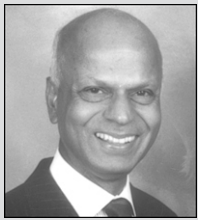


Palestine : From Deir Yassen to road map for peace



CHAKLADER MAHBOOB-UL ALAM writes from Madrid

THIS is a sad story -- a story of yet another example of man's inhumanity to man. It happened on April 9, 1948. At about 4 in the morning , when it was still dark and everybody was sleeping in a peaceful Palestinian village called *Deir Yassen* (now part of West Jerusalem), it was attacked by a Jewish terrorist group called Irgun Zvai Leumi . The terrorists massacred dozens of men ,women and children -- all of them innocent civilians. In order to create panic among the Palestinian population in other villages and towns of Palestine, some of the *Deir Yassen* villagers were paraded and jeered at in Jerusalem before being shot in public. A Polish *emigre* called Menachem Wolfovich Begin (who went on to become the prime minister of Israel and to win the Nobel Peace Prize) was the leader of Irgun at that time. Later, he boasted that the news of the massacre created such panic among the Palestinians that they " started to flee for their lives". During the course of the next few months 80 per cent of the Palestinian population fled the country . That was precisely the objective of these terrorist activities. How could there be a Jewish state without a Jewish majority in the population? In the process the Jews also confiscated all the land and properties left behind by the Palestinians. Fifty-five years have gone by since that fateful day and the sad story of Palestinian suffering still continues. A combination of extraordinary factors and the twists and turns of history have placed them in this terrible predicament.

A few days after the massacre, on May 14, 1948 , despite Arab opposition, the state of Israel was proclaimed by the United Nations because President Harry Truman (yes, the man who ordered the atomic bombing of Hiroshima and Nagasaki), had taken up the Jewish cause. The subsequent events covering deportations, massacres, assassinations, illegal settlements , Arab incompetence, America's blind support for the Jewish state, Israel's military supremacy and the failure of the Oslo Process are well-known to everyone. Today , Israel is what Theodor Herzl, the author of *The Jewish State* (1896) and father of World Zionism could never imagine it to be. It is much more than a simple little homeland for the oppressed European Jews. Besides being America's closest

ally , it is also the most important military power in the Middle East. Through a series of military conquests and confiscation, Israel now possesses 78 per cent of former Palestine (In November 1947, because of intense pressure from the American administration a little over 50 per cent of the territory-- a disproportionately high percentage considering the relative numbers of Jews and Arabs in the territory at that time-- was allotted to the future state of Israel

the three or more million Palestinians , who stubbornly refuse to disappear from the scene or flee to the neighbouring countries as many others had already done?

Israel could not absorb several million Christian and Muslim Palestinians as its citizens without losing its jealously guarded status as an exclusively Jewish fundamentalist state. Since in the late twentieth century the world opinion would not endorse the physical

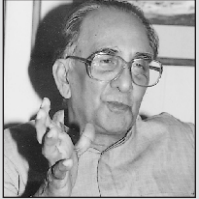
not allowed to use these motorways.) The long-term strategy was that eventually under an American-sponsored (the Israelis do not trust anybody else) peace treaty, the Palestinians will be allowed to live in geographically isolated towns and villages scattered across the West Bank and Gaza (which Mr. Sharon graciously conceded, if the Palestinians wanted to call "state" or "states", he would not mind.) The Palestinians living in these "semi-autonomous ban-

pressure from the American government, Yasser Arafat refused to sign on the dotted line. This is the reason why he has become a "persona non grata" in Washington. This is also the reason why Americans insisted on a regime change in Ramallah even though they knew that Yasser Arafat was democratically elected by the Palestinians as their leader.

