posed to maintain global

peace, but rather frontcally it

is due to the balance of nuclear

terror produced by the Cold

War. It is the knowledge that

the next world war may esca-

late to a nuclear holocaust

which would eliminate human

civilization, that has discour-

aged the superpowers from

Dhaka, Monday, November 4, 1991

## Exams and Responsibility

Over 300 students, all candidates in the current B A (Hons) and Master's final examinations, went and submitted a memorandum to the Vice Chancellor of Dhaka University Saturday, asking Dr Maniruzzaman Miah to make immediate arrangements for holding of those exams. The VC should give serious thought to the request, not only because rarely has a more just demand been made by ordinary students on university authorities, but also because the time has come for Dr Miah to take a major initiative to relieve a situation which owes its existence to his own blunders in no small measures.

These exams, involving two batches of undergraduates and graduates, should have been held ast July. But the Vice Chancellor's decision to hold elections to the Dhaka University Central Students Union (DUCSU) in the same month turned out to have been a seriously misguided one, to put it mildly. We do not know what the rationale behind simultaneous scheduling of both the exams and DUCSU polls was, but it was clear even then, that holding of the polls would raise tension on the campus to a point where prospects of peaceful atmosphere needed for academic pursuits such as studies and exams would become a forlorn dream.

The primary responsibility of the university authorities was to hold the examinations first, allow two batches of students to pass out and lessen the session log-jam in the process. Nobody would have got hurt had DUCSU polls been held one, two or even three months later. Unfortunately, the university's executive authority went against saner advice and, as a direct result, over 1,500 students still await their long-overdue chance to become fully-fledged, working citizens of the country. And prospects of a peaceful DUCSU elections are still nowhere in sight. For a reason which is yet to be explained satisfactorily, the university somehow forgot that its very reason for existence was to impart education and produce graduates, and not act as a launching pad for political careers.

But that is all in the past now. A lot of water has flown down the Ganges since and too much blood spilled on the campus once known as Oxford of the East. Much has already been said about the hows and whys of the situation, but the \*time has now come for shouldering of responsibility. The VC, as the chief executive of the institution, must now stand up and assert his authority. Indefinite periods of closures and postponements of exams and classes can no longer be regarded — if they ever were — as acceptable methods of administering the country's highest seat of learning. Political problems that exist will take time to sort out and further clashes cannot be ruled out so long as the Home Ministry keeps its head buried in the sand.

But the university must now put the interest of the students above any other considerations. That means holding of exams without any delay. If the teachers feel the atmosphere on the campus is not conductive to holding of exams, then the VC should look for alternative venues where examinees could go. There is no shortage of such venues around the city and funds for hiring them should pose no problem whatsoever. Alternatively, the VC could consider declaring the halls of residence closed to all except for those holding exam passes, shut down the DUCSU office for the exam duration and deploy police throughout the campus to keep troublemakers out (surely the police cannot fail to do that much). And then hold the exams in their rightful place. Whatever decision the VC may take, a decision has to be taken now rather than later, and that decision must reflect the interests and needs of the examinees and other students and no one else's.

## Writing Science in Bengali

The nation observed the 14th death anniversary of Dr. Qudrat-e-Khuda - once the biggest name in science among the Bengali Muslims and the man with the biggest academic and research accomplishment that we got on our side of the great divide of 1947. He was the first amongst Bengali Muslims to have been awarded a D.Sc. by London University for his original work in chemistry. If for the better part of the Twentieth Century Albert Einstein was the idea of a scientist for the world's common man, Qudrat-e-Khuda was exactly so for the common man of Bangladesh.

Comparisons are odious but that help sometimes to show someone close to us in his or her true worth. Dr. Khuda did not pursue a life of science and chose to be first an educational administrator — being the DSI of undivided Bengal and then an organiser of scientific establishment being the founder-director of the BCSIR. He may thus very well said to be a Pasteur or Madame Curie, if only he were to have similar scientific achievements.

