

Time for Stern Action

'We shall reap as we sow' — and we did. The violence that we allowed to continue; the armed students' clashes that we pulled strings from behind the scene to perpetrate; and keeping in our ranks known criminals who we saw were destroying our educational institutions — have all now come back to us turning Dhaka University campus into a battlefield last Sunday. There are those who killed. Then there are those who participated in the three-hour-long gun battle. And then, of course, there are those who being in position to stop it all, did nothing. For all of them we express our deep revulsion.

Whosoever may have pulled the trigger, the moral guilt for the violent armed clash that resulted into tragic deaths of three youngmen squarely rests on our two leading political parties. We had hoped and prayed that nothing like what happened on Sunday should ever occur. But we feared that it would — and it did. We deeply regret the deaths and the plight of the several who were injured.

If there was ever an appropriate moment for the Prime Minister to act, it is now. She should not waste another minute in taking the sternest of measures against those who are making a mockery of our government and jeopardising the gains of our struggle against autocracy. Governance is not necessarily always a popular affair. To protect the democratic norms the elected leader of the people must take decisive actions regardless as to who it might hurt. The most important thing for her to remember is that in taking the tough but necessary actions the Prime Minister must act as — and solely as — the custodian of law and order and not as the leader of any party. Her actions must be beyond reproach, evenhanded and guided by the sole desire to uphold the law of the land and to strengthen democracy.

Sunday's armed clash proved — if proof was ever necessary — that the student parties of both the BNP and the AL possess illegal and highly sophisticated arms — and in plenty. Such open lawlessness by activists of the parties, one of which runs the government and the other leads the opposition, has naturally raised serious questions in the public mind as to how sincerely their commitment to democratic norms be taken.

To increase public confidence in them both the parties should denounce those among their ranks who are guilty of armed violence, expel them and then assist the law enforcing bodies to do their duties. As the party on which the majority reposed their trust and the responsibility to govern, the BNP should take the lead. This would throw a moral challenge to AL. Either the opposition will have to respond or stand exposed.

Whatever may be the perverted logic that leads political parties to use armed gangs, it must have become clear after the DU incident that the situation has gone quite far. It may have already gone beyond the respective parties' control. People are tired of the continued violence on the campus. As of today five out of the six universities are closed along with 72 leading colleges. There is already a disturbing trend of armed clashes in several district towns. A decisive action in Dhaka will help to eradicate violence throughout the country. Is it too unrealistic to expect the BNP and the AL to work together to contain this cancer? Let their commitment to the nation dictate their action, and not petty party interest.

Eschewing Rhetoric to Save Man

The situation in the northern region, thanks to the two great political parties' exertions, is fast being reduced to a matter of rhetorical nuance. The situation up there is or isn't similar to that which prevailed in the same area in the 1974 — that seems to be the lakh-Taka question. A rather easy commonsense view of the possibilities of the present difficult situation is eluding both the parties, perhaps because each of them are more interested in finding fault with the other and not in knowing the truth and doing what that knowledge would dictate. The point is: the present hunger situation in the north doesn't need to be as 'spectacular' as to be more hurting to the region in particular and the whole country in general.

The new crop will not be in before at least 45 more days. Till then there is no work for anyone. May be relief is trickling into the bowl of Rangpur, Kurigram, Gaibandha, Lalmonirhat and Nilphamari. But there is a much wider zone that is facing the same trouble as those five districts. What's happening in Bogra, Sirajganj, Pabna, Chapainawabganj, Natore, Naogaon, Jaipurhat, Dinajpur, Thakurgaon and Panchagarh?

According to a knowledgeable writer on the region's problems, at least 20 lakh families of the 30 upazilas of the above districts are facing a scarcity situation. Of these 12 lakh are families of landless farm-labour hands who have no way to buy their daily morsel for want of work.

