

**New Goals for CIA**

Should the Central Intelligence Agency of the United States, the world's premier spy network, redefine its goals? The answer seems to be in the affirmative. This may well be the consensus, if one can obtain this kind of agreement about any intelligence agency. On the other hand, a lot of people might just say, "Well, get rid of it completely and use the funds you spend on it for the needy and homeless."

The call for redefining the objectives of the CIA has come from none other than Robert Gates, the new director of the agency, who acknowledges that with the gradual disintegration of the Soviet Union, the threat from the KGB no longer exists. It is also unlikely that the new Moscow-based commonwealth of former USSR republics will treat the setting up of a new intelligence agency as a matter of priority. What is more probable, Boris Yeltsin will set up a mechanism of his own to check on what's going on in various parts of the commonwealth. But this should not worry Mr Gates.

Another reason for taking a new view of the CIA stems from the realisation which is probably shared by its new director that the agency's performance, especially in recent years, has been lopsided, and dismal. It bungled its way into several situations and then bungled its way out, leaving behind Washington's reputation in a shambles. In this respect, the Bay of Pigs remains the worst example of the CIA's failure. Others followed, like the Iran-Contra affair and finally the invasion of Kuwait by Iraq. As time went on, the list of CIA's lapses, to use a relatively polite term, got longer.

What kind of reorganisation of CIA is Mr Gates working on now? It is too much to expect that the new chief will disclose his plans. However, in one statement, he has hinted that he might shift the agency's resources, due to be cut by \$30 billion over coming years, to new areas, such as the proliferation of arms in the Third World, probably meaning the Middle East. No one should argue against it, except pointing out covert sale of arms to the Third World countries by western powers and by private weapons dealers should also get due attention by the CIA. There are also suggestions by western analysts that the agency should focus on economic competition among industrial powers — meaning USA should spy on its allies more diligently than before — the international war on drugs and even environmental degradation. Then, one observer offers the view that the agency should shift its attention from secret intelligence to open discussion. It is a tricky suggestion. It remains to be seen how many intellectuals, anywhere in the world, will attend seminars organised by the CIA.

We are hardly in a position to offer any unsolicited advice to Mr Gates. However, two suggestions may well be in order. Whatever monitoring of political and economic trends CIA may undertake in foreign countries, especially in the Third World, it should refrain from influencing and sometimes toppling government in other peoples' countries by covert and often not-so-covert means. Such activities should be totally banned. Again, CIA has its own system for recruiting its agents, from all kinds of professions. In the past, both KGB and CIA went after selected journalists. While KGB ended up with Philby, CIA had its own share of newsmen, even from the Third World, to carry out its not-so-respectable functions. It will be nice if Mr Gates can leave them alone and instead concentrate on those who are potential professional spies, not promising journalists.

**Privileges of MPs**

The Parliament's Standing Committee on Privileges held their third meeting recently. No doubt the Committee spent their valuable time — not to mention the taxpayers' resources — in trying to justify newer privileges for our honourable members of parliament. As the elected representatives, our MPs, no doubt need and deserve special facilities to carry out their work. They need special travel allowance to move back and forth between their constituencies and the capital. They need to have access to information and official findings to deliberate better on public issues. They need to be briefed as to why the government opted for certain decisions and not others. They need to visit projects and development works, in short our public representatives must be given all facilities to be able to represent us better. If not already provided with, our MPs should be given a special book allowance so that they can keep themselves abreast of what the writers both within and outside the country are focusing on. This will no doubt enrich their reading habit.

