

Dhaka, Sunday, April 21, 1991

It's Looking Brighter for a Cyprus Solution

Cedric Pulford writes from Nicosia

Suddenly optimism is growing that a solution to the Cyprus problem may at last be in sight. UN Secretary-General Perez de Cuellar says he hopes to have an agreed outline for a settlement in a few months. Gemini News Service's correspondent talked to President Vassiliou and the leader of the largest party in Cyprus, veteran politician Glafkos Clerides. Both are optimistic and sense that the world climate is right for a solution. Clerides believes the mood among Turkish Cypriots for a reunion as a federal state has softened.

Justice for the Kurds

In what looks like a shrewd reversal of his position, Saddam Hussein has started cooperating with the United Nations in the aid programme launched for the Kurdish refugees. The Iraqi leader may be just buying time or simply making a short-term move. Such is his credibility. However, significantly enough, Mr Hussein's move came soon after George Bush woke up to his country's responsibility towards the Kurds. Until then, concerned as he was that the United States must not get involved in another Vietnam quagmire, President Bush had treated the internal crisis in Iraq with indifference.

In his welcome change of policy, President Bush has made two significant moves: First, he has increased the US assistance manifold — the real figures are still a little unclear — to help in the immediate relief, in providing food, shelter and medicines to the refugees; and secondly, by ordering the US armed forces, still in Iraq, to feed and offer sanctuaries to the refugees.

Herein lies a proof, if one is needed, that strong words from Washington, backed by firm policy actions, can make someone like the Iraqi leader at least rethink his position.

However, the welcome change in the US position and the belated — some would say the hypocritical — move from President Hussein have come a little too late in changing the overall scenario for the Kurds, from one of despair to one of hope. With nearly two million refugees now fighting their way to Turkey, some through the freezing mountains of northern Iraq, and with 1,000 Kurds, especially children, reportedly dying every day, nothing short of a massive international programme can provide the answer, and the answer must indeed come from the United Nations. In carrying out such a programme, the world body must get the fullest support from leading members of Security Council, especially the United States, Britain and France.

One must indeed pay credit to Britain and France to taking up the cause of the Kurds far more vigorously than the United States. Danielle Mitterrand, the wife of the French President, has emerged as the strongest ally of the Kurds, while the British Prime Minister, John Major has suggested that the UN should set up enclaves inside Iraq for the Kurdish refugees.

The British proposal, unique in many ways, has serious demerits. For one thing, there is the danger that these enclaves would perpetuate homelessness and put off indefinitely a political solution of the Kurd problem.

Indeed, the real — and the only — answer to the Kurd problem lies in the change of the regime in Baghdad and in the exit of Saddam Hussein from power. It is only new government in Iraq which, pursuing genuine democratic principles and adhering to fundamental human rights of all its people, can offer autonomy to the Kurdish region and ensure that it is not subjected to the kind of oppression and harassment that it has known again and again in the decades of the seventies and the eighties. If Iraq cannot undertake this long overdue reform of its political structure — a reform in which Saddam Hussein's exit must be the starting point — the demand for a partition of Iraq may eventually acquire an international dimension. Such a move which would amount to dismemberment of a state, for crimes committed by one discredited regime, must indeed be avoided. But it is still in the hands of the government of Iraq, especially of Saddam Hussein, to prevent this catastrophe.

End of an Era

The death of David Lean at the age of 83 last week has left a vacuum of incalculable depth in the world of film-making. Critically acclaimed, as his 28 American Academy of Motion Pictures awards would testify, Lean did not simply make films, he narrated stories.

In an age when the subject-matter and direction of films tended to appeal more and more to the baser instinct of man, David Lean remained true to the idea that films were nothing if not an extension of literature, which, as our own uncrowned poet laureate Shamsur Rahman said, must have aesthetic value in order to be meaningful. David Lean's films retained that value throughout his entire career. When the whole world of celluloid seemed to be rushing towards the money-spinning underworld of sex and mindless violence, Lean remained aloof, indignant, even self-righteous, and his films head and shoulders above the sea of mediocrity below.

He let his camera capture the stunning beauty of the broad expanses of Mother Earth, whether a civil-war landscape of post-imperial Russia, or a burning sea of Arabian sand, or a mysterious India of hills and caves. His judgement in choosing actors to narrate his stories was virtually infallible — from Alec Guinness in 'The Great Expectations' to Victor Banerjee in 'A Passage to India', they seldom failed to play the giants' roles in films that could only be classified as epics, and destined to become classics at a time when the very genre was a dying breed.