Should we remember him today as the great builder of the BCSIR — the biggest institution of its kind in Bangladesh but still very much far from playing any significant role in the shaping of the nation in either scientific or industrial or research terms? One knows that it is the various successive governments and their policies and not the BCSIR were to blame for that. But that knowledge does bring to us many unpleasant thoughts instead of brightening up the memories

of that truly big man. We shall remember him for long for his uncompromising crusading for education and research of the sciences in Bengali. Not only he was the author of a very authoritative school text-book on the sciences, he was also a great pioneer in finding and coining appropriate Bengali "poribhasha" for scientific terms of Greek, Latin and Auglo-Saxon origin. His was a style striking lucid and precise, particularly suited to scorching scientific knowledge. And he fought till the last day of his life, as indeed his more illustrious peer Satyen Bose also did, to make Bengali have a rich and dependable scientific literature. Today in Bangladesh the sciences are taught in the vernacular up to the graduation level — and this does not owe in any mean measure to the unsparing efforts of Dr. Khuda.

May his memory remain long with us inspiring us to write science in Bengali and to serve our society in the many capacities he did.

## Nuclear Threat a Check to Third World War!

T THEN the United States of America dropped atomic bombs on unarmed civilian pupulation in two Japanese cities with no military significance at the end of the Second World War, in August 1945, it was officially "justified" on the ground that this was necessary to accelerate the termination of the military conflict in the Far East (the war in Europe had ended a couple of moths earlier), in order to minimise American armed forces' casualties. However, prior to the atomic bombing of Hiroshima and Nagasaki, through intelligence and diplomatic channels, the government of the United States was aware that the Japanese military high command which was in control of the state and government in Tokyo, was on the verge of taking the decision to sue for a cease-fire, in order to cut its own losses, having realized that defeat was inevitable.

If Washington already knew that Tokyo was soon going to surrender anyway, why did the United States proceed with its decision to devastate Hiroshima and Nagasaki with atomic

The most important motivation behind Washington's use of these strategic weapons of mass destruction, for the first, and so far only, time in history, was to convey a vital political signal to its erstwhile war-time ally and imminent main adversary, the Soviet Union. In the months before the end of World War II, the Grand Alliance against the Axis powers was disintegrating. After all, the unlikely war-time partnership between the Liberal-Capitalist United States and United Kingdom, on the one hand, and Communist Russia on the other was from the onset a product of necessity, a marriage of convenience, in the face of a common enemy Axis, represented by Nazi Germany, Fascist Italy, and Imperial Japan.

Ideological Divide The imminent demise of the common enemy precipitated the divorce procedure within the Grand Alliance and

this was accentuated by the ideological divide between Capitalism and Communism. Indeed, during the last months of the war in Europe. Hitler survived on the hope that the Grand Alliance would completely fall apart, over divergent national interests and priorities, before his total defeat, leading to an alliance between the Anglo-Americans and Germany, which would then conduct a crusade against Soviet Communism.

In the meantime, Hitler's regime was also accelerating its programme to manufacture its own atomic bomb, but the process was being deliberately hindered by Allied air raids.

by Muhammad Azher Zafar Shah possibility of an invasion of the western Europe by the Red Army of the USSR, since philosophically and politically Communism aspired to global domination. Furthermore, the Kremlin had not forgotten the active military intervention by the western powers in favour of the anti-Bolshevik White forces during the civil war in

ernment of Premier Kerensky. It was in this global political and strategic scenario of mid-1945 that the American air

Russia that followed the

Leninist coup d'état of

November, 1917, against the

democratically-elected gov-

which had left about twenty million of its population dead. The USSR being closed totalitarian society, the Western powers at that time had little

idea of Moscow's internal condition. Moreover, Stalin, himself afraid of potential capitalist aggression against the Soviet Union (one of the important considerations behind his desire to establish his sphere of influence over eastern Europe, which was to act as a buffer zone), and aware of the economic weakness of his country, keenly projected a powerful image to the external

clear arms race, securing super-power status because of the overwhelming qualitative and quantitative superiority in the sphere of nuclear weapons.

The Cold War, which was at its height during the quarter century that followed the culmination of the Second World War, was characterized by a series of crises, each of which might have led to another world war: the Berlin crisis, the Korean crisis, the Hungarian and Suez crises, the Cuban crisis, the Soviet invaston of Czechoslovakia in 1968. and the Vietnam war.

By 1970, the Soviet Union

world. Thus, throughout the had achieved nuclear parity

It was in the global political and strategic scenario of mid-1945 that the Americans dropped atom bombs on Hiroshima and Nagasaki not only to compel Tokyo to surrender... but also to indicate to Moscow that the US had an effective weapon to counterbalance the conventional military superiority of the USSR on the European continent

ironically, the progress made by Nazi technical know-how in their atomic and rocket programmes was to be tapped by both American and Soviet sci-

entists during the Cold War.