While we are all in favour of increasing some of the privileges of our MPs, there are, however, some that we feel they should voluntarily give up. The most prominent among them is their privilege of buying tax-free cars. What really entitles them to evade tax, or deprive the public exchequer? We all know that this measure was introduced by the discredited autocratic regime of Gen. Ershad for the simple purpose of currying favour with the law makers. To put it bluntly, by allowing the MPs to bring in tax-free cars and then allowing them to resell that in the open market after a limited time bar, the wily Ershad was giving huge financial benefits to the so-called public representatives without appearing to be doing so. At the time when it was introduced we all knew why and we all condemned it, even if we could not say so in print. We, therefore, naturally expected the real representative of the people to put an end to this shameful practice. Perhaps more urgent matters of the State prevented our law makers from focusing attention on this issue earlier. Questions have also been raised about the need for diplomatic passport for the MPs. On official business the MPs will receive all the protocol facilities, in which case they do not need a diplomatic passport. On private visits the MPs should not be allowed diplomatic privileges. So why do they need a diplomatic passport anyway. A more cautious approach to the use of our diplomatic privileges — which is governed by an international convention and not national whims — may be advisable.

We want our members in the parliament to receive all the privileges that permit them to carry out their responsibilities better. We, however, oppose all privileges that have nothing to do with their duties.

THE United States commemorated this month the 50th anniversary of the treacherous sneak attack on Pearl Harbour — "treacherous" because, like most US wars, it came without a formal war declaration.

Anniversaries can be important occasions to reconsider the past, maybe to heal wounds, and to draw lessons from history, so often talked about but so rarely learnt. Perhaps this anniversary will lead to some reflections on the course of US Japanese relations, which have become perhaps the most important and potentially dangerous in the post-Cold War world.

There are two basic models of war commemoration. One, more frequently found in the Christian world, demands confessions, apologies, signs of inner repentance and outer reparations, with the final aim being forgiveness by the wronged party and/or by the Almighty. The other model, found in the Buddhist world, holds more promise. The cause is not attributed to one side only.

Instead, the figure of bad karma is invoked, suggesting a shared destiny that has gone wrong, and leaving an opening for dialogue on why and how to improve the karma.

The apology approach to Japan prevails in the United States. The Japanese response to this range from demanding apologies for the genocide in Hiroshima and Nagasaki to the proposition that "the entire world is responsible for the war".

Regarding "blame", the Japanese can rightly point to the US opening of Japan by force in 1853. The United

**How to Avoid Another Pearl Harbour**

*The 50th anniversary of the Japanese attack on Pearl Harbour came amid growing tension between the world's two pre-eminent economic powers. Johan Galtung, professor of peace studies at the University of Honolulu, explores the areas of conflict between the United States and Japan, continued indifference to which could lead to war or a least war-like activities, he says.*

States and "the rest of the world" point to Japanese Imperialism in Taiwan, Korea, Manchuria, China and the rest of the "dai-to-a kyociken", or Japanese co-prosperity sphere. The Japanese point to the US economic boycott, and so on. Who started what and when is a futile question.

The economic relationship between Japan and the United States is the relation between a First World and a rich Third World country, with the United States reduced to the tasks of providing raw materials and simple commodities, liquid capital and elastic markets willing to buy whatever comes from Japan at whatever price.

None of the strategies devised by US economists to counter this trend have worked: quotas, relocating production to the United States, investment in Japanese infrastructure, less-saving-more-consumption, less-work-more-vacation. Whether the dollar goes up or down, Japan manages to turn it to its own advantage. Trade and current account deficits favouring Japan remain enormous, contributing to the United States having the highest national debt in the world and the major creditor, Japan, having tremendous investment power

over it. On the other side is the de facto continuation of the US occupation of Japan, not only in the form of military bases, but in the entire manner and style of US political behaviour toward Japan. Washington treats it as a client state, demanding highly political changes in the entire Japanese economic structure, from production via distribution to consumption patterns, forcing on Japan an Americanization that runs against the deeper grain of Japanese culture.

To take but one example: in a Japanese company, power — and with it the responsibility to care for the workers — is with the management more than with owners and the board of trustees. To take over a company in the US style, therefore, smacks of slave market practices, and gives rise to enormous animosities.

Japan is high in economic and low in political power. The United States is high in the latter and low in the former. Both tend to use their strengths to compensate for the weaknesses. Japan comes up with new, imaginative economic schemes, such as economic zones east of Suz.