It is often said that no man ever wasted as many yards of celluloid as did David Lean. But a perfectionist's painting on the broadest canvas could hardly be expected to allow logistics to limit his imagination. Here was a man who could wait three months to get that one, perfect shot on location; and David Lean, who did his own editing on all his films, thought nothing of sifting through 100 takes to get that one image. Such meticulous attention to detail left many flabbergasted, but it also took the art of film-making to heights scaled by precious few others.

The passing of David Lean brings another reminder to us in Bangladesh of our own poverty and deprivation. Not only is our film industry light years away from the world stode by David Lean, our audience is also deprived of experiencing anything approaching quality films. It's been a long, long time since a 'Lawrence of Arabia' or a 'Dr. Zhivago' was screened by a local movie hall. As a result, an entire class of cinema lovers today stand disenfranchised.

MOVES in the United Nations Security Council over the 17-year old Cyprus problem are being matched on the partitioned island by important movements in the political package.

Cyprus President George Vassiliou told me in an exclusive interview: "The process is obvious. And what is more important it's not simply a process here, it's a process in Turkey."

At the United Nations, Secretary-General Perez de Cuellar sounded upbeat about Cyprus when he met the security council in March. He said conditions were favourable for a settlement and he hoped to produce an agreed outline in a few months.

He expected that the Greek and Turkish Cypriot communities would agree over the powers of a federal government and the withdrawal of forces from the island.

Perez de Cuellar acknowledged some major issues are outstanding. These include land allocation for the two communities (Turkish forces occupy about 40 per cent of Cyprus, although before the 1974 invasion Turkish Cypriots were only 20 per cent of the population), freedom of settlement and the problem of displaced persons.

Meanwhile, the view of President Vassiliou, a non-party leader elected with the support of left and centre parties, was echoed by Glafkos Clerides, whose right-wing Democratic Rally is the largest party in Parliament.

Clerides told me he had sensed a "definitely softer" mood among Turkish Cypriots towards reunion when he crossed the United Nations Green Line to visit the other side of the divided capital, Greek Cypriot politicians from

many parties met Turkish Cypriot politicians, some for the first time in years.

"For the first time I heard opposition groups say the best guarantee (for Cyprus's future) was the will of the two communities. Before, they said we must have Turkey as a guarantor, there must be Turkish forces."

He was emphatic, however, that the new mood of reconciliation did not extend to the Turkish Cypriot leader, Rauf Denktaş, and his National Unity Party.

Vassiliou, aged 58, a politi-



GEORGE VASSILIOU

We're not asking for Schwarzkopf



GLAFKOS CLERIDES

We started from wrong end

cal outsider when he was elected in 1988, stressed that the "solution to the Cyprus problem would benefit Turkey more than anyone else."

He said: "Both the military and the political reasons d'etre (for continuing the occupation of northern Cyprus), even if you accept their point of view, are not there."

Politically Turkey had made the European dimension the main one while militarily for Turkey to occupy the north of Cyprus was "Second World War, Maginot Line kind of thinking" in the rocket era.

[Turkey has an estimated 35,000 troops on the island in support of the mainly non-recognised "Republic of Northern Cyprus."

Vassiliou spoke about the effects of the Gulf War on Cyprus, where a common street opinion is that if the United Nations can implement its resolutions on Kuwait, which produce oil, it should do so over Cyprus, which grows, among other things, carrots.

In March the European Parliament declared unanimously that "equivalent determination should be shown in order to implement all relevant UN resolutions on Cyprus by peaceful means."

Vassiliou said: "We aren't asking for General Schwarzkopf to stop over here, but there is now a world climate in favour of implementation of UN resolutions, which makes the search for the solution to the Cyprus problem more obvious."

The President would not be drawn on similarities and differences between Cyprus and Kuwait, while Clerides warned of the dangers for Greek Cypriots of pressing the parallel.

He said: "It might make it more difficult if we try to establish a parallel. Turkish Cypriots would argue the differences — for instance, that Turkey's 1974 invasion was precipitated by intercommunal

strife and that it had the right under the independence treaty. They would say the invasion followed intervention by Greece with the coup against Archbishop Makarios."

