

# Zidane has been punished, why not Materazzi?



DR. FAKHRUDDIN AHMED writes from Princeton

WATCHING the tragedy that unfolded in the 110th minute of last Sunday's World Cup final, I was reminded of a line from the 1965 movie, "Lord Jim," based on Joseph Conrad's 1900 novel of the same name, when Jim (Peter O'Toole) muses: "I have been called a so-called hero and a so-called coward, and there is not the thickness of a sheet of paper between them."

Regardless of the final outcome, France's Zinedine Zidane was ten minutes away from joining the pantheon of soccer gods alongside the likes of Pele and Beckenbauer. Instead, with the world watching in horror, in a split second of insanity, the god showed that he had feet or

more appropriately, head of clay. Such a catastrophic fall, from a hero to a villain is reminiscent of Satan's fall from heaven to hell!

Zidane deserved to be sent off for head-butting Italian defender Materazzi in the sternum. As the religious saying goes, to whom much is given (talent in this case), much is expected (patience in this case). As a role model for children all over the world, Zidane should have known better. Although after the final French President Jacques Chirac called Zidane "a genius of world football," the former French Sports Minister Marie-George Buffet was more to the point: "This morning, Zidane, what do we tell our children, and all those for whom you were the living role model for all times?"



Zinedine Yazid Zidane, the son of Muslim Algerian immigrants, is known for his discretion and shyness in France as well as brilliance in football. His two goals in the final of 1998 World Cup against Brazil struck a blow for multi-culturalism and became a rebuke against anti-immigrant sentiment in France.

Zidane grew up playing on concrete in an impoverished immigrant neighbourhood of Marseille, where fouls and insults are met with instant retribution. "You can take the man out of the rough neighbourhood but you can't take the rough neighbourhood out of the man," said striker Thierry Henry. Even on the world stage, with the whole planet watching, for a moment Zidane lost his composure and acted like a thug on the mean streets of Marseille.

Zinedine Zidane has paid a hefty price for his indiscretion with the possible loss of the world cup final, prestige, and future endorsements. What about the other thug, Marco Materazzi, the instigator? He has paid no price whatsoever. Seconds before the incident, Materazzi grabbed Zidane's jersey as the French attacked (the referee did not call a foul.) The two exchanged words as they walked back. The Paris-based anti-racism group SOS-Racism issued a statement on Monday quoting "several very well informed sources from the world of football" as saying that Materazzi called Zidane a "dirty terrorist."

Materazzi denied saying that, although he was very careful not to say what he did say that provoked Zidane. According to Zidane's

agent, Zidane told him that Materazzi "said something very serious to him, but he would not tell me what." (An Italian lip-reader has claimed that Marco Materazzi provoked Zinedine Zidane by saying, "I wish an ugly death to you and all your family.")

Let us get this straight. Materazzi was not heaping praise on Zidane or telling him, "Zizou, can I kiss your whiskers?" He was constantly insulting and provoking Zidane. It was not that Zidane wanted to practice heading on Materazzi's chest. After 110 minutes of insult, he had had it and acted like any ordinary man would. For those who think words cannot hurt, think about this: How many times have you been hurt by someone physically? And now think how many times someone's words hurt you. Not even close, is it?

If someone were to insult you ethnically, religiously or racially, you would forget that you are a doctorate and attack the offender physically like an animal! It is bad enough to be an immigrant of Arab heritage in Europe. An Arab European would have to be more tolerant than a saint not to react to constant taunts of "dirty terrorist" or "I wish an ugly death to you and all your family!"

Yet, Materazzi faced no consequences and celebrates the world cup! The way Materazzi reacted to Zidane's head butt, one would have thought that his ribs were busted. Yet, he got up immediately after Zidane was ejected and calmly rammed in Italy's second penalty kick. Everyone also seems to have forgotten about the inconsistent and sometimes atrocious and illegal referring by the match referee, Horacio Elizondo of Argentina.

Neither the referee, nor the two linesmen had seen Zidane's head butt. Commentators were quick to point out that since football does not allow the use of instant replay to adjudicate disputed plays, Zidane cannot be punished for something neither the referee nor the linesmen had seen live.