Now that regime changes have taken place in Afghanistan, Iraq

in Palestinian camps and villages with the clear objective of provoking either retaliatory violence from the Palestinians or a civil war among them. Although the Road Map vaguely mentions a gradual withdrawal of the Israeli army from the Palestinian areas and a halt to further settlement activities, it gives immediate priority to the cessation of Palestinian attacks against the occupiers. Abu Mazen says that he is capable of getting Hamas and Jihad Islamica to "sheathe their swords", at least for the time being. But the question is: Will Sharon stop the Israeli violence? It seems, no one wants to face this question because everybody (including the die-hard conservatives of Bush administration) knows that Sharon does not really want peace unless it is on his terms which means complete capitulation of the Palestinians. Curiously enough, 83 American senators and 278 members of the House of Representatives have already issued statements supporting Sharon.

Long and protracted negotiations will not yield any positive results. They will simply incite quibbling over details and maintain the military status quo on the ground, which will suit Sharon fine. He will continue with his policy of building more settlements, committing more targeted assassinations and more armed incursions in Palestinian territories. The Palestinians will retaliate by committing more suicide attacks. In other words, the cycle of violence will continue. Therefore, bolder action is required. Actually, although the Road Map has got four sponsors (and all of them must actively participate in the negotiations), such is the power of the United States and its leverage over Israel that the only person who can bring about a change in Sharon's attitude is President Bush. Now, after his victory in the war against Iraq, he is in a unique position to put pressure on Sharon to withdraw his army from the occupied territories, dismantle the settlements, return all the land captured during the 1967 war in return for complete security for Israel. By doing so he will not only be able to regain credibility in the Muslim world but also help stabilise a politically volatile region and contribute towards global security. As Aaron Miller, the former State Department negotiator, (who is now the head of Seeds of Peace) puts it, "In.....Arab world, no single issue resonates everywhere more than the Israeli-Palestinian conflict. Nothing would do more to enhance American maneuverabilityin the region at large, than for us to make a credible effort to defuse this issue. A burning Israeli-Palestinian conflict creates so many opportunities for our enemies and so many problems for our friends, including Israel". Has President Bush got the courage and conviction to take such a bold step? Will his neo-conservative advisers allow him to do so?



MUHAMMAD HABIBUR RAHMAN

A depression at the Bay

There is a depression in the Bay .
And there is a depression in my heart
Depression is deepening in the sea
Depression is idling in the sea,
Three hundred sixty miles away from the shore
It may hit the land after thirty six hours more.

Only after the storm and the rain
New leaves of the *neem* will smile.
Only after the storm and the rain
New leaves of the banyan will smile
The storm must come and it must rain.

Last time it was more than hundred Fahrenheit
The overcast sky was unusually quiet

The atmosphere was holding its breath grumpy and sour
As if waiting for a run hundred miles per hour .
Suddenly it burst forth, blustered and thundered.
Blue streaks forked and pierced the sky
And the heavens were plundered.
And into the shivering earth the thunders entered.
With pouring rains the seeds were sown
And the sundered earth did all of them own.

A wonderful calm dawned all over
In the heavens the depression was over .
On the earth the depression was over .
At the Bay the depression had already been over .
The Bay was calm .
The sky was calm .
And the earth was also calm.

From the peasant to the boatman it was calm for all
Everybody will soon be out to attend his call.
At the port the boat is ready to leave the anchorage
And cheerily set for the sail for another voyage.

Out there you'd find the sparkling *neem*
A heaven on earth to all it would seem.

Muhammad Habibur Rahman is former Chief Justice and head of caretaker government.

One man's terrorist is another man's freedom fighter

The matter of terrorism is rather complicated. Terrorists change. The terrorist of yesterday is the hero of today, and the hero of yesterday becomes the terrorist of today. This is a serious matter of the constantly changing world of images in which we have to keep our heads straight to know what is terrorism and what is not.

BILLY I AHMED

MOST revolutions began as guerrilla terrorism. The American Revolution started out as terrorist acts against England. The "Boston Tea Party" is a prime example of terrorism. Colonial revolutionaries sneaked aboard an English Tea Merchant Ship, where they threw thousands of dollars worth of tea into the Atlantic Ocean. Americans today think of that incident as a stride to freedom, but the English look at it as the beginning of countless terrorist acts.