Clerides said: "What we can and should stress is that we are in front of a new situation where for the first time the Security Council is taking collective action (over Kuwait) to force obedience to its resolutions."

"But if you claim parallels and the Security Council says the Cyprus and Kuwait cases aren't the same, you have really stuck your face out for a punch — and as a politician for more than 30 years I've learnt to duck."

The 72-year-old leader has been at the heart of Cyprus politics since 1974, when he ran the country for six months as president of the National Assembly in the vacuum created by the Greek coup, the temporary deposing of President Makarios and the Turkish invasion.

His Democratic Rally is expected to make gains in the May 19 parliamentary elections, consolidating its position in the assembly.

As the solution to the Cyprus problem, both Clerides and Vassiliou support a federated, bizonal (Greek and Turkish) state in line with the

long-existing but never-activated High Level Accords.

On the vexed question of guarantors, Clerides offered an olive branch. On Turkish objections to the European Community (EC) becoming the sole guarantor, he explained:

"They say Yes, but Greece is in the Common Market and we are not. My answer is keep Turkey also a guarantor. Let's have Turkey plus the European Community."

The proposal could prove controversial among Greek Cypriots because it would give Turkey a more direct role than Greece in a future Cyprus.

Vassiliou, meanwhile, said the question of guarantors was not settled and that the important factor was Cyprus's prospective full membership of the EC. "Joining the Community would supersede the need for guarantors in substance, if not in terms of the formalities," he predicted.

The President, who said he was "committed to solve the Cyprus problem," underlined his view that most Turkish Cypriots "badly want a solution," while Clerides stressed the need for both communities to feel secure personally and territorially.

Through a long perspective of political years, Clerides said: "I believe that in all the negotiations we have done, including when I was the negotiator, we have started from the wrong end of the stick. We began with the constitutional order, the inside, and we left this vital question of security unsolved."

"So everything either side suggests is put under a magnifying glass. If you solve the question of future security, the other things would be of much less importance." — GEMINI NEWS

ACCORDING to a World Bank report about 10 per cent of the cattle wealth of Bangladesh is lost in epidemics annually. In absence of adequate number of veterinary surgeons hundreds of cattle fall ill and die untreated. In the district of Gaibandha recently there has been a considerably toll of cattle in 'Khura' disease. And the farmers allege, the local veterinary doctors hardly visit the affected areas without any tips. If it is, an increase in the number of doctors seem to be no immediate solution either.

But farming is being hampered for want of bullocks. A tremendous shortage of bullocks prevails in Magura, Jessore, Comilla, Rangor, Bandarban and Nawabgonj of Dhaka district. Thousands of farmers are facing extreme difficulty in tilling their lands for Kharif crops.

There is scarcity of fodder on the other hand. And poisoning of cattle is rampant in some areas of Brahmanbaria while in Chapainawabgonj cattle lifting is reaching to its height.

In the circumstance, cattle smuggling from India is going on unabated. It appears that unscrupulous traders purchase cattle at a low price from India and bring them in Bangladesh through Natore and via Chalan Beel and they reach the markets of Pabna and Sirajgonj.

Cattle Shortage Hampers Farming

by Naren Paul

Trucks loaded with cattle are seen passing through the streets of the metropolis almost every day. But this does not help the farmers economically, nor the economy of the country is benefited, in real sense.

According to a report of Bangladesh Livestock Directorate there are about 2,24,72,000 cattlehead in Bangladesh excluding 6,85,000 buffaloes. During the sixties the number of cows in this part of the country was 1,89,61,000. The growth of cattlehead over the period is not satisfactory. During sixties the population of this land was six crore. Now it is 11 crore. The slight increase — a mere one lakh cattlehead — is very meagre for the additional five crore people.

Bangladesh incurred a great loss of cattle during the devastating flood of 1988. About 75,000 cattlehead including 47,000 goats and 2000 sheep have been lost. Still Bangladesh could not make up the loss.

The statistics of Livestock Directorate says about 23 per cent of the cattle, 10 per cent of the buffaloes, 50 per cent of the goats, 33 per cent of the

sheep are slaughtered for meat every year in Bangladesh. Breeding at a snail's pace cannot make up the shortage.

Bullocks continue to come in Bangladesh from India. Now the question is that if this trend of "illegal" coming is stopped by chance, what would happen? The animal husbandry is beset with problems and progress and achievement there are very few and far between.