Yet, the referee watched the replay on the huge screen in the stadium and threw Zidane out. This is illegal, as the commentators pointed out! Since the referee or the linesmen did not see the infraction, the worst punishment should have been a yellow card for Zidane. If Zidane was to be ejected, Materazzi should have received at least a yellow card for instigating the incident or should have been disqualified from taking the penalty. For a 50-50 infraction, Zidane, the retaliator, received 100% punishment, and Materazzi, the instigator, received 0%. This is not fair.

Anyone reviewing the tapes would notice that the referee Horacio Elizondo was determined to call as few fouls committed against Zidane as possible. Zidane frequently complained to the referee to no avail. Even when he was brutalised by the Italians and injured his shoulder and was in danger of not returning to the field, the referee did not call a foul. This led to Zidane's frustration and eventual explosion. The referee has to be consistent. If the 7th minute infraction by Materazzi was a penalty for France, there was a more clear-cut penalty in the second half that the referee denied the French. Sure, he had given France a penalty before; but it did not mean he had the discretion not to give France a penalty they had earned!

Horacio Elizondo is not the first referee to have an impact on the result of a World Cup final. His Latin predecessor, Mexico's Edgardo Codesal, the referee in the 1990 World Cup final in Rome, was even worse. In those days yellow cards were not wiped clean after group plays. Consequently, Argentina had 4 or 5 of their starters ineligible for the final. Within minutes of the start, Codesal red-carded Argentine player Gustavo Dezotti on a questionable call. Later, he sent off another Argentine, Pedro Monzon, on another questionable call. Even with nine men, somehow Maradona and his valiant warriors managed to keep the match scoreless for 84 minutes. Six minutes from the end, Codesal gave West Germany a penalty which clearly was not a penalty! Germany scored and won 1-0.

Only much later I learned that the Mexican fans hate Argentina for its football success and that in the final of the 1986 World Cup in Mexico City, Mexican fans wildly cheered for West Germany against their Latin brothers Argentina. One would have thought that referees would be above such partisan considerations; with Mr. Codesal, this may not have been the case.

Referees must be men of steel, uninfluenced by partisan crowds, players' acting, ethnicities and race. A good referee cannot be a feeble man. Someone brought up the disturbing thought that perhaps Horacio Elizondo was so quick to punish Zidane and France because eight of the 11 French starters are black or Arab. The best referee in the world should referee the final. I don't think Edgardo Codesal (1990) and Horacio Elizondo (2006) were

the best referees available. When Europeans are in the final, as in 1990 and 2006, FIFA should still go for the best referees, not exclusively Latin referees. I have no doubt that a referee from Italy or France would have been fairer to both the teams than Signor Horacio Elizondo was to the French.

This writer is a supporter of Brazil. However, Italy is his favourite European country. This writer cheered Italy against Germany, and picked Italy to win the final. However, Materazzi's behaviour left a bad taste in the writer's mouth. I have many Italian and Italian American friends; they condemn behaviour such as Materazzi's. I hope Materazzi apologises for taunting Zidane. If he does not, I hope Italy will punish him. If Italy does not, I shall lose some respect for my favourite European country and think that they won the 2006 World Cup with foul words!

I have little faith in FIFA to do anything sensible. FIFA's policy is to punish the retaliator, not the instigator. That policy ought to change. Foul words hurt much as a foul tackle, if not more. To avoid repeats of the Materazzi-Zidane scandal, FIFA can make it compulsory for the players to wear a button-size listening device that would record every utterance of players and can be heard live, so that the services of lip-readers are not necessary. FIFA should make it a foul to use foul language and to taunt opponents during football competitions. Appropriately, the listening-recording device should be labeled, "Materazzi Button!"

Dr. Fakhrudin Ahmed is a columnist of The Daily Star.

## A man of law

MESBAH-US-SALEHEEN

NEARLY three years ago from now, one of the brightest luminaries in the legal profession of our country left us for his heavenly abode. Barrister Syed Ishtiaq Ahmed died on July 12, 2003 after a prolonged illness. By his passing away, the nation not only lost an eminent jurist, but also lost a wonderful gentleman with courage and vision.

He was not a son of our soil. He was born in a noble and aristocratic family in a remote village of Gazipur, Uttar Pradesh, India on January 18, 1932. He maintained his noble and aristocratic nature throughout his whole life. Barrister Ishtiaq became more *Bangali* than the *Bangali* itself. His oratory in Bangla was superb and one can wonder how he achieved this goal.

