Dhaka, Sunday, September 6, 1992

August's Campus Warning

If success in the battle against lawlessness could be measured by the number of arrests, with or without charges, that are made in a given month, then the Ministry of Home Affairs could afford to feel satisfied at the moment. The public at large, however, are not likely to see things that way, even though the police have announced the arrests of 25,000 "miscreants" or 'terrorists" during its month-long Operation August '92. Before judging the usefulness of such anti-crime sweeps from time to time, the public would be more inclined to look at other, more pointed facts, such as incidences of criminal acts, police reaction to individual crimes, seriousness of investigation in the aftermath of the crimes being committed, prosecution etc.

The killings of two activists of the Jatiyatabadi Chhatra Dal (JCD), the ruling party's student front, in an on-going inter-party feud on Friday. came as yet another reminder that the criminals are not only at large, they are also living too close to the government's own back-yard for comfort Friday's fatal clash on the Dhaka University campus came within five days of another battle between the same factions of the JCD in which a bystander was killed on Aug. 30. Unfortunately, little has been said about investigations into the August 30 murder, or about clearing the halls of residence of firearms, or even about legal actions against possessors of illegal weapons in those halls. The result was that the armed elements remained in the halls, undaunted and undeterred, ready to act and counteract again. Incredibly, when the police went into one of the halls following Friday's bloody clash no weapon was found. Political failure to prevent a feud from turning into a murderous rivalry was thus followed up with administrative incompetence.

The question that is bound to exercise people's minds now is: against whom was Operation August '92 conducted? And have the arrests of 25,000 people contributed to the improvement of law and order in any meaningful way? Judging by the incidents on the campus, the answer to the second question would certainly be a negative one. More, statistics provided by the police themselves show that reported crimes registered an increase last month, compared to July. Are we then to assume that those detained during August '92 were not necessarily all criminal elements? And that many who in fact are, simply escaped police attention? We are yet to see how many of these arrests will actually be followed up with prosecutions, but the failure of the drive had become apparent even before it has formally ended, as was also the case with Operation Durbar last year.

The major flaw in the enforcement of law in this country seems to be the inability of the police to react timely to incidents. Crime detection is sluggish and political interference is to blame in no small part for this. If crimes are not immediately and effectively investigated, then criminal elements can only feel that they would be able to get with their way the next time too. The police seem to have adopted an inexplicable policy by which they leave the responsibility for filing cases to somebody else. In many instances, people do not come forward to file cases out of fear, and the incident is then allowed to go without investigation and prosecution. This is one practice that has to come to an end. There has to be some kind of mechanism, either a law or departmental regulation, by which the police would be obliged to probe into incidents and press charges immediately after a crime being committed. The incidents on the Dhaka University campus are clear examples where the police should have taken the leading role as the law enforcement agency of the city, in bringing the culprits to book, without waiting for anyone else to file cases. Once the police start to take up such a role, not only will periodic anti-crime drives become unnecessary but deterrence of crime will also become a possibility.

A Wrong US Deal

The US administration's latest decision to sell as many as 150 F-16 jet fighters to Taiwan has sent diplomatic shockwaves not only from Washington to Beijing but also all across the capitals of different countries. Bush administration's argument that the move will promote peace in the region is simply naive, to say the least. That the announcement of the sale of these most advanced fighter planes has coincided with the Republican Party's unenvious election campaign, particularly Bush's abnormally low score in the opinion polls compared to his democratic rival Bill Clinton's, is seen - and quite understandably so - as a direct overture to the voters. An appeasement move, such as this, on the election agenda is indeed unacceptable.

It is known that the sale proceeds will help create jobs amounting to thousands, but equally true is the fact that the acquisition by Taiwan of such a large number of sophisticated jet fighters will fuel the antagonism between the two uneasy neighbours of Asia. Taiwan and China have between themselves been enjoying the most inoffensive relationship ever. Suddenly this preposterous move by the US to lift the 10-year ban on arms sale to China's rival has set into motion recriminatory forces across the border and the Pacific.