The United States acts like a bully, using strong words and wielding big sticks. Public

opinion in the United States and Japan increasingly sees the other as the major antagonist. During the Gulf War, several Japanese magazines ran headlines like "after Iraq, it is Japan."

Clearly, US-Japan relations are the most important successors to US-soviet relations as a polarity organising the world. The Soviet Union had an ideology but was never a credible economic competitor.

Japan certainly is, and also has an ideology, though the west is too ignorant of the Japanese to see it. One crude attempt to understand this ideology was found in the US Central Intelligence Agency (CIA) report, "Japan 2000" which sees Japan as bent on "unequivocal economic dominance". This is a concept with which the United States and the CIA are familiar, of course, since this has always been the name of the game in US foreign policy.

Where do all these lead us? If not to war, at least to war-like activities, such as supporting the economic-political games being played in and around the conference tables with military moves.

Three scenarios of hostility can be imagined: the United States and Japan supporting

militarily opposing forces in East Asia and high-tech war games designed to intimidate the other side. But this is not Pearl Harbour, people may object. True, the Japanese have discovered that much better than bombing Pearl Harbour is to buy Pearl Ridge, particularly given the US ideology of seller's rights.

And nobody would argue that there will be a second Yamamoto picking up a book like Hector Bywater's *The Great Pacific War 1962*, with a complete blueprint for exactly that.

But remember that Japan is the producer of at least 70 per cent of the smart parts of the smart weapons of Gulf War fame. Japan is probably quite advanced in several successor weapons to the nuclear bombs now being phased out by the Gorbachev-Bush initiatives of 1987-1991. Such weapons may be most effective as threats in war rooms where the other side is invited to see the Japanese surround the United States like a 'go' game master. The next step after that may be real war against much more than some ships in Pearl Harbour.

To avoid this, deeper dialogues are needed. The United States has to understand that it takes two for

someone to dominate someone else. And it must not continue encouraging those who, like Lee Iacocca, practise Japan-bashing while selling automobiles made in Japan as Plymouths and Dodges, importing engines from Mitsubishi because the local product is inferior, receiving heavy capital aid and enjoying US\$4.6 million in salary and bonuses for being second rate. The way out for the United States is evidently to make better products.

The way out for Japan, which complains of being treated like a client, is to stop behaving like one. Tell the United States that the Cold War is over and the time has come to close the military bases. In short, follow the Ishihara line of saying "no". It is no good for either Tokyo or Washington to wait for explosive reactions from the public or from the other government. To be exploited or repressed is dangerous to both parties.

Let one million dialogues grow and blossom. The problem is the superficiality of the present discourse, focusing only on details of the economic and political transactions between the two countries. It is time to focus on solutions, on actions that can be done, even if some pain is involved, before it is too late. Above all, if both parties could look critically at their deeper assumptions, at their territory, studied, theoretic, often racist sense of being chosen by the Almighty — the United States by the Judeo-Christian God and the Japanese by the Shinto sun goddess Amaterasu Okikami — it would be most useful to us all. — IPS

**Military Crushes Togo's Fledgling Democracy**

George Ola-Davies writes from Paris

*Hopes for a smooth transition to democracy in Togo were dashed by a coup d'etat against the West African country's recently-elected transitional government. Longtime dictator Gnassingbe Eyadema collaborated in ousting the government of Prime Minister Joseph Koffigbo. France's refusal to come to Koffigbo's aid raises movements become more active in Africa.*

TRANSITION towards democracy in Togo has been seriously set back by a coup d'etat and military clampdown which killed 40 people in the capital, Lome.

And a refusal by France to send troops to help the beleaguered government of Prime Minister Joseph Koffigbo Koffigbo raises questions about the depth of its professed support for a shift to democracy in its former African colonies.

In late November soldiers loyal to President Gnassingbe Eyadema overthrew Koffigbo's transitional government. They arrested Koffigbo and, with Eyadema's collaboration, forced him to name a new "government of national unity".