The debate on the northern situation continues in the Parliament. A lot of people in at least 16 northern districts are facing acute nutritional problem and it is for all of us, specially the government, to see that not one life perishes for want of food with well-stocked godowns being there within easy reach. This sincere wish, we fear, may be by now rather a late prayer. But in matters of saving life no action is too late and we appeal to the leadership of the country to eschew their rhetorics and get down to the business of saving man jointly. And that will require genuine government attempt to involve all parties in the relief and other rehabilitation programmes in the affected districts.

TODAY the Turkish Republic is sixtyeight years old. After the First World War which saw the collapse of the more than six-century-old Ottoman Empire, the Turks regrouped, under the inspiring leadership of Mustafa Kemal Ataturk, in the hills of Anatolia and after heroic battles 'succeeded in driving out the occupying powers and set up the Republic. This year's celebration follows closely on the heels of general elections for the Grand National Assembly.

Pollsters have been proven right. The results are as follows: DYP (True Path Party) - 178, ANAP (Motherland Party) - 115, SHP (Socialist Republican Party) - 88, RP (Welfare Party) - 62, SDP (Social Democrat Party) - 7.

Mr Suleyman Demirel is the leader of DYP, ANAP is the ruling party founded by President Turgut Ozal and the current Prime Minister is Mr. Mesut Yilmaz. The SHP is led by the son of the famous Mr. Ismet Inonu, war companion of Ataturk. The RP is an amalgam of what goes by the Western definition of fundamentalist and the right wing xenophobes. The SDP is led by the son of the former Prime Minister Mr Bulent Ecevit.

Following the military coup of 12 September 1980, which led to the ouster of then Prime Minister Mr. Demirel's coalition government, the leading politicians of that period including Mr. Demirel, Ecevit and others were disallowed political activities and their parties banned. It is worth recalling that the coup brought a sign of relief among the population because the

Turkey Celebrates Sixtyeighth Anniversary of the Republic

by Arshad-uz Zaman

A stable Turkey is of great importance for the region and indeed the world ... Turkey's geographical location as well as her emergence as a mediumsize industrial power, make it a factor in world politics ... With a window to the East and another to the West Turkey has been attempting to strike a balance.

coalition did not function and the country was sliding into anarchy. The word coalition conjures up fearful memories for the Turks. Fortunately the distribution of seats are such this time that Mr. Demirel has a free hand in choosing his coalition partner for he is only short of 48 members for a majority in a house of 450. The ruling ANAP has been steadily losing ground for sometime now. It was established by Mr. Ozal in 1982 and in the elections held a year later it won handsily because of the absence of any meaningful competitor. In the seventies when Mr. Demirel was Prime Minister, Mr Ozal was the Deputy Prime Minister. The fortune of ANAP has ebbed and flowed with Mr. Ozal. In November 1989 he was elected the President of the Republic and he hand-picked Mr. Akbulut as Prime Minister. In June 1991 he lost within his party the leadership to the current Prime Minister Mr. Yilmaz. With the elevation of Mr. Ozal to the Presidency it is not surprising that his party has lost out to his erstwhile

boss Mr. Demirel. Once the excitement of the elections will have died down, continued stability can safely be forecast for Turkey. Mr. Ozal was elected for a seven-year period and barring the brief period when he ran the show with Mr. Akbulut as his hand-picked Prime Minister, the focus of power is the National Assembly and the Prime Minister is the Chief Executive. Turkey is expected to return to that pattern. In domestic policy there is really nothing to distinguish between DYP of Mr. Demirel and the ANAP of Mr. Ozal. Turkish foreign policy does not follow the changing fortunes of parties.

A stable Turkey is of great importance for the region and indeed the world, we have witnessed in the recent past and are witnessing enormous changes all around Turkey. Immediately west of Turkey, the whole of Eastern Europe has undergone a sea change. Incredibly, Communism has suddenly vanished. Turkey's giant neighbour the USSR is undergoing mighty convul-