The possibility of China and Taiwan eventually merging together has always been there. With the appearance of the F-16s on Taiwanian soil, the prospect of such a merger will recede further. Everybody knows the inclusion of the F-16s in the country's armed forces will surely strengthen the defence capability of Taiwan, but that tiny Taiwan is no match for its big neighbour, so far as the defence prowess of the two are concerned, is also an established fact. What purpose the new arrival of the sophisticated fighters will serve remains to be highly dubious.

If it has anything to do with the formal handover of Hong Kong by Britain to China in 1997. the US administration is perhaps taking too long a view of the emerging situation and the possible defence strategy it will have to adopt. By selling the fighters the US also risks the disruption of the ongoing process of arms transfer restraint initiative the five permanent members of the UN Security Council are pursuing. This move may well be directed to keep China, which is not shunning the communist way like the US would prefer to see, worrying about its defence expenditure. With the end of the cold war, it is in the fitness of things that the Bush administration reconsidered its decision and thus dispelled the mistrust now gathering.

American Presidential Election: Issues and Personalities

from his ticket, President Bush has retained him as his running mate. Four years of exposure as the Vice-President has failed to improve Quale's image. He is still perceived by the American people as a laughing stock- a man without the intellectual or other qualities needed to be the President of the country. He will certainly bring no strength to the Bush candidacy. An ultra rightist fringe seem to support Quale but otherwise he is a liability rather than an asset for Bush. The picture is quite different in the Democratic camp as an influential Senator with lots of important contacts in the capital Al Gore brings a lot of strength to Clinton who as the governor of a small state is not so well known in the political circles of Washington. It may be recalled that Sen. Gore tried to get the Democratic nomination in 1989 but lost. The experience seemed to have toughened him and better prepared him for the gruelling campaign that he must now go through. Press reports about the excellent rapport between Clinton and Gore will create greater public confidence in the team. Gore has an image of his own in the country and is also reported to have a strong following in the environmental lobby. President Bush created a negative impression during the Earth Summit in Rio Geneiro in June. Though he claimed to be the environ ment President he is given poor marks for his performance in this field.

"Bleeding Heart"

During the 1989 campaign the Republican side successfully painted Dukakis as a "bleeding heart" liberal who would yield to the black and

other pressure groups and who would not be strong enough to govern the country. Dukakis fell for the batt and failed to stand up for his liberal convictions. Clinton has, however, very skillfully taken a middle position on most issues and so far the Republicans have failed to paint him in any particular hue. The campaign will now begin in right earnest with Baker in charge of the Bush camp. He is an experienced campaigner and one has to wait and see if he will change the campaign tactics. If past

president will claim that inflation is under control, interest rate is low, exports are booming and productivity has risen. However, all this will sound rather hollow as long as more than 10 million Americans remain unemployed, businesses failures and bankruptcles are on the increases, the poor and the minorities continue to get poorer. President Bush will have to convince the American voters that he will be able to reverse the direction of the economy. He angered the faithful Republicans when he

ON THE RECORD

by Shah AMS Kibria

experience is any guide, one can expect a rough fight- with the Republicans taking the initiative in launching attacks on the challenger. In the final analysis the outcome of the election will be largely determined by the assessment of the American people about the fitness of the two men-George Bush and Bill Clinton. The traditional TV debate between them and their running mates will have a decisive influence on the result. However, the way in which the campaign will be conducted between now and November will also

Apart from the personalities, the two sides will also debate on the basis of their position on the different problems facing the country. The state of the economy will undoubtedly be the most crucial issue. The longest-lasting recession and the high rate of unemployment has been hurting Bush. The

have a significant impact.

reneged on his promise not to raise taxes. His failure to control budget deficit and reduce balance of payment deficits have created the impression that Bush has neither the capacity nor the interest to deal with the domestic economic

Most Talked about Word

The most talked about word in the country today is "change". The young Democ ratic candidate has been able to convey the impression to the electorate that he stands for change and dynamism. As a champion of middle class interests he has so far avoided identification with the radical left or the other left-leaning group interests. Yet his appeal to the blacks and other minorities seem to be pretty strong. In any case the blacks and other minorities have no choice but to support him because he would be far better