In the 1930s and 1940s, the Jewish underground in Palestine was described as "TERRORIST." By 1942, the Holocaust was occurring, and liberal sympathy with the Jewish people had built up in the Western world. At that point, the terrorists of Palestine, who were Zionists, suddenly started to be described, by 1944-45, as "freedom fighters". You can find in some old books and posters pictures of Israeli Prime Ministers, like Menachem Begin, labeled as "Terrorists" - Reward 100,000 British pounds!

From 1969 to 1990 the PLO, the Palestine Liberation Organisation, occupied the centre stage as the terrorist organisation. Yasser Arafat was described repeatedly by the great sage of American journalism, William Safire of the New York Times, as the "Chief of Terrorism."

In September 29, 1998, it was rather amusing to see a picture of Yasser Arafat to the right of President Bill Clinton. To his left was Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu. Just a few years earlier Yasser Arafat used to appear with this very menacing look and a gun protruding from his belt. I am sure you remember those pictures.

And do you remember the picture of President Reagan, in 1985 receiving a group of bearded men. These were very ferocious-looking men with turbans and flowing garments looking like they came from another century. President Reagan received them in the White House. After receiving them he spoke to the press. He pointed towards them, and said, "These are the moral equivalent of America's founding fathers". They were the Afghan Mujahiddin. They were at the time, guns in hand, battling the Evil Soviet Empire.

Up until this time the old adage, "one man's terrorist is another man's freedom fighter" was still valid. But now there is no such thing as a freedom fighter whether it is the oppressed fighting for liberty in Chechnya, Kashmir or Palestine. Every freedom fighter has been reduced to a "Dirty Rotten TERRORIST".

In August 1998, another American President ordered missile strikes from the American navy based in the Indian Ocean to kill Osama Bin Laden and his men in the camps in Afghanistan. And yet again another President of the United States, in November 2001 launched a devastating campaign to 'Smoke these men from their caves'.

The embarrassing reminder is that Mr. Bin Laden, the great 'Satan of the East', was only a few years ago the moral equivalent of George Washington and Thomas Jefferson! Now of course Mr. Bin Laden is very angry over the fact that he has been demoted from the moral equivalent of the 'Founding Fathers' to the moral equivalent of Rasputin.

The reason to recall these stories is to point out that the matter of terrorism is rather complicated. Terrorists change. The terrorist of yesterday is the hero of today, and the hero of yesterday becomes the terrorist of today. This is a serious matter of the constantly changing world of images in which we have to keep our heads straight to know what is terrorism and what is not. But more importantly, to know what causes it, and how to STOP it.

Billy I Ahmed is a researcher

Iraq : As the dust settles the questions arise

MILIA ALI

THE US invasion of Iraq has provoked, inspired and generated reactions and discussions of all kinds -- mass protest rallies, media hype, journalistic reporting, essays and speculation on the shape and form of the new world order in the post-Iraq war era. Although I am tempted to add my opinion on this pile of diverse views, I will refrain from doing so, primarily because "war analysis" is not my forte. However, what I can and would like to do is express a concern. One that

We have to find answers to the unanswered questions ... Like many around the world I am waiting for the American people, like Michael Moore and the thousands who protested in the streets of their cities, to provide us with the right answers. Because only they can change the way the US administration thinks and acts! The world needs to separate the American government and the Bush administration from the real people who have a history of being humane, generous and willing to accept diversity in culture and thought.

many aware and sensitive people around the world are contemplating and reflecting upon: In what ways this unjust war has rocked the basic moral foundations of many who still wish to believe that, the

world may not be perfect, but brute force and propaganda fabrications cannot triumph over truth and goodness. The Iraq war has, in fact, left people like me confused, perplexed and opened up a whole new set of questions on what is right and wrong.