sions. Moscow, the capital of world Communism has banished it and the Cold War is dead. The tremor in the Soviet Union continues unabated and it is nearly impossible to see where it all leads to. Those in the southern republics of the Soviet Union are blood brothers of the Turks and the total population equals the population of Turkey. During the recent Gulf war, the western led coalition leaned heavily on stable Turkey. A new phase is about to begin in the Arab-Israeli relations with the opening of the Peace Conference in Madrid on the 30th October. Turkey's geographical location as well as her emergence as a medium-size industrial power, make it a factor in world politics. With a window to the East and another to the west Turkey has been attempting to strike a balance. Her application for membership of the European Community dates as far back as 1959. The negotiations are still dragging on and Turkey continues to strive to enter the Community. If she succeeds,

she will be the first Muslim member to do so. The Europeans have not said 'No', but they prefer to play the waiting game. Meanwhile later applicants are enlarging the Community. Turkey plays an active role within the OIC, particularly in the economic field. Following a summit decision to set up a Commission for Social and Economic Council (COMSEC), Turkey was assigned the task of organising the activities in this field. The first Comsec meeting was held in Istanbul in 1983 and was presided over by President Kenan Evren. These meetings have been held annually in Turkey and serve as a clearing house for goods and services for member states. Since the infrastructure of most of the member states are rather weak, it will need a lot more patient work.

Relations with Bangladesh

Turkey and Bangladesh have maintained excellent relations since Turkey recognised Bangladesh immediately after

Pakistan's recognition in 1974. Highest level political visits have taken place between the two countries. Bilateral agreements in the fields of trade, economic and technical co-operation, cultural agreement, military training co-operation agreement, banking agreement, maritime agreement, exist. Bangladesh exports have steadily climbed from US \$ 7 million in 1987 to US \$ 20 million in 1990. The exports to Turkey are mainly jute and jute products. Turkey's exports to Bangladesh has fluctuated between US \$ 1 million in 1987 to US \$ 9 million in 1990.

These are modest figures compared to the potential that exists. A determined effort needs to be made from both sides for a quantum jump. Bangladesh exports need not be limited to the jute field alone. Similarly giant Turkish companies are successfully competing around the world and particularly in the Arab world. They need to be introduced into Bangladesh. The excellent bilateral relations need to be cemented by more concrete steps. The presence of newly elected parliamentary governments should go a long way in the realisation of this goal.