Apart from his legal profession, he had always been busy with many kind of works and became a public figure. He spent his entire life in legal profession, a profession with no set hours. Even being so gifted, he never took things for granted and was a hard working man.

After attending the cases in the Supreme Court, he had to spend hours in his chambers with his juniors. Some of the brightest lawyers in our country today were once his juniors or students, and still cherish their fond memories working with him. The depth of his knowledge was astronomical and it

seemed that the essence of many matters were at his fingertips.

He was politically a conscious man, although he did not join in any political party. By asking him about it, I tried to find out the reason behind. But all the time, smile on his face, he put back the question towards me and used to ask me to find a political party, which went by its objectives and visions truly and firmly. Because of his non-political affiliations, he became two-time adviser of the neutral caretaker government in our country.

Barrister Ishtiaq was a visionary. He had a vision to separate judiciary from that of administration. He started it as an adviser of the last caretaker government but could not finish it because of his sojourn stay. But, still five years after that and many a times' reminder from the Supreme Court, the government yet to finalise that chapter.

We wonder how Barrister Ishtiaq would have been reacted and feel about the current political environment in our country including the public attitudes towards the judicial system. He deeply thought about our country. He was firmly committed to the ideals of democracy. He loved to see this country that the citizens here would live in true democratic conditions with peace and harmony, where the rule of law will prevail.

He was a courageous man. His undaunted courage to speak up for truth and justice was widely known. He was widely respected, a vast knowledgeable lawyer, and for that

he often called by the Supreme Court as Amicus Curie (friend of the court) to assist them in most difficult and complex issues particularly on constitutional matters.

The nation will not forget that under his leadership, the 8th amendment to the constitution of our country, concerning establishment of several High Courts in different places of our country, was declared unconstitutional and void in 1989. He was arrested and detained for this movement. Barrister Ishtiaq loved his profession very much and he was born to be a lawyer.

He used to love roses very much. Those who have gone to his Gulshan house would never forget the variety of roses he used to plant near the veranda of his downstairs chamber and drawing rooms. Good-natured, wit and humour and urbanity were the characteristics of Barrister Ishtiaq, and in many ways he was a true aristocrat.

He had style and intelligence to match his lively nature among his close family members and friends. Barrister Ishtiaq is no more to us today, but his legacy will remain as inspiration to our society. We pressingly feel the need of his presence in the present scenario of our country.

May the soul of Barrister Ishtiaq Ahmed rest in eternal peace.

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## Why W should learn from WW

Although sometimes described as the first MBA-style president, George W Bush displays some of the same organizational deficiencies as Wilson. As described by David Gergen, "Bush is a top-down, no-nonsense, decisive, macho leader who sets his eye on the far horizon and doesn't 'go wobbly' getting there." But strength of character is not an adequate substitute for organizational competence (such as Bush's father possessed).

JOSEPH S NYE

MEMBERS of his administration compare him to Ronald Reagan or Harry Truman. But the 20th-century president he most resembles, for better and worse, is Woodrow Wilson.

There are uncanny similarities between Wilson and Bush. Both were highly religious and moralistic figures who were elected initially with less than a majority of the popular vote, and focused on domestic issues without any vision of foreign policy. Both were initially successful with their transformational domestic agendas in Congress. Both tended to portray the world in black and white rather than shades of gray. Both projected self-confidence, responded to a crisis with a bold vision and stuck to it.

Both relied on a close political adviser and failed to adequately manage a broad range of information inputs in their administration. As Secretary of State Robert Lansing commented in 1917: "Even established facts were ignored if they did not fit in with this intuitive sense, this

semi-divine power to select the right." As a close adviser described Wilson: "Whenever a question is presented he keeps an absolutely open mind and welcomes all suggestion or advice which will lead to a correct decision. Once a decision is made it is final and there is an end to all advice and suggestion. There is no moving him after that." While persistence can be an admirable trait in a leader, it can also be dangerous when it slows course corrections.