By the spring of 1945, Washington and London were seriously concerned that the formidable war machine represented by the Soviet Red Army, by then composed of over ten million battle-hardened and successful military personnel, may not halt its onward march westwards with the conquest of Berlin and the liberation of East Europe from Nazi occupation. In 1941, 1942, and 1943, Moscow had borne the brunt of the war against Nazi Germany, and the western allies had recognized that Soviet national power was essential for defeating the Axis.

Stalin's Demand As a result, at the Yalta and Potsdam summit conference of the Big Three, to coordinate the military victory and to chart out the post-war order in Europe, the western allies conceded to Stalin's demand to recognize East Europe as the Soviet Union's exclusive sphere of interest. After the physical destruction of Fascism and Nazism, the Liberal great powers were anxious about the

force dropped atom bombs on Hiroshima and Nagasaki: Washington did this not only to compel Tokyo to surrender immediately and unconditionally but also to indicate to Moscow that it had an effective weapon to counterbalance the conventional military superiority of the USSR on the European continent, and that it was willing to use the atomic weapon should Stalin's forces invade central and western

The question arises as to whether Stalin (it is appropriate to refer to him personally, although the Soviet Union was theoretically a dictatorship of the proletariat, because from the mid-30s until his death in 1953, he was in reality running a one-man political show in the USSR) had any actual intention to invade western Europe in 1945. Subsequent and extensive historical research indicates that no such plan existed.

## Exhausted USSR

In face, although the USSR had ultimately secured total victory in the eastern front of Europe, by mid-1945 it was completely exhausted physically, economically, and psychologically by the war effort,

1950s, the Western political and military elites grossly over-estimated Soviet national

The atom bombing of Japan in August 1945 in effect automatically negated the ideals and objectives of the United Nations Organization as embodied in its Charter, which was established at the end of the Second World War, to promote world peace through collective security, under the guidance of the victorious great powers (institutionalized through their permanent membership in the UN Security Council). For all practical purposes, it simultaneously terminated the Second World War and triggered the Cold War. Registering the intended message, the Kremlin frantically endeavoured to produce its own atomic bomb, and this was achieved by the end of the decade, with a little help from a few Jewish spies in the United States who passed on Washington's atomic secrets to Moscow.

## N'Arms Race

During the next four decades, locked in permanent rivalry, the United States and the USSR threw hundreds of billions of dollars into the nu-

with the United States: they both now possessed sufficient nuclear arsenals to destroy the world several times over (the thoughtful nuclear planners obviously believed in over-killi). Most appropriately their nuclear strategy was given the title of "M.A.D.", or Mutually Assured Destruction. The world lived in fear of nuclear terror, and this eventually inspired the superpowers' policy of detente, or reduction of tensions, from the beginning of the 1970s.

There has been no world war since 1945, although more people have been killed in approximately two hundred local wars since then than were killed during the entire First World War, and there has been no war in Europe, although the current crisis in Yugoslavia may change that situation. This is an achievement, in view of the fact that the Second World War broke out only two decades after the end of the First World War, whereas there has been no Third World War during the past half century.

#### Cold War Effect

This state of affairs is not due to the existence of the United Nations, which is sup-

converting the Cold War into a Hot War. By the early 1980s, the conventional and nuclear arms race between the two superpowers brought the USSR to the verge of economic bankruptcy. Consequently, on coming to power at the Kremlin in 1985, Mikhail Gorbachev initiated "New Thinking" in Soviet foreign policy, comprising the external front of his programme of "glasnost" (openness) and "perestroika" (restructuring). which led to the de-ideologization of international politics, the promotion of common human values, the overthrow of Communism in East Europe, the disintegration of the Warsaw Pact, Sino-Soviet de-

tente, the termination of

Soviet support for Communism

in the Third World, major cut-

backs in the Soviet armed

forces, the diplomatic settle-

ment of regional conflicts, and

the elimination of the

monopoly of the Communist

Party over the USSR. In a nut-

shell, the psychological fear

and the economic cost finally

led to the death of the Cold

War, and the triumph of Capitalism over Communism. Superpower cooperation during the recent Gulf war. and the signing of Strategic Arms Reduction Treaty (START) symbolized the end of the Cold War. In this new era, the United Nations, under inspiration from the superpowers, will probably re-emerge at the apex of world affairs, as had been envisaged before the onset of the Cold War. Therefore, the memory of Hiroshima and Nagasaki has

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prevented a Third World War.