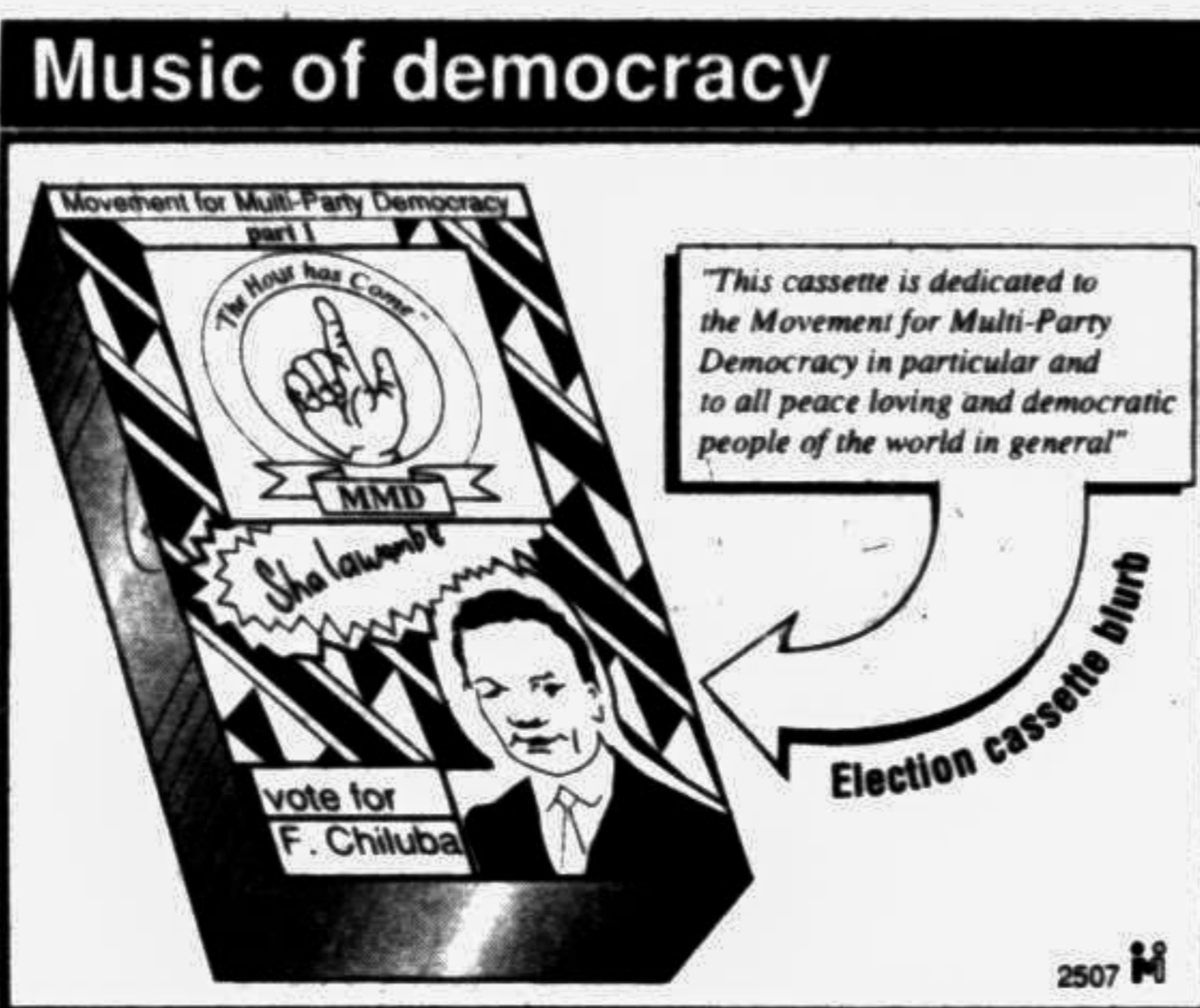
Since the birth of the Republic, the founder, the far-sighted leader Mustafa Kemal Ataturk, laid down the foreign policy — peace at home and peace in the world. By following that dictum, Turkey has taken giant strides. She is poised to play larger role in the world.

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Zambian Pop Musicians Rock the Political Boat

Elias Nyakutemba writes from Mufulira, Zambia

After 17 years of one-party rule and tight restrictions on music critical of politicians, Zambia's pop stars are on a march to freedom. Their latest numbers are hot and selling fast. Opposition songs are playing a key role in the current election campaign. But licensed retailers and state-run radio stations will not touch them.



into difficulties recording its controversial hits. 'Producing the tapes was a headache,' he said. 'No studio would touch the stuff, so we decided to set up a makeshift studio somewhere in Lusaka and went ahead with our work.' Shalawambe's six hits — dedicated to the leading opposition group, the Movement for

Multiparty Democracy (MMD) — hit the streets in early September. More than 3,000 copies sold out within a few weeks. Still, no licensed outlets would sell the recordings. 'Everyone says the stuff is too hot,' says Kabwe. 'So we give it to the street boys and other sympathizers of the MMD.'

Not long ago, "hot" would have been an understatement to describe Shalawambe's "Fire, Fire," which celebrates the MMD manifesto and depicts the movements leadership as "water" meant to douse the fire, or misery, brought about by UNIP.

"Treason" would have been the preferred adjective. The song's lyrics say Zambia "must change. UNIP is fire and it has burnt the people, the economy, even the trees to ashes. People are dying from lack of medicine and hunger. MMD, you are the water to put the fire out."

On the flip side is "The hour," a song no less likely to irritate UNIP leaders. Short for the MMD's main slogan, "The hour has come" the song accuses UNIP of allowing Zambia's brain drain and unemployment to worsen. "Why," it asks, "do you send children to school if you can not give them jobs?"