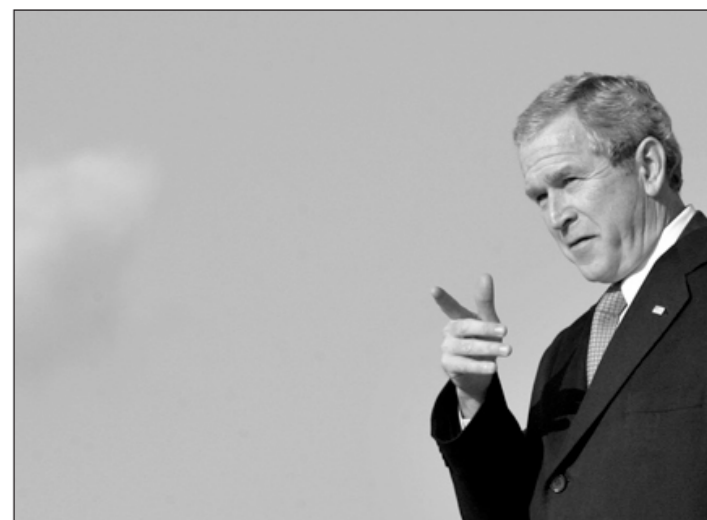
Although sometimes described as the first MBA-style president, George W Bush displays some of the same organizational deficiencies as Wilson. As described by David Gergen, "Bush is a top-down, no-nonsense, decisive, macho leader who sets his eye on the far horizon and doesn't 'go wobbly' getting there." But strength of character is not an adequate substitute for organizational competence (such as Bush's father possessed). Information flows in the run-up to the Iraq war were clearly limited. Former Secretary of State Colin Powell reported of Bush that "he knows kind of what he wants to do, and what he wants to hear is how to

get it done."

Though Wilson started as an idealist and Bush as a realist, both wound up stressing the promotion of democracy and freedom in the rest of the world as their transformative vision. And both defined visions that had a large gap between expressed ideals and national capacities. Many of Bush's speeches sound as if they could have been uttered by Wilson, though Wilson was the better rhetorician. Fortunately for Bush, there are also important differences between the two men. Bush appears to have an emotional intelligence and self-mastery that failed Wilson at crucial moments. He is also more personable where Wilson was often stiff and aloof.

Both Wilson and Bush tried to educate the public to accept their visions. But as political scientist Hugh Heclo argues: "Successful teaching requires ongoing learning on the teacher's part." Bush's impatience hinders learning. In the words of a journalist who spent many hours with him, "He has a transformational temperament. He likes to shake things up. That was the key to going into Iraq."

That impatient temperament also contributed to the organizational



process Bush put in place that discouraged learning. In his second term, Bush has made some efforts to change the debate on Iraq by publicly acknowledging new facts. But as one of the designers of this strategy said, "It only worked because we married it up with admitting some mistakes, and that was quite a fight, because the president doesn't talk that way."

Wilson succeeded initially in educating a majority of the American people about his League of Nations, but he failed because he refused to make compromises with the Senate. Whether Bush will be able to persuade the American people of his proposed transformation of American strategy remains to be seen. His legacy now depends upon the still-uncertain outcome of the preventive war in Iraq, which was his particular addition to the

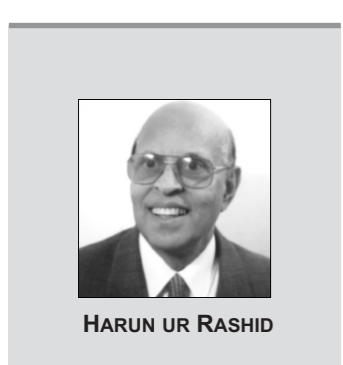
crisis created by al Qaeda's attack on 9/11.

The prospects for successful transformational leadership in foreign policy are greatest in the context of a crisis. But even then, it takes a combination of soft power skills to attract people at home and abroad with a feasible vision, and hard organizational and political skills to implement the vision. Franklin D Roosevelt had the combination. Woodrow Wilson did not. In his first term, George W Bush articulated transformational objectives but did not develop a successful strategy to accomplish them. Today his case remains open, but he is running out of time.

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## China and India re-open the Silk Route



INDIA and China, the two most populous nations in the world and once bitter rivals, are getting closer day by day due to current global political and economic environment. One of the symbols of this relationship is the opening of the ancient "Silk Route" from Tibet to Sikkim (India) on July 6 through a Himalayan pass, Nathu La, that was closed 44 years ago following the brief border war in 1962.

The opening of the route comes a little over a year after the meeting of India's Prime Minister Dr.

### BOTTOM LINE

The re-opening of the old Silk Route promises to boost the economies of the land-locked mountainous regions of the two countries. According to a study conducted by Sikkim's Nathu La Trade Study Group, the trade volume through the Himalayas pass is expected to be worth Rs.4.5 billion in 2015 and Rs.5.74 billion in 2020.

