally are in some way connected to the manufacture and distribution of drugs, according to UN estimates.

There is simply too much money to be made from international drug trafficking and too many people who want illegal drugs. International drug trafficking is a \$400-500 billion a year business and the world's second biggest illegal enterprise after arms trafficking. So as long as there is demand for illegal drugs, enterprising

individuals will be willing to supply it. Meanwhile, as the U.S. has tried to eliminate the drug kingpins, it has also pursued a policy of interdiction that focuses on eradicating the drug problem at the source. What's happened to Colombia the past twenty years well illustrates the result. Huge fields of coca and poppy have been wiped out with herbicides; tons of drugs, seized; hundreds of drug labs, destroyed; and thousands of drug traffickers, corrupt government officials and the man and woman in the street, jailed. Yet, what has all this accomplished? Colombia is still at the centre of the drug trafficking universe, while it teeters politically on the verge of disintegration.

We should not expect an elimina-

tion of Osama Bin Laden from the international scene or "successful interdiction campaigns in Afghanistan and Iraq and other future targets of the Bush administration's preemptive strategy to affect the trade in international terrorism. As Egyptian President Hosni Mubarak put it. "The Iraq War will create 100 Osama Bin Ladens. Every terrorist hunted down and killed or imprisoned in Guatanamo Bay and elsewhere will no doubt be replaced by others, who will be no less determined to become martyrs and to wreck havoc on U.S. interests. If Syria, Libya or Iran become the next target on Uncle Sam's hit list, will we not see the number of suicide bombers multiply and the scenes of their terrorist acts spread? According to Rona Qunaratna's

revealing book, "Inside Al Qaeda", the CIA estimates that Al Qaeda can draw on the support of some six to seven million radical Muslims worldwide, of which 120,000 would be willing to take up arms. One cannot help but wonder, though, as the scenes of carnage in Iraq have been beamed around the world via satellite television, how much the support for al Qaeda's has grown.

President Bush explained on television his administration's strategic objective; "Our war on terror begins with Al Qaeda but it does not end there. It will not end until every terrorist group of global reach has been found and defeated." That's a nice sound bite for television, but how realistic is it given the negative experience with the War on Drugs and its kingpin strategy?

And will Afghanistan and Saddamfree Iraq become the unstable Colombias of Asia into which the U.S. pours billions of dollars without any positive effect? Afghanistan once again is the biggest heroin producing country in the world, and the Taliban and its Al Qaeda allies seem to be reorganising and are still on loose in the country.

The most disturbing parallel has been the lack of attention that the U.S. has paid to the demand side in both wars. In the War on Drugs, the U.S. has all but ignored the root issues--why many people take drugs and why some people are willing to cultivate illegal crops, despite our best interdiction efforts. Likewise, in the War on Terrorism, the U.S. ignores the root issues-why Uncle Sam is so hated in some parts of the world and why some people continue to gravitate to the terrorist camp. The Bush administration, for instance, continues to play a passive role in resolving Palestinian-Israeli conflict, even though Osama Bin Laden has been able to convince many in the Muslim world into believing that the Palestinian cause is central to his terror network's war against the U.S. Until the U.S. address the root causes, it shouldn't expect any longterm success in our "new" war. As has happened with the War on Drugs, the War on Terrorism will become just another long war with no end.

And how long could that be? In the 1990s some scholars of the War on Drugs began calling it the "100-year War," since the origins of U.S.'s involvement can be traced to Spanish American War and the it's annexation of the Philippines in 1898. Opium was used legally in the Philippines, but under pressure from American clergy and others in the growing anti-opium movement the U.S. Congress banned opium use in the Philippines in 1905. The U.S. and its allies in the War on Drugs has banned many more drugs since then and claimed many victories against the powerful drug trafficking organisations that have come and gone. Yet, more than a 100 years later, international drug trafficking is bigger and more problematic than ever. Will someone be making the same observation about the international terrorist network in 2103?

Ron Chepesiuk is a Fulbright Scholar and Visiting Professor of Journalism in the Journalism Department at Chittagong University.