The soldiers had waited three days to storm Koffigbo's office, where he had been holed up since his return from the Francophone summit in Paris. Koffigbo was guarded by 50 soldiers with light weapons.

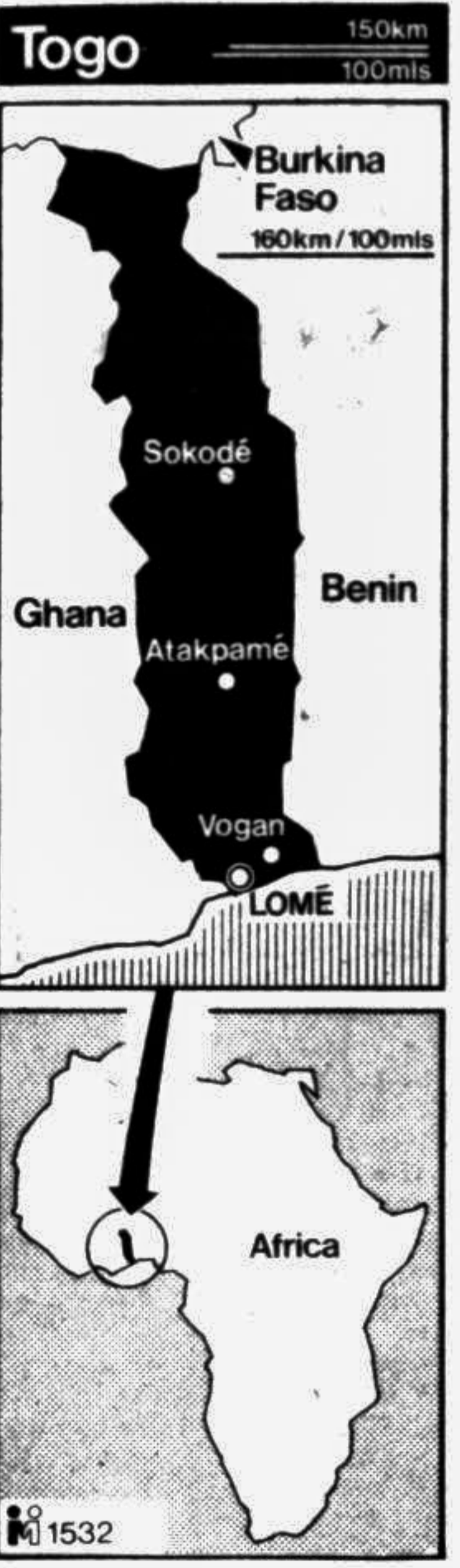
The mutineers gave Koffigbo 48 hours to report to their headquarters. Koffigbo stood firm, saying: "I am watching the situation with keen interest."

He told French radio by telephone that soldiers would suppress the people's will and sent a handwritten letter to President Francois Mitterrand urgently requesting French military help.

The help did not arrive. The soldiers stormed his office with tanks and heavy artillery at dawn on December 2. Lome hospital overflowed with bullet-riddled victims. Koffigbo was taken to the Eyadema's home and the two leaders issued the "national unity" statement.

The coup reversed a dramatic shift toward democracy which began when Koffigbo was elected to lead the transitional government at a national conference in August.

The conference, allowed following a wave of pro-democracy protests, was attended by 500 delegates from ruling and



opposition parties, religious groups, professionals, students, human rights groups, businesses, unions and traditional chiefs.

They moved swiftly to



PRESIDENT GNASSINGBE EYADEMA

challenge Eyadema, who had ruled Togo since a coup in 1967. They voted to strip him of his powers as commander-in-chief of the armed forces and ordered him to quit the military camp home where he had lived since 1963.

The conference also voted to redress an imbalance in the ethnic composition of the armed forces which, under Eyadema, had come to be dominated by his own Kabyle people. An estimated 70 per cent of low-ranking posts in

Togo's military are now filled by Kabyle; 50 per cent are thought to come from Eyadema's home town of Pya. Among officers, 80 per cent are believed to be Kabyle, also mostly from Pya.