In areas such as managing the fiscal deficit, improving the school system, protecting the environment and in supporting a health system which the American people will enjoy not as a privilege but as a right-Clinton seems to have gained some eredibility. Foreign policy is the strong point of President Bush but even there the shine was lost when Saddam Hussain was seen to be able to defy the UN and the American might. The popularity enjoyed by him immediately after the Gulf War is now only a distant memory. The people may, of course, regard him as the more experienced of the two men- certainly in the field of foreign relations but voters cast their vote more on domestic questions involving their economic interests than on international issues. If the current controversy between Saddam Hussain and the UN is not resolved peacefully the President may order bombing Baghdad or other targets. This may raise the President's approval rating but the Clinton might charge Bush with unscrupulous use of the question for personal political gains. Given the intensely partisan mood prevailing in the country now such allegations may have negative impact on Bush campaign. In other words, even in the field of foreign relations the Presidents' clear advantage may not be reflected in the

than Bush whose conservative

policies need no further proof.

Major Campaign Issue

votes.

Womens right to have abortion will be a major campaign issue. President Bush opposes abortion under all cir cumstances. He will naturally enjoy the support of the pro-

life lobby which is campaigning vigorously for the Republican Party. Clinton supports the right of women to have abortion. Vice-President Quale, when questioned about his reaction if his daughter wants an abortion, replied that he would counsel his daughter about it but if she wanted to go ahead with it he would respect her choice and stand by her. Mrs. Barbara Bush also came out with a similar view. This is somewhat different from the ultra conservative position take by Bush. The emotions on this issue are running so high that many women may not follow the party line and vote on the basis of their position on President Bush is still trail-

ing Clinton in the opinion polls though the gap is getting narrower. His recent attacks on Clinton has taken a harsh and strident note. For example, in a recent speech in Dallas Bush said he was struck by the fact that the word 'God' was missing from the Democratic Party platform."My party platform is different, "he continued." We are proud to celebrate our country's Judeo-Christian heritage, unrivaled in the world." Predictably, Clinton characterized these comments as "deeply offensive." In a desperate bid to gain voter support Bush is resorting to the tactics which politicians in our country have often used. Departing from the great tradition established by Jefferson and other founding fathers Bush is seeking to introduce religious sentiments into the fight. It is to carly to say if Bush will succeed but the initial press reactions are not favourable. Both the New York Times and the Washington Post in editorial comments criticized Bush for these attacks on his opponents. Despite the inherent advantages that an incumbent president enjoys in American elections it seems that the two candidates are heading towards a photo finish this time.

NAM Assumes a Greater Role inspite of Weakness

T is often asked: What is the role of Non-alignment today when the world has so radically changed, when decolonization is almost completed, and when the blocs have lost their old cohesion and militancy in a unipolar world? But in all the previous summits it has been emphatically spoken out by the leaders that Non-alignment is more a movement than an organization, because it can withstand the domineering force of the blocs and the superpowers and exercise influence on the minds of people everywhere, including in the camps of the aligned.

nomination President Bush by the

Republican Party in

Houston on 20th August sets

the stage finally for the

Presidential Election in

November. Unlike the last

election when Michael Dukakis

clearly proved to be no match

for George Bush, this time it

promises to be a tough fight.

The Democratic ticket headed

by Governor Clinton and

Senator Gore is a formidable

one. Clinton has proved

himself to be an adroit

politician who survived a series

of crises which confronted his

campaign to get the Demo-

cratic nomination. A scandal

linking the handsome gover-

nor with an young woman

threatened to derail his nomi-

nation drive but he stood his

ground with firmness and good

humour and the American

people appear to have ac-

cepted his version of the story.