Manmohan Singh with his counterpart Wen Jiabao in New Delhi in April 2005.

Nathu La, a part of the famed Silk Route and located 4,400 metres (14,520 feet) above sea level, has again been opened to promote border trade between the two countries and observers believe that bilateral trade which has stood up to \$18.73 billion in 2005 will get a boost. India and China have pushed for greater trade to tap a total consumer market of 2.3 billion people.

Trade between the two countries currently relies mostly on sea transport and is largely seen as very modest, compared to flows with

their other trade partners. The re-opening of this route will help end economic isolation in this area.

The opening of the Silk Route coincides with the July 1 start of the first train line between Lhasa (Tibet) and eastern region of China. Tibet is no more a mystery land and the train line consolidates the Beijing's hold on Tibet. The train line is a marvellous feat of engineering in modern days and could attract foreign visitors in great numbers.

**Economic benefits**

As per the arrangement, trading will initially be confined to the border regions, with only Sikkim-based

traders and 44 commodities having been allowed in the bilateral trade. Out of 44, 29 commodities were listed for export and 15 for import.

The items included in the bilateral trade are goatskin, sheepskin, wool, raw silk, china clay, borax, salt, some domestic animals, agricultural implements, agro-chemicals, processed food, clothes, spices, tobacco, and vegetables.

It is reported on July 7 that merchants were presented on each side with silk scarves symbolizing respect and were greeted with music and folk dancing after crossing the border through a stone-walled passageway that has

replaced the barbed wire that had kept them apart since 1962.

Officials say that about hundred traders from each country crossed the Nathu La pass, on the border between India's Sikkim state and China's Tibet region to markets on the other side and returned in the evening.

All traders had first-hand knowledge of trade facilities at Renqinggang, the trade station on the Chinese side. They were reportedly been issued trade passes and given a crash course on import-export modalities and regulations.

The re-opening of the old Silk Route promises to boost the economies of the land-locked mountainous regions of the two countries. According to a study conducted by Sikkim's Nathu La Trade Study Group, the trade volume through the Himalayas pass is expected to be worth Rs.4.5 billion in 2015 and Rs.5.74 billion in 2020.

**Political ramifications**

China has always expressed reser-

vation on the annexation of Sikkim by India in the late 70s, and never recognized it a part of India. At the same time, India never recognized Tibet as part of China and gave refuge to the former temporal and spiritual leader the Dalai Lama in India. The historic summit that took place in April 2005 in New Delhi between the two prime ministers, resolved the issue for broader strategic considerations. China recognized Sikkim as part of India while India considered Tibet an integral part of China.

The opening of the Silk Route from Tibet to Sikkim demonstrates the acceptance of India's sovereignty over Sikkim and China's over Tibet. This is one of the important political milestones in bilateral relationship between the two Asia's giants.

Furthermore, observers believe that the recognition of Sikkim and Tibet by each other may lead to resolution of border dispute between the two countries, a legacy

of the 1962 war. India considers Chinese occupation of Ladakh as illegal, and India's occupation of some parts of Arunachal Pradesh is considered as unlawful by China.

The increasing relationship between the China and India may not be comfortable to Pakistan. Democratic or dictatorial, China always features large in Pakistan's policy-decisions towards India. Pakistan had hoped for a permanent breach between China and India and now Pakistan finds that Chinese self-interest has compelled it to narrow differences and repair some of the damage with India caused by the 1962 border war.

Another fact is that since 1949, China has seen Pakistan as the small and vulnerable neighbour, forced to defend itself against a much bigger regional power with greater aspirations. Ex-US National Security Advisor Zbigniew Brzezinski held that only China restrained India's ambition to "subordinate" Pakistan. That perception

does not remain anymore with China against India in the background of current security and economic circumstances.

The re-opening of the Silk Route is a significant edifice of confidence and cooperation between the two countries. Both countries have demonstrated that they are not impervious to getting involved in either economic opportunity or strategic alternative and that they are keeping their options open.

Economic analysts believe that the opening of the ancient Silk Route between the two countries may have an impact on countries in South Asia. Some of them even assert that the economic integration of Bangladesh's economy with that of northeastern states of India is appropriate and timely against the background of rapidly expansion of trade between India and China.

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