The national conference also voted overwhelmingly to demilitarise Togo's political institutions — not an easy task.

Army involvement in Togolese political life dates back to early post-independence days which saw two coups, both backed by Eyadema, as well as the one he led himself in 1967.

Eyadema threatened to suspend the conference and refused to attend its closing ceremony, feigning a sore throat. Tensions heightened after Koffigbo took office, made himself defence minister and moved to replace the heads of armed units.

The first senior military figure Koffigbo tried to move was Commandant Narcisse Yoma Djoua, head of the powerful Rapid Intervention Force, which had been accused of serious human rights violations. Djoua refused to quit.

Next was Colonel Donou Toi Gnassingbe, Eyadema's half-brother and head of the presidential guard, which the conference wanted scrapped. He was to die in the final assault on the Prime Minister's office.

Even before taking office, Koffigbo had a troubled relationship with the military, which his human rights group accused of crimes against hu-

manity. After election, he faced two serious military challenges.

On October 1 a handful of soldiers occupied the radio and television station, demanding the transitional government's dissolution. A week later about a dozen troops attacked the hotel where Koffigbo lived. He escaped unhurt, but pro-democracy militants barricaded roads to his hotel and office amid rumours that he might be kidnapped.

The latest trouble erupted soon when the transitional legislature outlawed Eyadema's Togolese People's Rally (RPT), which had ruled for 22 years.

At dawn on November 27, troops seized the radio and television station and other strategic buildings in Lome, announcing the end of the transitional government. The army called on Eyadema to "name a capable, worthy man" to form a new government.

If he failed, it warned, soldiers would reduce the city to ashes. Twenty-three civilians were shot dead. The killings dissuaded citizens from following calls to protest by Edem Kodjo, former secretary-general of the Organisation of African Unity.

Lome became a ghost town. The shootings recalled an April crackdown in which civilians were shot dead and thrown into the Lome Lagoon following pro-democracy protests by students. When civil servants, taxi drivers and

the business community joined the protests Togo's economy was paralysed.

Eyadema was in Pya, 400 kilometres north of the capital, when the coup began in late November. He returned to Lome and ordered soldiers back to their barracks. They obeyed. Few were visible in the first two days of the insurgency, but on the third, units from all over the country descended on the capital.

France sent 300 troops to neighbouring Benin where they awaited instructions. Paris had thrown its full support behind Koffigbo, implying that French military might would be used.

Its inaction prompted many questions. Why were troops not immediately sent to Togo? Why, if France was really serious about supporting the democratic process, did Mitterrand say French soldiers would not enter Togo without Eyadema's permission?

What was Jean-Christophe Mitterrand, the President's son, who is in charge of African affairs at the Elysee, doing in Togo at the time of the crisis? Why did Defence Minister Pierre Joxe say a French defence pact with Togo must be reviewed?

Koffigbo's decision to turn himself to Eyadema highlights the President's survivability. Nonetheless, despite Eyadema's long hold on the army, divisions have surfaced. Koffigbo's right-hand man appears to be Chief of Army Staff Bassabi Bonfoh.

Democratic transition in Togo has a fragile foundation. As a visibly shaken Koffigbo himself said in his "submission" speech: "To avoid a bloodbath, I have given myself up. The country has a long way ahead to achieve our aims."

— GEMINI NEWS

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**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.

**Migratory birds**

Sir, A section of bird lovers become very soft on migratory birds at the advent of every winter when several species of foreign birds arrive in Bangladesh. Visit by migratory birds is a natural yearly phenomenon. During winter migratory birds pay visit to suitable locations for food and shelter. But I cannot grasp at the feeling that why should we become so concerned about their safety and existence. I don't like to hurt the bird lovers but would like to point out some specific factors for which we cannot enforce 'wildlife (Preventive) Act 1974' and which should be considered before terming some hunters as simply meat lovers or cruel killers.