It may be recalled that in 1989

Gary Hart- a strong candi-

date- lost the bid to get the

Democratic nomination be-

cause of a sexual scandal. The

media hounded him relent-

lessly until he was forced to

withdraw from the race. The

Republican party will no doubt

try to revive the issue to em-

barrass Clinton but this time

the American media do not

seem to have the stomach for

an attack on the democratic

candidate based on an unsub-

stantiated story. Similarly the

question of his attempt to

avoid army-draft during the

Vietnam War failed to stop

Clinton from getting the nom

ination. A Rhodes scholar,

Clinton got exemption from

military service in Vietnam for

academic reasons. George

Bush, on the other hand, is a

war hero, whose bomber air-

craft was hit during action and

he had to be rescued from the

sea. The Republicans will natu-

rally try to make use of the is-

Running Mate

Despite pressure from cer-

tain quarters to drop Quale

sue during the campaign.

The policy and movement of Non-alignment have given expression to its member states, action trend against military intervention and interference in the internal affairs of other countries, in mutually interconnected fields: (a) By striving to preserve world peace and the national security of states, as one of the essential conditions for the existence of the human society, and the optimal framework for attaining independence. equality, economic development and social progress for all states and nations. (b) Within the framework of the anti-colonial revolution, a process of the broadest possible liberation of nations in the history of the mankind, of nations who were the victims of foreign intervention and brutal interference in their internal affairs, as well as within the context of opposing all at tempts to establish neo-colonial imperialist and hegemonic domination. (c) By setting in motion a broad range of activities aimed at the establishment of a new international economic order from which all domination and exploitation would be eliminated and which would constitute the foundations for a broader democratization of international political relations. (d) By efforts to have international and other disputed issues settled by peaceful means, without the use of force, by denouncing the use of force regardless of its vehicle and attempted justification and by insisting that all crisis situations should be dealt with under the auspices of the United Nations. (e) By striving

disarmament bearing in mind that power politics are largely based on the strength of weapons. (f) By extending broad-based support to the right of every nation's sovereignty and freely to decide on all questions concerning its international orientation and its international de-

SUPERPOWER IDEOLOGI-

CAL IMPEDIMENT: The above relevant policy points of Nonalignment were stressed in the documents of the Non-aligned countries, and in the resolutions of the Security Council and the General Assembly of the UN. But due to the ideological reasons, the United States of America and the ex-Soviet Union, the two super powers always claimed that it was their sacred duty on behalf of the interests of the "free world" or in the name of progress" to extend aid to certain social forces, regimes, or persons, as was done by the USA during the military intervention in Vietnam, Laos and Kampuchea. On the other hand, by the ex-USSR in a different context, invoking the principle of so-called proletarian internationalism, in some countries in Eastern Europe, and also in Afghanistan. Apart from the super powers' ideological pressure, the debate on intervention in Vietnam and Kampuchea and later, specially, events in Afghanistan have shown us that there are certain differences among the Non-aligned countries, which are making it difficult to achieve consensus for the movement.

Contradiction Between

Achievements and Aims: The official history of the Non-Aligned Movement begins with the Belgrade Conference in 1961. The Belgrade Summit took place in a period of nuclear testing and increased East-West tensions over Berlin, Laos, Cuba and The Congo. Wars of national liberations continued notably in Vietnam, Algeria and Angola. But from the first summit there were differences in emphasis on the causes of tensions that could lead to war. For Tito, disarmament and peaceful coexistence were essential to ending the East-West conflict. He opened the conference with a discussion of non-bloc policy, and expressed a desire to see the elimination of any blocs.

by Rumi Noman But many leaders pointed out that colonialism and neo-colo nialism were the cause of wars. As Suakarno summarized it -"in every case the root of international tensions in imperialism and colonialism and the forcible division of nations."

But inspite of the different views all the Non-aligned countries established a unity.

(a) They adopted principles and criterion for membership; (b) gave concrete support to national liberation in the form of full membership to a provisional government; (c) formulated a global framework for their activities: (d) asserted their right as small and middle sized states to participate in world politics - a concept they called the democratization of international relations and (c) took direct action to bring about international peace and security through their efforts to reduce world tensions.

