

UN Security Council Acts Against Libya

CPE Flawed Fundamentally

On Wednesday this journal reported on the progress of the CPE under a bold headline "Compulsory primary education fails to reach target". This was a little misleading. The only target that such a programme can logically have by its very definition, is compulsory primary education which is another name for universal education for the primary age-level. Taking even a most unpragmatically optimistic view of our schooling outlook one would only be fooling oneself by believing that this target can be hit even in the next few decades — unless of course something of the strength of the French Revolution or the nature of the October Revolution overtakes the society in the meantime. On the face of it, The Daily Star report seemed to be a non-news story.

Beneath the surface, however, lay a strand of veritable gems. What should have been a programme covering the whole of the nation — the much vaunted CPE launched with a publicity racket bordering on being a very transparent and hilarious fraud by a minister of the past autocratic regime, is being put to practice in 68 selected urban and semi-urban centers. The figure quite coincidentally reminds one of the number of Bangladesh's villages out of which the fallen top-man made a political credo.

However, it is more important to observe that the CPE-adopting centres include the district headquarters and some selected upazilas where, quite naturally, the literacy rate as well as the primary enrolment rate should be far higher than the national averages. Patently because the four-fifths of Bangladesh left-out of the supposedly 'pilot project' consists of nothing but pastoral backyards.

A Daily Star sample survey of two spots out of the 68 showed an enrolment of 70 per cent of school going children although two current national enrolment rate, as trumpeted by government publications, is significantly higher than this instead of being far less than the survey figures. Primary-level arithmetic is enough to convince that CPE, even in its contracted 'pilot project' form, has been detracting rather than adding to the furthering of the cause of literacy and education.

The present government should have been a little more wary in accepting every broth cooked by the autocratic crooks, particularly this absurd CPE which is but a cog in the massive wheel of fraud that pervades the nation's educational sector. Let us ask of our democratically elected government how can you compel the parents to send their children to school when at least 30 per cent of them have no jobs and any other provision to sustain a family life including, of course, food and clothing and shelter? How can the concept of 'compelling' the parents creep into a situation where the children are essential tools of survival in more cases than we can ever imagine? The whole programme is as such flawed at the very onset. Flawed fundamentally. The nation needs to be rid of such hunting for the will o' the wisp and go for the real hard-way participatory things rather than bureaucratically ordained panacea.

THE UN Security Council is in action again — this time against another Arab country — Libya — because of "renegade" Gaddafi. One wonders who would be the next — may be Assad of Syria and so on. All "renegades" must be fixed — one by one and better through the UN.

Action has been taken as Libya refused to hand over to US/Britain two Libyan agents suspected of mid-air bombing of the Pan Am Flight 103 over Lockerbie, Scotland in 1988 killing 270 people. France also demanded an access to four Libyans suspected of bombing a UTA French Airliner over Niger some months after Lockerbie bombing. The Security Council action has come in the form of a resolution taken on March 31 imposing sanctions against Libya on air link, aircraft and aircraft spares and arms supply. The resolution also calls for reduction of Libyan diplomatic personnel in UN member countries. It takes effect on April 15, if Libya fails to comply with the Security Council's demand. However, Libya has rejected the resolution and vowed to take revenge. How far it will succeed, one has to wait and see, but serious trouble has already erupted in Libya. Some of the diplomatic missions of the countries which apparently organised and supported the resolution were attacked by mob reportedly with the support of the Libyan authorities — acts against all diplomatic norms and stand to be condemned.

A Moral Defeat

This time the resolution was passed with only one vote more than the minimum required for passing a resolution

in the Council. It was thus seen as a moral defeat for the US, Britain and France. The resolution certainly does not carry the same weight as the one taken against Iraq about a year ago. Reportedly Libya, after having rejected it, has raised a technical and probably a legal question — Russia's position in the Security Council. In any case, the resolution is fraught with danger as it was taken under Chapter 7 of the UN Charter, which enables the Security Council to enforce, if necessary, through military action. "It was the second time — the first followed the Iraqi invasion of Kuwait — that the Security Council had imposed sanctions on a country for flouting its demands." Under the same Chapter of the UN Charter force was used against Iraq for driving it out of Kuwait as it was a case of aggression. But the question remains whether Libyan case amounts to aggression — the concerned Western countries say bombing of a civilian airliner was nothing but aggression. Apparently, terrorism is being confused with aggression. It is high time to look for the correct definition of aggression as the UN Security Council is being dragged into an area which clearly entails military action against a member country whereas such a matter could be resolved through negotiations. Indeed the Arab League was rightly insisting on negotiated settlement but nothing happened. Today Arab League's position does not seem to be the same as it was before the Gulf war.