The war propaganda was initiated by the Bush administration on the basis of "fighting terrorism" and overthrowing the Saddam regime in Iraq which, according to US intelligence sources, possessed Weapons of Mass Destruction (WMDs), including biological and chemical weapons. Although it is not yet clear what the US government means by WMDs, but if we are to take it literally to mean weapons which destroy masses it has become obvious, since March 21, that the US Military owns many more of these than does Iraq. The moral question then is :Why is it right for the US to produce and use WMD and wrong for Iraq (even if we hypothetically believe that Iraq did have them)? Is it because, as suggested by CNN, Fox News and to a lesser extent by BBC, the Americans and the British are more "civilized" and would only use them under extreme provocation to defend themselves against "the forces of evil"? But facts tell us otherwise: the "barbaric" Saddam has so far shown no signs of having fired a single WMD in this war, whereas the US army has indiscriminately cluster bombed the innocent men, women and children of Iraq -- the very people that it went out to "liberate" from the demon Saddam! Which brings me to my second moral question: Why is it right to kill innocent people in Iraq based on an assumption (unfounded by any evidence) that their leader MAY use weapons of terrorism against the people of the US in some remote future? Are we

living in a world where even the distant threat to an American life is worth the lives of a few thousand Iraqi "natives"?

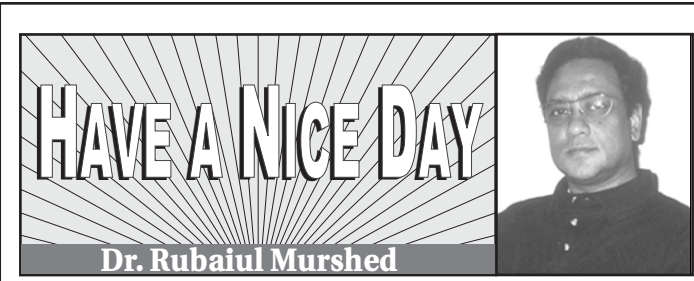
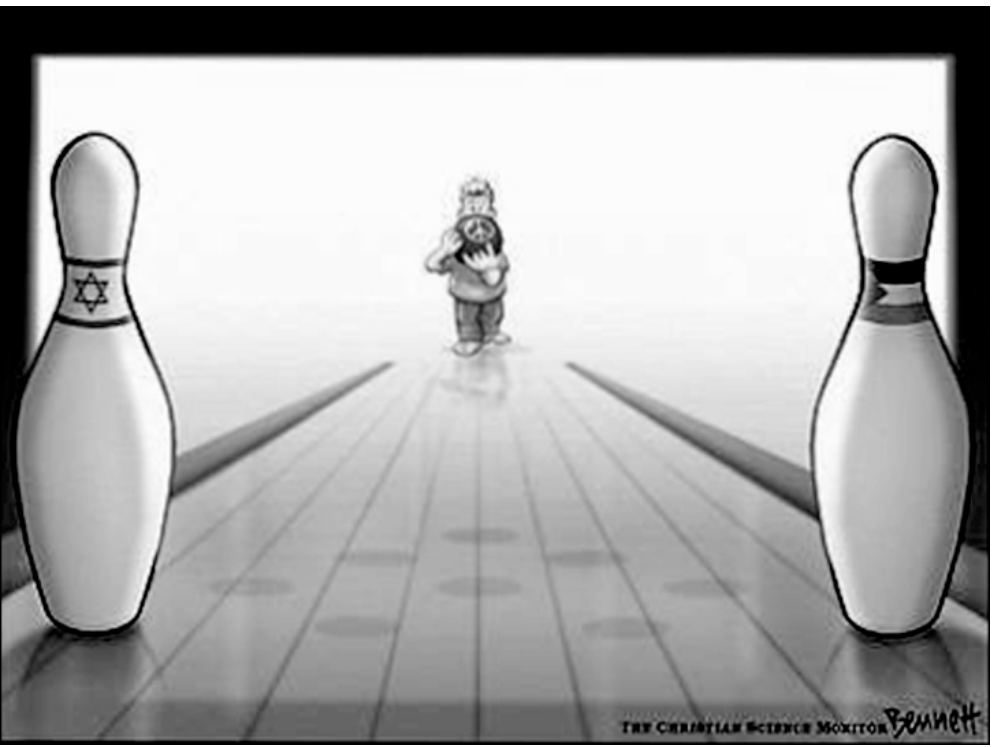
The other US argument for attacking Iraq preemptively was to save the world from a "rogue state" which has Al Qaeda terrorist hide-outs and training centers (where are they, by the way -- can anyone tell us?) So, we needed the American troops to "liberate" Iraq and the world from fanaticism and the extremist Muslim forces. But what do we see now? Thousands of Shias flagellating chains and whips, circling mosques, and marching toward Karbala, laying the foundation of a Shia-Sunni split in the so called newly "free" country? Is this not a sign that post-Baathist Iraq has the potential of becoming a breeding ground for Shiite fanaticism? Does this ring a bell? A replay of the events which led to the creation and later destruction of the Taliban in Afghanistan by the very same "guardians" of secularism and liberalism?