Now a pair of bullocks costs Taka 12000 to 14000. Very few farmers can afford to purchase bullocks at such an exorbitant price. In some upazilas there is system of hiring bullocks (by tenure system). In some areas the bulls may be hired for Tk 70-100 a week but then the emaciated bullocks can not pull the plough properly. In many areas, cows are being used in drawing ploughs and carts. According to statistics about 2,29,000 cows are being used for the purposes. But cows are not efficient substitute for bullocks.

World Bank report says only one per cent of the land in Bangladesh is tilled by tractor. For the rest 99 per cent farm-

ers have to depend on cattle. Yet adequate attention was not paid to improve the condition of cattle wealth. Some improved category cattle were however imported from abroad and some healthy cows were supplied to some wealthy persons as well as some marginal farmers at reduced price. But that just cannot help improve the situation. There is shortage of fodder, want of grazing fields, shortage of medicine coupled with alleged negligence of veterinary doctors. For all this also the breeding of cattle is falling alarmingly.

In Bangladesh there are about 34,52,000 milk cows. In 1984-85 about 12,40,672 metric tons and during 1989-90 about 13,13,949 metric tons of milk had been produced. There is some increase in milk production. Yet crores of taka is spent for importing canned milk from abroad.

There is lack of grazing fields and the livestock experts say if we want to improve our cattlehead numerically and qualitatively we are to improve the food and nutrition conditions for the cattle first. In the char regions of

Noakhali of in the forest areas there are some uncultivated or uncultivable lands. That may be used for cattle grazing. The agricultural waste or byproducts like hay, oilcakes, molasses are also good fodders. We should not let them go out of the country as export items. On the other hand import of some food supplement, like vitamin and minerals must be ensured even by providing subsidy.

Vaccine production must be increased. At present about 30 crore doses of vaccine are produced. It is very insignificant to meet the great demand. For breeding healthy cattle healthy cows and bulls may be imported and for ensuring timely treatment fund should be raised if necessary.

Soft term credit facilities should be given to those enterprising with cattle or dairy farms. Arrangements should be made in such a way so that they can sell their milk or milk products through cooperatives.

For development of agriculture and livestock IFAD (International Fund for Agriculture Development) extends credit facilities through

different agencies in Bangladesh. For development of fodder there are about 22 projects in the country including those at Rajshahi, Faridpur, and Rajshahi. All this may be brought to optimum utility.

In 1980-81 the Livestock Directorate launched a programme of cultivating Napier grass on either side of Dhaka-Aracha Road on experimental basis. It has proved successful. Meanwhile the grass has been distributed to many farmers. In Rajshahi also cultivation of this grass is on progress. More areas may be brought under such programme.

In this context it may be mentioned that Shama grass is very harmful for the cattle. In this grass there is hydrocyanic poison that causes diarrhoea of the cows. Public should be made careful that their cows should not feed on this grass.

In fine it can be stated that so far from Pakistan about 100 healthy cows have been imported. There are also about 150 Friesian cows. Each of such cows, give as much as 30 litres milk a day. However, only in particular areas these cattle can be reared. Well, can't we create the similar suitable condition in more areas to accommodate more and more such high yielding cows replacing the less qualitative ones. Problems are so many, but there are also ways out.

To the Editor...

Letters for publication in these columns should be addressed to the Editor and legibly written or typed with double space. For reasons of space, short letters are preferred, and all are subject to editing and cuts. Pseudonyms are accepted. However, all communications must bear the writer's real name, signature and address.

"Should disaster strike"

Sir, A number of organisations carried out programmes to observe World Health Day, on April 7, in a befitting manner. This year's slogan "should disaster strike — be prepared" becomes more relevant after the Gulf War, and its ensuing result which we are yet to experience.

Experts are time and again emphasising on the environmental changes and their effect on us. Therefore, this year's slogan of the Health Day is nothing but a reminder of what can happen and that we should not be forgetful, rather be alert and prepared for the disasters that may strike.

The modern world has become a combination of problems as well as relief from them. But we notice, the more we find way out of a certain problem, the more new ones are created! Some more suggestion on the extent of preparedness should emerge.

Tahmina Mojumdar
Mohakhali, Dhaka.

