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July 4 and American myths



of Liberty, were not happy. In most urban areas of America, obscure political hacks such as Sam Adams of Boston had achieved public renown for the first time in their lives by denouncing the threat of British tyranny from the moment of the Stamp Act. The stature of politicians whose popularity depended upon British tyranny diminished inexorably.

Then in 1773, Parliament passed a bill with American implications. In the course of regulating the affairs of the East India Company, the House of Commons made some provisions that made British tea cheaper and therefore, competitive with that smuggled into the colonies from Holland. Sam Adams and others interpreted cheap tea as the means to seduce the Sons of Liberty into subjugation. They saw in it a British design to undermine American liberty. Adams and his followers decided to "venture upon a desperate remedy" to prevent the tea from being landed. On Dec. 16, 1773, 150 Sons of Liberty disguised as Indians boarded three ships in Boston harbour and "in a very little time," according to Sam Adams, "every one of the teas was immersed in the bay, without the least injury to private property."

Of course, the East India Company regarded their tea as private property of some value. In fact, by their accounting, 10,000-pound worth of private property had been wantonly and publicly destroyed, leading to a chain of events which ultimately triggered a full-scale war. However, if Britain ignored Sam Adams and his "Boston Tea Party" and did not impose martial law in Boston, Mr. Adams and his followers would have again lost their standing and like Canada, America would have evolved peacefully as an independent nation within the Commonwealth. Still I have no objection to Americans' celebrating Independence Day as long as they don't forget the real history. Happy Birthday, America.

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The US Independence Day on July 4 is also an occasion to debunk some myths about America. Americans say that their founding fathers fought a War of Independence against Britain because they thought "taxation without representation is tyranny." This is absolutely incorrect. The Stamp Duty of 1765, to defray some costs that Britain incurred for colonial defence, was never collected and later revoked and all 13 colonies had their own local legislatures.

It may be recalled when on April 12, 1770, the British Parliament repealed the Stamp Act, some Americans, who called themselves Sons

Hong Kong, Taiwan vis-à-vis China

With reference to a July 2 letter to the editor by Mr. Arthurlyx, I must affirm that I have absolutely no reason to misconstrue facts, let alone offend a loyal reader of my column under any circumstances. I realise I should have added a footnote below the table contained in the article, "Dilemmas of foreign currency reserves" indicating that Hong Kong and China as "one country, two systems."

Pursuant to an agreement signed by China and the United Kingdom on 19 December 1984, Hong Kong was designated as a Hong Kong Special Administrative Region of China on 1 July 1997. Under this special agreement, China accepted "one country, two systems" formula and promised not to impose its socialist system on Hong Kong and that Hong Kong will enjoy a high degree of autonomy in all matters except foreign and defence affairs for the next 50 years. Accordingly, The World Fact Book reports economic and demographic statistics of Hong Kong separately like any other country. Even China treats all exports and imports that pass through Hong Kong separately from those of the mainland for accounting gimmick.

With respect to Taiwan, the pressing unresolved political issues include the status of Taiwan and its relationship with China, the form of eventual unification as well as domestic political and economic reform.

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Tale of dying water-bodies

Living in the outskirts of Dhaka city for more than 30 years, I have noticed various ways in which water-bodies are killed every day. Let me describe a few. Divide and rule. If there's a large pond or channel, build a road with a view to providing a 'short-cut link' to reduce the distance. Bisect or trisect the channel again and again so that earth filling can take place in a way everyone can cope with the change. Remind the people of

better communication facility, but never let them realise the loss of water-body.

Pollute and eliminate. Pollute the low land so badly that everyone will feel relieved to get rid of it. Dump all the sewage materials and let it be the heaven for mosquitoes. Pay attention that odour becomes unbearable for the people of the locality. Then the people will actually help to fill those low lands. Shock and awe. Arrange the work

force and necessary equipments in such a way that you can grab most of the low lands overnight. It is really difficult to undo once you have done it. Dispute may arise, but this 'Israeli way' is an effective one, indeed.

Slow poisoning. Dump the waste, effluent materials etc. and grab the ponds or canals. Build few make shift houses. Then dump more and extend the houses by grabbing more of the water bodies. Continue

this way until you grab the whole.

Camouflage method. It needs suitable place to set up public facilities like water pumps or power sub-station, fill the low lands. Markets, bazaars, schools, mosques, graveyards, hospitals etc. all can be excuses to grab the water-bodies.

Hide and seek. Fence the water-body, partly or wholly, with CI sheet etc. and then start earth filling in an accelerated fashion. Don't forget to hang a notice mentioning that some development (!) activities are going on.

Deceptive logic. You hang a notice that a hospital or stadium will be set up as committed by the authorities and fill the canals or ditches with earth. Never remind the people that the same authorities had earlier banned filling of any water-body whatsoever. Let the people be confused with logic and counter logic.

I am sure the list will continue. There are many ways one can kill the water-bodies, indeed. Can anyone please tell me how we can save those?

Engr. Hafizur Rahman Arman
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6X2

12X3

6X3

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