However, having sensed that the resolution was imminent, Libya filed a case with the International Court of Justice (World Court), an organ

of the UN, in the Hague, for injunction against the moves of the US, Britain and France. The case, therefore, should have been treated as subordinate under the UN law though the World Court does not have the power to enforce its decision. The hearing took place and the World Court was expected to rule within a couple of weeks. Despite this the Security Council went ahead with the action. Why so much of hurry? Why the Security Council could not wait till another body of the same UN, a court — indeed the World Court — came out with its ruling on the case? The concerned countries waited for

the Lockerbie bombing was the vengeful work of Ahmed Jibril, a Palestinian under Syrian control... And pinning all the blame on Colonel Gaddafi may be expedient for an administration eager to humble Libya in an election year. — writes The New York Times in its editorial "Libya: Let's See the Facts". Libyan agents were indicted after the investigators found that a fragment of a detonator which triggered off the plastic bomb to blow off the Pan Am airliner "was identical to 10 detonators that had been seized from Libyan agents in Senegal in early 1988..." The experts may argue but fragment's sameness with another

could not depend on the trial of these suspects in Libya. Libyans also had reservation about the trial of these two agents in the US and Britain, probably because of absence of diplomatic link with these countries and apparent hostile attitude of the US and British administrations, though courts are courts irrespective of locations. Agreement could be reached to choose a court in a neutral land for trial of the suspects. The idea was to find justice — if the suspects were found guilty they must be punished and punished according to law.

After what happened in Iraq and now with another possible military involvement of the Security Council in Libya, many doubt whether the Security Council is being properly used.

SPOTLIGHT ON MIDDLE EAST

Muslehuddin Ahmad

years but they could not wait for another couple of weeks. The World Court's ruling, if it went in their favour, could have strengthened their case immensely and the voting in the Council could have been better. This sort of hasty actions raise the people's concern on how the UN Security Council was used by some powerful permanent countries to their advantage.

US Media Comment

As far as terrorism is concerned, Libya's record, as various reports show, are loaded. "Even so, valid doubts remain about indicting Libya alone as the culprit in the bombing of Pan Am Flight 103, over Lockerbie, Scotland, in 1988. The Bush administration has yet to explain in its abrupt retreat from initial claims that

object of similar identity should not be treated as a conclusive evidence for anything. Then the link was shown through a diary note discovered by the US Justice Department "showing that one of the agents had stolen luggage tags from Air Malta, enabling them to place the suitcase of a Malta flight that connected with Flight 103 in Frankfurt". These seem to be circumstantial evidences and could not be taken as the conclusive proof for triggering off UN Security Council action under Chapter 7 of the Charter entailing military action that may seriously disturb the world peace and security. The appropriate course was to produce these before any court for consideration, not necessarily the courts in the US and Britain. As the US/Britain

The Council's action in Libya will certainly not promote peace in the region — indeed military action under its name cannot be ruled out. Of course, much would depend on how President Bush would shape up in the next couple of weeks in the election campaign. If he is sure of victory which seems likely, he may not go for military action. It would also depend on who will be in charge in Britain. If John Major returns, which is somewhat unlikely, Colonel Gaddafi will surely be in major trouble.

Rash Action Counterproductive

However, for the US, any rash action in Libya would be highly counterproductive and indeed reverse all praiseworthy steps taken so far by Bush administration for bringing peace in the region:

1. M-E peace process is likely to suffer a setback as Syria has already warned against one sided US action in the region. The Arab League itself has been humiliated as its demand for "hold off" till the decision of the World Court was totally ignored.

2. Gulf alliance against Iraq may crack giving advantage to President Saddam. He was indeed waiting for some serious mess up by the US in the region. Syria has already opened its border with Iraq.