Hijacking

Sir, Hijacking is not a new phenomenon in the city of Dhaka. Not a day passes when one area has not undergone this experience.

The other day such an incident took place at Motijheel area in broad daylight. A hijacker snatched a gold necklace from the person of a lady, and was running away at a great speed.

However, a number of onlookers as well as pedestrians caught hold of him, but the strangest part was that before getting caught the miscreant fired shots from his pistol.

I call this strange, because time and again we hear of submitting of fire arms or of taking serious action against those possessing fire arms. Well, if any of this was done seriously we would not be having hijackers on the street with arms, shooting at people.

So we urge the authorities once again to be really serious about this and take

action as quickly as possible, and thus save us from the armed hijackers.

Masud Khan
D.I.T. Avenue, Dhaka.

Form of government

Sir, In your editorial — "A Welcome Address" on April 7, you have highlighted some important points from the address of the Acting President Justice Shahabuddin Ahmed which he recently delivered during the inaugural session at the Jatiya Sangsad.

There is no reason to doubt the neutrality of the Acting President. The President has rightly advised the political parties to settle their difference on the question of form of government in the parliament house.

It is hoped that the sincere and unselfish advice of the Acting President will get due attention from all the quarters and every front will move toward establishing true democracy in Bangladesh ignoring mere political differences.

M. Zahidul Haque,
Assistant Professor,
Bangladesh Agricultural College, Dhaka.

Changing trends

Sir, These days it is so difficult to get a good repair man for doing any small job at the household.

Or in other words, domestic odd jobs like, repairing the switchboard, drilling randleplug holes in the wall for hanging something, etc.

Besides, the fact many of them are not good at their work, some of them also do, whenever possible, try to cheat people in many ways. Say, if six electric switches need to be repaired, and if we are not careful, they would bill us for twelve!

This is a new trend in the society; as life gets complicated, people and their nature seem to be changing too. This was not so before.

We do sincerely hope that with the fast changing time, there will be some change in attitude too and things will improve soon. Won't it be!

Rehana Taher
Wari, Dhaka.

Health and environment

Sir, This year's World Health Day's slogan was "should disaster strike — be prepared". The theme chosen for 1991 is "emergency preparedness."

The above mentioned slogan and theme of the world health day and year respectively are very appropriate in the context of the present situation. The UN WHO Director General Dr. Hiroshi Nakajima has rightly pointed out that international solidarity and

cooperation are essential to reducing the adverse effects of disasters.

I think, in the present day, man-made disasters are causing serious hazards to the mankind and their environment. The recent Iraq-Kuwait war has initiated a man-made disaster in which many men and children have died and still dying. The environment has also been dangerously polluted.

We want end of wars and conflicts. Let all the nations work unitedly to combat the natural disasters and to make our boiling planet into a smiling heaven.

M. Zahidul Haque,
Assistant Professor,
Bangladesh Agricultural College, Dhaka.

Telephone charges

Sir, Prior to July, 1986 Telephone charges per call was Tk 1.00 and thereafter it was raised to Tk 1.10 paise per call. From July '88 it was further raised to Tk 1.30 per call. The existing rate of Tk 1.70 per call took effect from April, 1989. Although no further increase has been made in the rate per call from April, '90 new items viz. 1.5% as Development Charge and 15% in lieu of 10% Excise Duty have been levied in general, which indeed make it a very heavy increase. Besides, quite cumbersome increase in rates for installation of new tele-

phone connections has been made practically discouraging the average people from taking a telephone connection.

Even for transfer of a telephone within local limits a subscriber has to pay Tk 5,000/00 which in the opinion of the former Minister-in-Charge, Kazi Feroze Rashid ought not to have been above 50% of the amount, but the relief is yet to reach the telephone subscriber requiring a transfer of telephone.

It is important to note that the Gas Department has introduced a lower rate for domestic use than that for industrial connections. Electric Department has also introduced separate rates for domestic, commercial and industrial connections.

As frequent and rather high rate of increase in almost all utility services has been very much unbearable for the average domestic consumers subscribers, the respective authorities are expected to provide some sort of relief, to ameliorate the sufferings of common man.

The Bangladesh Telegraph & Telephone Board would be better advised to reduce charges as far as possible for residential private telephones besides withdrawing the new levies imposed since April, '90. *Omair Bin Naser Dinajji, Mirpur, Dhaka.