As on principle they are Non-aligned, they take the decision altogether but pursue it individually. Though they were successful in some crisis, still the thirst for power and interests remains in a different form and as a different point of

Here I can mention "The

UN Sanctions on Libya" as a relevant example. With the US endeavour the UN has imposed sanctions on Libya as she has failed to the hand over, two intelligence agents to United States or Britain for trial accused of blowing up a Pan Am airliner over the Scottish town of Lockerbie in 1988. Though this sanction against Libya seems logical, but there is a significance of US-Libyan rift. From 1971, Gaddafi became a rival person of Western Powers as he established "Arab Socialist Union" (ASU). Gaddafi made new theory: "An Alternative to Capitalist Materialism and Communist Atheism," which brought a new political and economic order in the Muslim world. So Gaddafi was marked as a "new Arab revolutionist" and from then CIA is alleged to be planning to eradicate Gaddafi from the power. Moreover US interest apparently is to make a monopoly over the Middle East oil fields.

Apart from the policy for Middle East's oil resources, the United States and the Western world also pursue a

our country get one meal in

condition of one shift work. If

not work, they must starve.

The working class, here, usu-

policy which is to protect the security of Israel. They are concerned about the Arab nationalist movement because it might make an anti-Israel movement among the Arab countries. So it is clear that the Zionist influence on the United States and Western World is always very real. Now that Libya's punishment is already started through UN sanctions, what is the role of Non-aligned countries against the 'policy' which the so-called western powers impudently pursue to meet their thirst for global strategic interest and pecisely, in the name of Mid dle East peace process or antiterrorism? In fact the world. peace initiative remains indis tinct instead of projected suc cess and here is the contradiction between their aims and

AFRICAN AND ASIAN NON-ALIGNED COUNTRIES: Most of the African and Asian Nonaligned countries are least developed. Most of these countries implement their economic and political goals by serving super powers military or strategic interest. For example, India is trying to forge closer military and political relations with the United States after the demise of the Soviet Union, a former ally and once India's major arms supplier.

achievements.

Position of Bangladesh

Though the late President Ziaur Rahman affirmed in the sixth Non-aligned summit at Havana that the policy of Nonalignment is a cornerstone of our foreign policy and though he played a role of arbitrator in the Gulf war between Iran and Iraq in 1979, but in the Gulf war of 1990 between Iraq and allied forces Bangladesh rather played an opposite role by sending its army against Iraq, for the sake of her national interest. Bangladesh changed her policy of arbitration perhaps because the two major donor countries were in the side of the allied group. So the role of Bangladesh in the Gulf war again showed the Third World's political and economic reality vis-a-vis the moral al-

The most successful events of these century are the German reunification and Soviet disintegration. These are suc-

passed in the parliament. And

the bills are sealed by the

parliamentarians as it had

achieved the verdict of the

common people. How strange!

The activities recall us the

'Gulliver's Travels' by Jonathon

cessful because the events were the outcome of mass people's interest. The breaking of Germany was a super powers' interest and the East European communist bloc was also another superpower's strategic interest. So the disappearance of Warsaw Pact with the Soviet Union's demise and the German reunification teach us that the people's power is still alive and also successful while more than a hundred Non-aligned countries are only struggling and holding summits against superpower' or 'bloc' dominancy year after year.

The Inside Weakness

The Non-Aligned Movement was the product of cold war and with the end of the cold war, the movement is reassessing its position. At a ministerial meeting earlier this year in Larnaca, Cyprus, discussions indicate the inside weakness of Non-alignment.

Delegates were aware that No-Aligned Movement (NAM) has failed, particularly over the last decade, to make a significant impact on world affairs. Some of the members had even talked of dissolving the movement. There were three distinct groupings the first led by Egypt and Cyprus. Indonesia and Syria favoured co-operation with the West. The second comprised the countries which would like to confront

the US but dare not do so because of economic and political vulnerability. Algerian Foreign Minister Lakhdar Brahimi urged to take Washington's "New World Order into account" since its "superiority is a fact." The third grouping consisted of countries like Iran, Iraq, Yemen, Cuba and Libya which insisted that NAM should, in the words of Iranian Foreign Minister Ali Akbar Velayeti. confront the hegemony of the West."