Then the denunciations end and along comes the campaign pitch: "Brothers and sisters, keep your voter's cards safely. Vote wisely. Vote MMD and Fredrick Chiluba for

President." One chorus, sung in English, urges voters "to choose between stable prices and rocketing ones." Another, sung in a local dialect, says: "It's time to chase away the fire." In unison, band members chant: "Kuya bebele [UNIP must go]."

Despite the outburst of activity by opposition musicians, UNIP should not be counted out. Not to be outdone, pro-government bands have crafted attacks on the opposition which are almost always on the air waves.

Hundreds of musicians are reported to have quit UNIP to join the MMD campaign, but the governing party still has supporters among some solo artists and bands such as the Amayenge Cultural Ensemble.

The Ensemble has cut more than 10 songs for UNIP, reportedly in state-run studios. In one of its pro-government songs, voters are urged to choose "UNIP, the disciplined and experienced party," and "vote KK (Kenneth Kaunda) for peace and stability."

In the countryside, village bands and traditional singers fight to be heard. One village song from North-Western Province urges Zambians to "get rid of the dust from foreign lands to restore our cultural heritage." Another, from the south, says: "Our cattle are dying; we need a cure; vote Chiluba."

In the lead-up to the October 31 election, opposition figures hope music by their supporters will become their strongest and most effective tool.

In urban areas, most households are believed to have heard or be in possession of some form of pro-opposition music.

As one fan said: "The night clubs, kitchen parties, wedding parties just about ceremony — you can hear 'The hour' or 'Fire,' 'Fire' and it's spreading like hell. By election time, all the kids will know the stuff by heart."

If that happens, Kabwe says he and his band will have achieved their goal.

"We are not an island," he says. "We belong to this society and we have to reflect the wishes and feelings of the people.... We have proved that Kaunda is no longer popular. If Chiluba wins, he will have to deliver the goods or face the same fate." — GEMINI NEWS

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Socialism with an Asian Face

Distancing themselves from the failure of socialism in Europe, China and North Korea are trying desperately to show that socialism is different in Asia. Mushahid Hussain of IPS reports from Beijing

IN a world where old-style political centralism is fast going out of fashion, the collapse of Soviet communism appears to have brought the bedrock communists of East Asia together despite important differences in strategy.

A recent tour through China and North Korea showed that communism's demise in Europe will not bring an immediate swing towards reform in these grim and austere nations.

While in China post-Tiananmen grassroots economic liberalisation has defied political rigidity, in North Korea change may be tied up with the longevity of the great helmsman, Kim il Sung himself.

Officially at least, both China and North Korea are adherents of what is now a discredited doctrine. But party ideologues here are re-assessing their faith, distancing themselves from Marxism's miscalculations in Europe and trying desperately to show that "socialism is different in Asia". What happened in East

Europe and the Soviet Union, they tell their people through the state-controlled media, cannot take place in China and North Korea.

In ideological terms, the Chinese and the North Koreans with varying degrees of emphasis, are trying to show socialism with an Asian face.

They are keen to emphasise the "superiority of socialism" while singling out the United States as a country that is keen to "wipe out socialism and impose its own values".

There is one significant difference between Pyongyang and Beijing in strategy: while the Chinese still profess allegiance to Marx, the North Koreans have now publicly rejected European socialism as unsuited to Asia. In North

Korea, it is Juche (self-reliance) — Kim il Sung's homespun ideology.

China clearly sees its salvation still in socialism and if in the past, the Chinese used to say "communism saved China", now they are saying "China will save communism".

"The changes in Eastern Europe have had no adverse effect on China and they have in fact helped stability in our country," said Gao Di, the president of the People's Daily, the Communist Party mouthpiece.

"The people of Eastern Europe are worse off than before, people are suffering because prices are up, there is unemployment and social disorder," Gao added in an interview with IPS.

He said many in Eastern

Europe now missed the welfare cushion of the state, and it was correct for China to take the socialist road despite its current weaknesses.

Gao and others in the party hierarchy echo an argument that is heard often in official circles here: that what brought socialism down in the Soviet Union was mistakes by its leaders, there is no inherent flaw in the socialist idea.