## Filipinos Debate Cost of US Base Shutdowns

Abby Tan writes from Manila

plan for United States A forces to leave the Philippines within thrforces to leave the ee years appears to be the most viable compromise President Corazon Aquino can forge among cantankerous senators debating the presence of US

A treaty which would have allowed the US to keep its bases for seven years was killed by the Senate in a historic vote September 16. It therefore appears certain that the US base at Subic Bay - the last one in the country - will be closed earlier than expected.

The only other US military facility in the Philippines, the Clark base, has already closed ahead of schedule because of a volcanic eruption at Mt. Pinatubo, which damaged both bases and devastated central Luzon, wiping out the livelihood of more than 600,000 people.

Now Filipinos face the difficult consequences of the base shutdowns. The US withdrawal will require them to bite the bullet rather then profit from it. The departure will also leave Filipinos without the economic and political crutch provided by nearly a century of US military activities.

The country is not prepared for this change, even though it has been in the wind since 1986 when a new Constitution limited the chances of continued US military presence once its old treaty expired in September.

That lack of preparation has prompted treaty supporters and opponents to engage in acrimonious debates over the length of the US withdrawal period.

The US has failed to persuade its old ally in the Pacific to renew a contract for American military bases in the Philippines. After an animated debate Filipino senators rejected pleas by President Aquino for a continued US military presence. The American withdrawal could have serious social and economic implications for a country that has long been dependent on Uncle Sam.

# US bases: withdrawal symptoms M 2459 Subic PRESIDENT AQUINO

Aquino has raised fears of severe economic disruption accompanying a sudden US withdrawal. She has allied herself with pro-base senators who favoured a seven-year gradual exit.

Uppermost in the minds of those senators are the 38,000

Filipinos employed at Subic naval base. An immediate shutdown at Subic could have forced them to join the unemployment queues formed by 40,000 others made jobless

when the US abandoned its

Clark base in June. But senators unsympathetic to the US military presence tion (of the Senate)". have argued for a one-year withdrawal. They fear the US would use its influence to try to revive the treaty by bringing about the election of a friendlier Senate in the May 1992 national campaign.

Anticipating legal wrangling. Aquino has said she wants a two-thirds majority vote in the Senate to pass the compromise withdrawal resolution. And many anti-base senators have indicated they would support the three-year formula.

"It is time to get on to other things," said anti-base Senator Rene Saguisag, echoing the feelings of many who felt exhausted by a two-week Senate deadlock over the withdrawal.

But the three-year compromise could still get bogged down in the courts. Base opponents say such a withdrawal effectively represents a constitutionally-prohibited extension of the life of the bases. The Filipino constitution

only permits such an extension if it is agreed to under a treaty. they say. Yet Aquino says she intends to negotiate a simple executive agreement with the US for withdrawal.

Senator Sotero Laurel, an opponent of the bases, calls the three-year compromise "an extension that cannot be implemented by a mere resolu-

The wrangling over the bases is certain to bring the issue of the Philippines' colonial relationship with the US to the forefront of national debate for some time to come, putting other pressing issues such as economic reforms on the back burner.

In a year when economists say the Philippines will be lucky to attain economic growth of one per cent - a severe contraction from over six per cent in 1980 - the national government will likely be distracted from other economic priorities, such as taming its 60-billion peso deficit.

A \$3-billion-a-year aid programme called the Multilateral Aid Initiative, to which Japan is the single largest contributor, may also be affected by the base decision.

While donor countries have declared the aid initiative is not linked to the bases, there is an unspoken understanding that Western donors would have felt more generous if the Philippines had continued to host the bases.

Aquino says her government will not ask for compensation during the US withdrawal. However, the Philippines will welcome US assistance for areas devastated by the volcano and it intends to negotiate with the US to leave behind

three floating drydocks and cranes at Subic valued at US\$70 million. Officials estimate that con-

version of Subic to a commerctal shipyard would take two years if the equipment were left behind. If not, it could take five years since the cashstrapped country would have difficulty purchasing new equipment.

Treaty opponents have refused to accept dire predictions of economic collapse without the bases. They often cite Singapore's successful conversion into a prosperous port following the British withdrawal.

But the pro-base bloc lacks such confidence. They say the Philippines cannot match tiny Singapore's iron-willed resolve to compete internationally.

Opponents of the bases counter that it is time for the former colony to cut away its umbilical cord with Mother America. Senator Renea Saguisag compares the situation with that of a child who cannot learn to survive on his own unless he leaves his parents' protection.