Such difference of views among the three groups, within a broader group, is also a result of self-interest. However, it is not hard to find way there are groupings and debate, among peace loving countries, while their move means not to involve with military blocs and try to view things independently and maintain friendly relations with all countries.

CONCLUSION: However, with the leaders calling for ensuring political and economic security for individual member states, blasting Western, and big power domination, at the current summit it is hoped that. NAM has not deviated ideologically. Assuming more of consolidation among its members, as has been envisaged of the crucial summit, NAM may play even a greater role than before in a world that is called unipolar now

OPINION

Customs Duty

am an appreciative reader of Mr S A M S Kibria's "On the record", which I find to be a clearsighted, level-headed, and above all operational analysis of the current economic impasse and possible solutions. However, I recently found myself in disagreement with him over one concrete point.

In his column published on August 30, Mr Kibria suggests that the reduction in customs duty on finished TV sets from 100% to 75%, and the increase in duties on some imported components from 40% to 45%, were unwise steps which will spell destruction for the local electronics indus-

Now it seems to me that a 75% duty on the finished product and a 45% duty on imported components should still allow a reasonable degree of effective protection to any local industry. Exactly how much would depend on the share of imported components in total costs. As an example, if imported components are the only intermediate inputs, and they amount to 70% of final value, then, compared to a situation where there are no duties on either the finished product or the inputs, the effective rate of protection is 145% (I beg the lay reader's pardon for these technicalities. In simple terms, this means that total value added per unit of output is more than twice what it would be if there were no trade taxes on either output or inputs). Now if a local indus-

try cannot compete with imports even with such high levels of protection, something must be terribly wrong with the industry. What is wrong is probably slack management and low labour productivity. These will not be set right by continued protection — on the contrary, such protection usually encourages slackness. Why bother with efficiency when government policy ensures profitability even to inefficient operations?

Another point worth noting is that this sort of cascading tariff structure (higher rates on final output than on intermediate inputs), when it may be inevitable for a while, also discourages backward linkages. Perhaps with a 45% duty on imported components, a few daring people will feel encouraged to try to produce these components locally. From this point of view, indeed, a case could perhaps be made for narrowing the gap still further. One could perhaps find fault with the speed of the reduction in protection - a more gradual phasing might have been advisable. But surely the direction is right.

Finally, Mr Kibria is certainly right that there is a powerful import lobby in the country. But there are also protection lobbies, who want to make easy profits in the cosy shelter of government patron-

> Abu Abdullah Research Director, BIDS

Islamic Co-op Commercial Bank Ltd

to check the arms race, to

achieve general and complete

Sir, The Finance Minister, the Ministry of Finance and the Bangladesh Bank, in particular, deserved highest congratulation for taking pragmatic steps to re-open the BCCI under the new name and style of Eastern Bank Limited, thus resolving the year-long stalemate created owing to closure of the BCCI.

The Islamic Co-operative Commercial Bank Ltd at Z Shah House, 120, Motifheel Commercial Area is another bank which had perhaps little

international linkage but has also stepped functioning since long. The affected public are yet to know what step has been taken for re-opening the said bank to remove the difficulties of the account-holders.

The readers, many of whom may well be some account holders will appreciate to know through the columns of your paper, what steps have so far been taken in the matter.

Abdur Rahman Mottheel, C/A, Dhaka

Away from reality Sir. Most of the people of

ally draw poor salary without medical, educational and other allowances. In this circumstances, they do not make out the meaning of, say, the Private University Bill. And it is nothing to them who become houseless by the constant erosion of the rivers and who are suffering from diarrhoea, malnutrition and other diseases, whether a minister exists or is ousted from the parliament. But such bills and issues not related to the commonmans' lot are being prepared and

Swift. He satires his society inventing a story in it thus: "The Father of the present emperor command his subjects to break their eggs at the smaller end instead of the larger end, because his son cut his finger while he was breaking an egg at the larger end. The political insurgence and chaos begin following this false issue.

Shelina Kamrul Bahirgola, Sirajganj