"The biggest superiority of socialism lies in three areas: it develops society faster, people become rich collectively and socialism prevents the gap between rich and poor," Gao added.

Then why is China still a developing country? Party officials replied that their country is still young and pointed to

vast increases in steel production since the revolution in 1949.

Some officials admitted privately that past Chinese leaders had made mistakes about trying to enforce "absolute equality". They supported the planned economy, but conceded the state could not "plan everything".

Perhaps Chinese socialism's greatest achievement has been that it has eradicated absolute poverty and managed to keep its huge population of 1.2 billion fed and clothed — no mean feat compared to the dismal failure in this regard in non-socialist countries with comparable populations.

Over in Pyongyang, however, talk of orthodox Marxism is overlapped by a critique of

its Euro-centric history.

"Classical Western theory and Marxism helped in clarifying principles of dialectics and the doctrine of surplus value," explained North Korea Vice-premier and Foreign Minister Kim Yong Nam. "But the world has made much advances since Karl Marx."

"Marxism has no answers for the changed international situation. It cannot be applied to present-day reality especially in Korea," the minister argued, using language that would probably be anathema in Beijing.

The two countries face fundamental dilemmas since the state cannot reconcile what it promises and what it can deliver.

And while they remain politically closed, North Korea and China have opened up in varying degrees to Western influences.

Both also have to find a balance between the economic imperative of seeing financial and technological inputs that only capitalist countries can provide with the political need of preserving socialism.

To the Editor...

The number one problem

Sir, Procrastination and inefficiency together with corruption inflict severe blow to the national economy as its business and public administration cultures indicate. We are groaning under foreign debt, burden, inflation and poverty.

There is a saying that when we lose money this is an insignificant loss; when we lose our health something is lost; but when we lose our character, it is a total loss.

A USAID funded enquiry to find out the causes of our inefficiency reveals that the primary cause for it was corrup-

tion on a massive scale. The Bangladesh Public Service Commission Report (1988) also states that there is widespread corruption among the Class I and Class II officials. This is the number one problem for us now. Our efforts for controlling the population growth and raising the agricultural and industrial output will all be jeopardised and set at naught unless and until we are able to fight this demon.

Shahabuddin Mahtab
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Dhanmondi Lake

Sir, Dhanmondi Lake is important as a recreational

place as well as for its economic value. But it does not seem that the lake authority is discharging its responsibility taking care of the lake's assets like fish, trees etc. Everyday some people are fishing 'illegally'. They catch any fish of any size and sale it by standing on the road next to the lake. Another usual scene is cattle grazing inside the lake boundary. These cows have eaten away a lot of coconut trees planted last year. The owners of these cows keep cowdung and fodder here and there and make the lake side dirty. So people cannot take a refreshing stroll inside the lake area. Although it is heard that government has been

investing a lot of money for the improvement of this lake but because of the carelessness of the lake authority that investment would not be able to achieve its expected goal. I feel to draw attention of all concerned authorities to the present problems of Dhanmondi Lake.

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Iraq needs peace

Sir, Since its existence, Iraq has ten times been attacked and every fight was fought on its soil, resulting in destruction to life and prop-

erty of Iraqis only. Seemingly due to willful deviation from the right path of Islam Iraqis have made their life troublesome and for which they remain busy fighting throughout their lives. Every fight had been caused, due to its apparent foolishness and it had to give high price for it. It got itself involved in fights in Hijri years of 317, 323, 398, 448, 486, 582, 587, 656, 1400 and 1411. In every fight Iraq lost lives and property. Iraq being a Muslim country surrounded by other Muslim countries should not have built so big quantities of weapons with billions of dollars.

Still there is time for Iraq to think of and search for the truth of Islam, which means peace, of course with dignity. Once Iraq finds the truth its enmity with other Muslim states or even other states of the world will revert to brotherhood.

In recent Gulf war three non-Muslim countries did not go against it but also it did not get any help from them. All these historical events clearly indicate that right now Iraq should try to create true friendship with others and must forget to attack any other Muslim country in future. Fighting does not help any nation, but ruins.

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