The ruling Filipino elite has always expected the US to help the country out of a bind. Yet many Filipinos also tend to blame the US for all the country's ills.

This dependency syndrome is often cited as the reason the Philippines will never grow up as long as the bases remain. Now the country may finally have to go it alone with only itself to blame.

- GEMINI NEWS

ABBY TAN is a Singaporean journalist specialising in economic and political affairs.

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.

## NGOs and relief activities

Sir, The attention of Rangpur Dinajpur Rural Service (RDRS) has been drawn to the first-page news story in your esteemed daily on Saturday November 2, filed by Moinuddin Naser from Rangpur stating that "lack of Govt-NGOs coordination affects relief operations."

Although RDRS was not mentioned in the report, we would like to retterate that RDRS is by far the biggest NGO in Rangpur and Dinajpur regions and that all its activities - development assistance and emergency relief - are approved by and coordinated

with the government. Our contacts and cooperation with the District and Upazila administrations are excellent and all activities are carried out in full, mutual agreement.

In the Rangpur District alone, RDRS is assisting 15,000 families in five Upazilas (Rangpur Sadar 2500, Pirgacha 4000, Gangachara 3000, Badarganj 3500, and Taraganj 2000). UP Chairmen and Members, Upazila Chairmen and Upazila Nirbahi Officers were involved in selecting the deserving, flood-affected families while respective UP Members were present at the time of card distribution.

Up to 29 October 1991, about 300 metric tonnes of

families in the five Upazilas received a total cash assistance of Tk 2,00,000 (two lakh ).@ Tk 50 to Tk 100 per family (242 families in Gangachara Upazila received @ Tk 100 per RDRS, Dhaka.

ceived 12 metric tonnes of

rice @ 5 kg per family. 3758

## Media and protocol

Sir, As an ordinary and average citizen of the country, have very little sophistication and familiarity with the official protocol and diplomatic niceties that guide various official rituals, ceremonies and functions. But some of these rituals and ceremonies, specially the ones which are shown on TV appear to be unnecessary, incongruous and even distasteful and not fit for public consumption.

One of these rituals, which was a routine affair during the last administration was when-

there were many — the entire episode: from the arrival of the great personality and his consort at the V. V. I. P terminal (very essential in the poorest country of the world) and his shaking of hands of various ministers, members of the diplomatic corps, assorted dignitaries and the presentation of the guard of honour by a smart contingent of servicemen, to his final benign smile and farewell waving of hands from the lofty perch of the airline stairways to the lowly citizens was dutifully and religiously recorded and shown on the evening news. This constituted the main subject and body of the evening news during his rule (or more like

Unfortunately for the last "great leader" he had not read McLuhan's Marshall "Gutenberg Galaxy" an "Media is the Massage." If he had would have found that over exposure and constant harping of the same theme or glorifica-

wheat was distributed @ 31 kg ever the Head of the State tion of the same personality present head of the governper family; 2400 families re- went on a foreign trip - and only depreciates and trivialises the image and diminishes public's perception of the personal of the subject.

> This is one of the reasons why some of the world's great actors, actresses, opera singers and entertainers limit their performances and public appearances to a limited number a year. Diamond is precious because it is rare, not because

it is abundant. Marshall McLuhan is considered not only an authority on communication theories but his works on electronic media (TV) is considered like a Bible in the communication industry. In the Bangladesh context, his theory has proven itself. In spite of the immense expenditure of public funds and efforts that were utilized for the incessant barrage and assault on public's patience to build up the image of the last President - all proved to be counter productive and fruitless as he was finally booted out of office

ignominiously. It is only hoped that the

ment, who was elected to the office in a free and fair election in a truly democratic process and enjoys tremendous popularity, public approval and goodwill, will not fall in the same trap of cheap publicity.

Another pertinent point can be brought out here that in a poor country like Bangladesh (euphemistically termed developing nation), where total working hours are amongst the lowest and official holidays are highest (not to speak of the strikes and other unscheduled holidays) compared to other nations - how can the ministers and other high-ups inspire the workers to be dutiful and diligent, when they themselves are wasting valuable and scarce resource in indulging in expensive and non-productive foreign tours at public's expense and also wasting time in worthless exercise like seeing off or receiving the national leader amidst grand ceremonies.

Omar Osman Khan Mottheel C/A, Dhaka