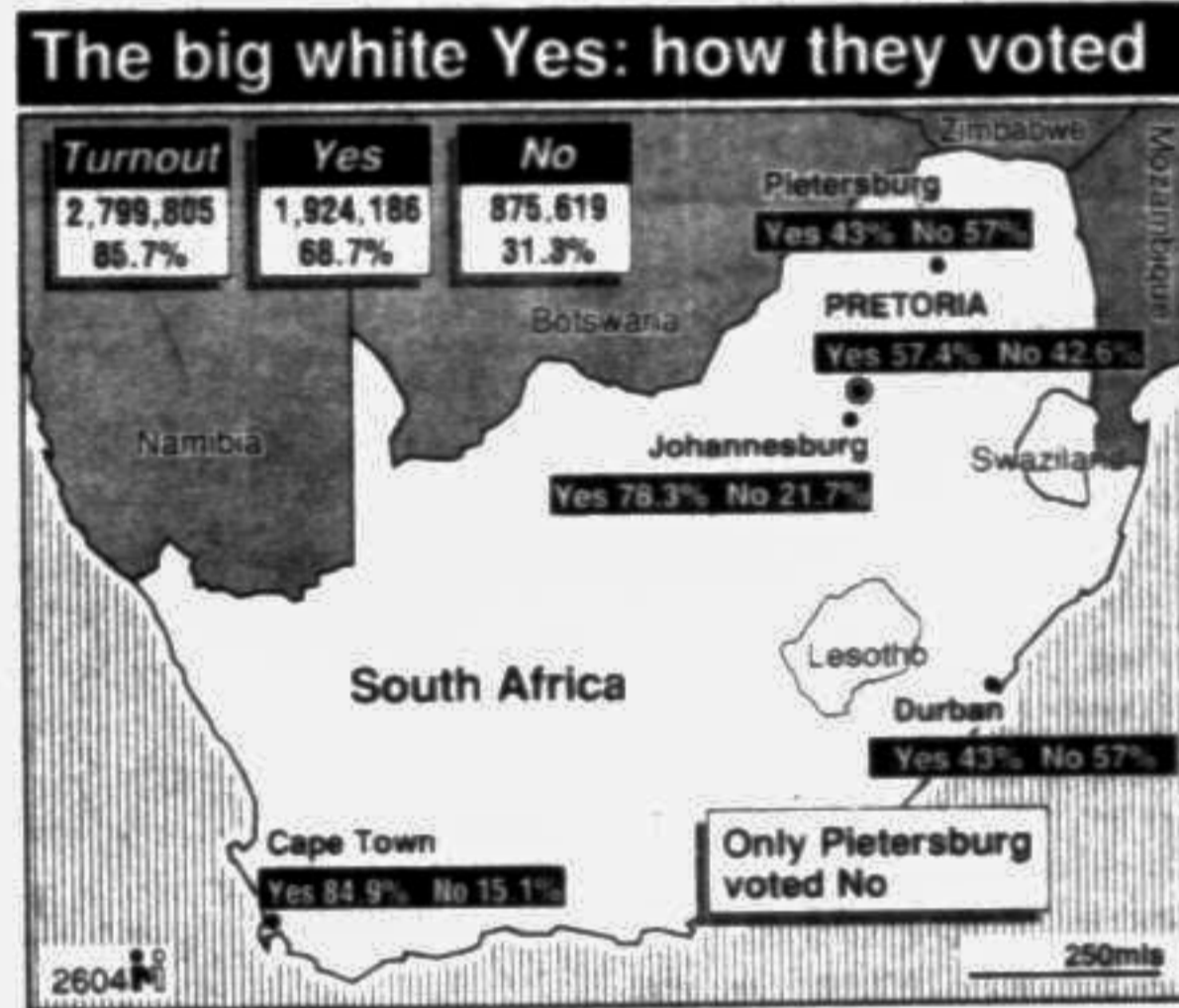
3. Saddam's "supergun" probably aimed at Israel was destroyed physically but "supergun cassettes" carrying the message of revolution and consequent smell of democracy have reportedly already made inroads into the moral and social domain of the Arab world thus threatening the present political structures of many states in the region.

4. Security Council's action intended to curb terrorism by punishing Libya backfire. When Gaddafi and for that matter anybody else in his position can not deal with the US, Britain, France etc. militarily and have no hold on the recently activated Security Council, they would revert to terrorism which came to its lowest ebb recently. New wave of hostage taking cannot be ruled out. Hezbollah has already declared revenge for the murder of its leader by Israel in South Lebanon. Libyans may easily join them and with the moral and financial support of some others in the region, the area may again become a vicious place for the innocent people.