It is known to all that catching a wild bird by any means is a difficult matter. Every year the migratory birds come by thousands. We

need not be anxious about their existence because a few number of hunters cannot extinct total flocks of wild birds as we can not wipe out our fish wealth or poultry birds despite random use through catching and killing.

Moreover, the contribution of migratory birds is just negligible against their consumption of huge quantity of fishes, water plants and winter crops of char lands. We never get even an egg from our so-called guest birds, but every winter we show some artificial kindness for them and express grave concern over their existence. Then what about our poultry birds? Everyone is so heartless to them! We kill them without any hesitation and as per our sweet will, and when required, but their production is as high as before. Then how some hunters alone would wipe out the total wild birds from existence? Once it made us laughing

when one of my friends who loves birds very much was telling about the cruelty of hunters chewing the bone of a fowl at a dinner. I told my friend that kindness should be paid equally to foreign and local birds.

The birds which meet human protein requirement, whatever they may be migratory or poultry, can be killed in time of need and that cannot be stopped by enforcing law. So the matter relating to migratory birds should be taken as easy.

Suraiya Begum  
Bridle Road,  
Gaibandha

**'Media Round Table'**

Sir, The Daily Star has introduced an important step towards identification of the deep-rooted problems and resultant set-backs in respect of our national economic crisis through its Round Table deliberations. I think it is a groundbreaking work for our country. I feel that journalists who are much more conscious about various problems of the country can play a big role finding out the causes for the economic stagnancy, social and political disorders, campus violence and the like.

Like The Daily Star, the other newspaper authorities may arrange debates on various controversial issues inviting representatives from each group or organisation. Let us attempt way out for the down trodden in the society.

Lastly my compliments to The Daily Star for its unique effort. I wish all success to such venture.  
Farid Ahmed,  
S.M. Hall, University of Dhaka

**Letter to the editor**

Sir, Often those among us who write letters to the newspapers are asked by the people 'who reads these stuff?' Obviously many readers who represent different sections of the society read these letters. But unfortunately people in the authority feels less to act on the basis of the contents of these letters.

Lately, of course, people are getting conscious and concerned about the contents. As far as I know, my letters are being read by a good number of people who often send me their personal comments. Recently while attending the AGM of the Association of British Council Scholars (ABCS), the president of the

association, Mr Md. Faizullah introduced me before the audiences as a 'letter-writer'. Fortunately, Mr Md. Faizullah is the secretary of the Social Welfare Ministry — my question is being the head of the Govt. Social Welfare Department, did he ever took any action after reading a letter in the newspaper which carried some social welfare related problem or proposal? Not only myself but many fellow letter-writers are writing regularly on various social problems. I think, Mr. Faizullah can definitely do something in respect of translating the expectations into reality. For the moment, I would like to draw his kind attention to one of my recent letters concerning Father Timm's citizenship application. Father Timm is a social worker and contributed a lot in the social welfare sector of Bangladesh.

There are many other readers personally known to me who are holding high offices in the govt. or in the private sector. I would honestly request them to take proper actions on the contents of the letters regularly coming out in various Bangla and English dailies and weeklies.

Meanwhile, one gentleman has even taken a personal initiative to form a letter-writers

forum. I received an invitation from Col. Mirza Shafi Ahmad, who is obviously a letter-writer, to attend a session at his residence for working out possible set-up of the forum. The aim of the forum will be to represent in person with the contents of our letters in various national forums for realising the objectives. Interested letter-writers may contact him over telephone no. 605098.

The most recent development in the discipline of letter writing is more exciting. Prof Dr. Abdullah A. Haroon FRCS of Sir Salmullah Medical College has done an excellent job by publishing a book containing his letters so far appeared in different newspapers. He has donated the proceeds of the book to the poor hearing-impaired students of HI-CARE School, Barisal. I greatly appreciate Prof Haroon's endeavour towards depicting and mitigating our social problems.

We sincerely hope that the government and other agencies will pay proper attention to our letters and price our views in translating national objectives.  
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