And now we have "America's Man in Baghdad," handpicked by the Pentagon to reinstate "freedom and democracy" in Iraq -- General Garner -- who "owes his appointment to the personal tie he ...formed with Rumsfeld" (Herald Tribune April 23, 2003). Of course, the whole world needs to take special courses on democratic freedom from the US , where even today citizens have serious doubts as to whether the current president was truly their popular choice! Where, I am told, web sites that provide the other story (e.g. Al Jazeera) have been made inaccessible to the people, where the majority can listen to only one opinion voiced by CNN and Fox News, and European and South Asian TV channels are available only at an exorbitant cost, where

war protesters are labeled as unpatriotic. A recurring question for many of us now is : Has freedom of expression for the American masses become a casualty of the Iraq war?

We have been informed by American President George Bush that the transition to a true democracy in Iraq may take as much as "two years"! During this period the Great Garner will make sure that freedom is restored to the ancient civilization of Mesopotamia and will, of course, in the process, garner the benefits for the coalition countries or as Jay Leno (NBC, Tonight Show), said, "Divide the country into three: premium, regular and unleaded" petroleum! My question to the American people: Would you accept a leader from Iraq, "handpicked" by its regime, to install a new form of democracy in the United States? (After all, there are many around the world that believe there is no true democracy in the US today.) Would you allow an outsider to lead the process of reforming YOUR constitution?

Finally to the devil Saddam! The tragedy of this war is that many of us that always believed Saddam was a ruthless despot who should have been forced out of power by his people a decade ago, are now left in an embarrassing situation, having to face the criticism of the handful who hold a flag for him and the likes of him! We are now told by our opponents that democracy is an eye wash and an excuse to subjugate the weak and "might is right" is, after all, the rule of the day! These critics also tell us that numerous dictators all around the world (Saudi Arabia being on top of the list) are great allies of the US. There are also the ex-Soviet dictatorships in the Caucasus and Central Asia



All health information to keep you up to date

Urinary tract infections and SEX

There can be a link between sex and urinary tract infections (UTIs) in women. For some women, UTIs (otherwise known as cystitis) may be triggered by sex or an increased frequency in sex. During sex, friction can push bacteria up the urethra, which is the tube that connects the bladder to the outside. Women have a much shorter urethra than men, so the bacteria have less distance to travel to get to the bladder. If bacteria start to multiply in the bladder, symptoms soon follow. These can include the need to urinate frequently, pain, burning, stinging on urination and a sense that your bladder is not completely empty. Fevers and backache may also occur. If possible, prevention of urinary tract infections is much preferred. After intercourse, women are advised to go to the toilet and empty their bladder to flush out any bacteria. Drinking plenty of water and drinking a glass of cranberry juice every day also helps prevent UTIs. Always wipe yourself after going to the toilet from front to back, so that bacteria from around the anus are wiped away, not towards the urethra. If you think you may have a urinary tract infection, it's always wise to see your doctor for advice and a urine screen.