Power-sharing Suspicions Linger after De Klerk Win

by Arthur Maimane

After the the big Yes in South Africa — what? On his 58th birthday President F W de Klerk declared in Cape Town that the landslide vote in the whites-only referendum marked the end of the "book on apartheid." Gemini News Service considers what could be the last chapters of the world's only racist constitution, witch was imposed by the National Party that began ruling South Africa in 1948.



them to turn National Party dogma on its head. He then subverted the House of Representatives by seducing coloured (mixed-race) MPs away from the Labour Party — which held the majority and was also suspicious of his reforms — into his own ideological fold. The Conservative Party also suspects it was tricked into the referendum to undermine its claims that de Klerk lacked a mandate for his reforms and that there must therefore be a "general" election it was certain to win — and reverse the abhorred reforms. Informed liberals share the suspicion, speculating that the National Party deliberately botched the February by-election in Potchefstroom to allow a Conservative victory that would give de Klerk the perfect excuse for calling a referendum — not an election he was in danger of losing because constituency boundaries favour rural areas that are home to conservative Afrikaners. In a referendum only individual votes, and not constituency results, count. De Klerk finessed his strategy to close the book on apartheid by playing the match on an uneven field. Despite Mandela's appeals, sanctions continue to crumble — and de Klerk now believes he has the heavier club: a knobkerrie, in South African parlance. He is a consummate politician who not only coerced colleagues in the Cabinet to stage a putsch against the then President P W Botha in 1989, but just weeks later persuaded

electorate. The suspicion is that he intends to use the overwhelming Yes vote as an intimidating club at the Convention for a Democratic South Africa (Codesa) that is negotiating the new constitution. The Rev Frank Chikane, general secretary of the South Africa Council of Churches, warned the international community on victory day "to remain vigilant against giving an advantage to de Klerk and his National Party against the victims of apartheid."

The implication of Chikane's statement was in line with Mandela's constant appeal that international sanctions must stay in place until negotiations are ended: a club to prevent de Klerk from

apartheid by allowing white immigrants who had still not naturalised to become instant voting citizens. Most are English-speaking, and they have voted with their heads rather than with hearts yearning to maintain privileges. Those privileges would have gone up in flames after a No vote, which would have been followed by the unfranchised majority turning to rebellion. De Klerk might not be "the man of integrity" — which politicians is? — that Mandela

thought him to be on his release from prison. But if these two men of purpose work together, and on a level playing field, then the fourth phase, a just constitution, should soon follow.

The urgent task will then be to restore peace and prosperity in a country where 1,200 people have died in political violence in the six months since a National Peace Accord was signed by all the negotiating parties.

About the Author: ARTHUR MAIMANE made his name as one of a talented group of journalists who ran Drum Magazine in Johannesburg during the Fifties and Sixties. In exile in Britain he worked for the BBC World Service. He has just been working for a spell as Parliamentary correspondent for the Johannesburg Weekly Mail.

UNESCO's Monumental Task

Paharpur Vihara (monastery) and the Sat Gambuj Mosque are soon going to get a new lease of life. A new deal aimed to repair and renovate the 8th-century Buddhist monastery at Paharpur, Rajshahi has already been struck between the Bureau for Co-operation of Operational Activities, UNESCO and the Ministry of Culture. The contract for the conservation of the Sat Gambuj Mosque is awaited to be signed soon. In both cases the contribution, to the tune of US \$ 305,100 for the former and US \$ 226,000 for the latter, is coming under a Japanese Fund-in-Trust arrangement to be executed by the UNESCO. Eversince their enlistment as world heritage, these two monuments have stood to enjoy the attention they deserve for their preservation. This was good news. But better still is the fact that for the first time they are going to be supported by the money for such painstaking and highly sophisticated scientific works. Both the mosque and monument have been lucky to be in the focus of the world's premier educational, scientific and cultural organisation. However, not many are so lucky. And we surely have several other such old buildings, forts and places of historical importance that deserve more or less reckoning.

However, the international attention these two old monuments have received augurs well for the country's architectural heritage. With architecture, a good portion of the past, as it was, is relieved and the shared feeling of a rich civilization along with the international community solidifies the enduring human bonds. That the new effort will be expanded to make the technological aspects of preservation match up with the elemental decaying process is also a sign of that international cooperation and fraternity. Significantly, the best of our past meets the advanced technology of the present and the involvement of the world community in this task makes us doubly happy.

With the taking of responsibility of the two monuments' preservation by the UNESCO, our part of the job however does not end there. The first and foremost should concern the raising of people's consciousness about the past through faithful projection of our cultural heritage. In this regard, as anybody can see, our knowledge and effort to spread the information are scrappy, poor and somethings distorted. That attitude must change for the simple reason that without ourselves being respectful to our heritage, we can not expect others to be so. And our respect must be ably supported by our painful and practical contribution to them. Only then can we expect to have more such monuments, places and objects enlisted by the UNESCO.

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.

Of Jamdani, Muslin and rickshaw

Sir, Why there are no National Awards for Jamdani textile products? It would provide incentive and recognition, and attract international attention. The other day I went to buy a box of muslin handkerchiefs for presentation to a foreign guest. I could not find any. This world famous handwoven cotton fabric would be a hit abroad, if marketed properly. This cottage industry appears to be dying out. The 21st century may not be able to visualize seven layers of nakedness. Why there is no Research and Development Cell for the rickshaws, to produce a better vehicle? It is a big industry; while the design is left at the

mercy of non-professionals. Designing rickshaws is not a 'respectable' profession?

Curious citizen
Dhaka

International terrorism

Sir, The Americans are very much concerned of and active in checking international terrorism. Recently they are influencing together with Britain and France to sanction certain drastic measures against Libya for her alleged involvement in smashing two passenger jetliners which killed hundreds of innocent people. We do not support killing of innocent people even for greater causes of the mass. So, I think, Libya should hand over the two sus-

M Zahidul Haque
Assistant Professor,
Bangladesh Agricultural
College, Dhaka

Let us learn

Sir, The sacred, green boundary of the Dhaka University was once again stained red with the blood of a brilliant student. Let me express my profound sorrow, and condolence to the bereaved family, while deceased's father deserves our appreciation for not lodging a case as the result would be the 'traditional' one. As usual political leaders did not miss to express their 'fashioned' sorrow, and in the coming days many more

mourning processions would be brought out, meetings would be held and demand would be made to punish the killer... and time will come when every thing will be forgotten.

If Raju was killed virtually nothing went wrong with the leaders nor that party which he was told to be a member. But it is unfortunate parents and relatives who will have to bear this tragic memory till the last moment of their life. Someday Raju's killer may be arrested and punished (if god blessed). But will the nation ever be able to punish the 'real killers' who are moving things from behind the curtain?

Raju's killing appears to be the outcome of 'selfish' competition of the 'leaders' to have their supremacy on one another. We would like to make a fervent appeal to all political parties not to do things that might provoke tension in the educational arena where student come to learn and not to get killed.

Md. Reyazuddin
Mahammadpur, Dhaka

OPINION Independence Day Celebrations

Ahmed Zaker

It seems our independence day celebrations have now become a meaningless routine. Celebrations were all official, beginning with government notifications and directives about how the day will be observed in Dhaka as well as the district headquarters — flags would have to be hoisted; ceremonial parades would be organised; speeches would be delivered at seminars; messages will be issued by political leaders and, of course, special prayers will have to be offered at all mosques, temples, churches etc. newspapers obligingly bring out special supplements. I can bet that if we looked up the newspapers ten, twenty or even thirty years ago (this would be true even for independence day celebrations during the Pakistan period), we would find exactly the same old stories and news headlines. Must we accept the sterile official celebrations to mark such an important event in our national life? Must this go on every year?

Upon reflection it would seem that something was seriously wrong with the manner in which the celebrations were organised in the first instance. I do not know whether the Prime Minister was also asking the same question herself as she sat through the long ceremonial march past.

Decision making can be pretty tough specially at the top. It can be pretty lonely up there, more so during times of crisis, when it is difficult to assess the pros and cons of a particular situation. Hard and honest advice is difficult to get when there are to many sycophants all around. Where governmental powers are centralised, people, expect the chief to give the final decision in all difficult cases.

What was wrong about the Independence day celebrations? It seemed so officious and lifeless. The people, ordinary men, women and children

were definitely not part of the celebrations; they were not intended to be so by design. People were not celebrating the independence; in fact they were not to be seen anywhere near the parade ground. In the way the independence day programme was drawn up, just as they had been done since the Pakistan days, there was no role for people to play.

Why did we have to make the ceremonial march past the main event in our celebrations? Why could not the ordinary people, particularly students and young children, take part in the march past? I am sure they could have with their spontaneous gaiety, feistions, posters, laughter, songs and music made the show much more lively and colourful. Could we have been a bit more imaginative and specially invited our village folk, representatives of co-opratives and even women's and children's groups to the capital to take part in the festivities? Probably we could have and that would have made our independence day celebrations more participatory and meaningful. A well turned out military parade, witnessed exclusively by the government elite and officials does not fully reflect the democratic aspirations of the people who have sacrificed so much to achieve their independence. The ceremonial march past rather demonstrated thoughtlessness and stereotyped character of the ceremonies.

In future, when such festivities are scheduled again, we should first ask the plain question — for whom are we planning the celebrations? Is it meant for people, the ordinary citizens and their children whom we need to inspire and who represent the future of the nation? Or is it meant merely to oblige the civil service and the top brass? We must break the sterile traditions of the past and let people spontaneously celebrate their independence!