Dhaka, Wednesday, October 7, 1992

Lessons from IMF-WB Meetings

There are unfavourable signals coming from the industrialised world, which suggest that it will be a long time before developing nations derive anything like the so-called peace dividends from the end of superpower rivalry between Moscow and Washington. Judging by the despatches from Washington just published by this paper from its guest columnist M Syeduzzaman, many of the hopes earlier expressed by experts about what might be called the great leap forward into a new era have been dashed.

This disappointment was reflected in the recently-concluded meeting of the International Monetary Fund (IMF) and the World Bank (WB). The disappointment was not so much about what was said as about what was not said about the future of the North-South relations, about placing it on a new basis in this challenging world. As we now learn from despatches from Washington, the meeting could not come up with anything even remotely resembling an agenda for the remaining years of the decade or, for that matter, for the next century. True, the meeting went through the motion of proclaiming the need for the "New World Order" as it had been done at the IMF-WB meetings in Bangkok last year. But, this year, the call for the so-called New Order, which still suffers from lack of clarity, was more subdued than in the past. For many, it was almost embarrassing to utter the term with any degree of conviction.

The fault did not lie with the IMF-WB meeting. What was lacking was the environment of hope, which our columnist has rightly attributed to the "Anemic recovery in the industrialised countries" and to the growing differences over exchange rates, the way to fight inflation and continuing instability in the former socialist states in Eastern Europe, not to mention the conflict in what was once Yugoslavia. There is little doubt that despite their long experience in these fields, the industrialised nations have put on a poor show in handling the challenges facing them today.

In more ways than one, it is the developing world which is certain to pay the price. For one thing, the aid climate has gone from bad to worse. If, in place of aid, the developing countries turn to investment, as indeed they do, or put in increased efforts to raise their volume of trade. they do not necessarily find easy solutions. The IMF-WB meetings insisted on structural policy reforms as a way of attracting foreign investments and stepping up more liberal trade. However, many Finance Ministers emphasised the need for increased aid to give them the breathing space during the transitional period. It all turns out to be a vicious cycle.

In time, multilateral agencies may find new answers for dealing with the situation. What is obvious, some of the old solutions, including a few of the conditionalities offered by these aid agencies, may no longer work in the way they expected even a year ago. In Washington, some Finance Ministers spoke about a new mix of a role for private enterprise and public sector participation to stimulate growth in the Third World. This may well be a solution. However, at this stage, it is important that the industrialised West sets its house in order.

The Slyest of Masters Preserves Himself

Did Diego Maradona muck up his first serious match after an 18-month exile in soccer wilderness, as a news headline suggested on Tuesday? No sir, nothing can be far from truth. Thank lord, coach Carlos Bilardo's timely call and Maradona's own good judgement in opting out of the Sevilla match against Athletico Bilbao in the 75th minute of the play allowed the maestro to escape the ordeal with nothing worse than leaving the field "limping and looking tired". He has been preserved very sagaciously, one would say, if the fellblooded Basque nationalist rage seething in each of the Bilbabians — the roughest eleven in and out of Spain - were in one's knowledge. The world number one ball player also happens to be the slyest of them all, how can we forget that?

That all of them would be only too eager to pounce on Diego at the first go, was child's knowledge. His low-profile mastery didn't give them a wink of a chance until the 75th minute. Till that moment he was instrumental in giving his side a one goal lead, the score originating from his own free-kick - and was busy holding off Bilbao incursions by holding himself to defensive rear action. Then the expected happened, Andoni Lakabeg fouled him sending him reeling and making him lie prostrate for two full minutes. Now the risk was rising for Diego as much as the stake was rising for Sevilla - the whole of the league and the season was waiting. Maradona left the pitch and Bilbao had their break and walked off with a 2-1 victory.

Bilardo had said before the match Diego was only 40 per cent fit. Why did he should play him then? Perhaps it was more Maradona than Bilardo who wanted that he play. It was a point of honour with Maradona and also one of keeping the morale of the Sevillans. A paltry 40 per cent can not match the hundred per cent all the world saw in dazzling display in the last two World Cups. But the Argentine wunderkind is far from finished and has yet a goodly fund of footballing pyrotechnics to treat the soccer lovers with.

Is this what we call turning a full circle? Wasn't Maradona also laid down in his last outing against Bilbao years back? That should explain much of his "inspiring" game for his team in their first engagement of the Spanish League. Football has long ceased to be a one-hero Armageddon. How the small master relives the lost glories of days ruled Pele!

Is Turkey's Coalition Government in Trouble?

held in Turkey last year. The True Path Party (DYP) of Suleyman Demirel came on top although it failed to gain enough seats in the Parliament to form a Government of its own. The Motherland Party (ANAP) of Mr Turgut Ozal came second and Socialist People's Party (SHP) of Mr Erdal Inonu came third. Before the elections Mr Ozal had been elected President of the Republic replacing Gen Kenan Evren. His handpicked Prime Minister Mr Akbulut ran the show in the Parliament on his behalf. Later in a leadership contest Mr Akbulut lost out to Mr Mesut Yilmaz, current President of ANAP. Mr. Demirel and Mr Ozal have been colleagues for many decades and in the seventies on the same political platform. Following the military coup of 1980 parties were banned

including the political leaders. When politics was allowed to function again Mr Ozal appeared on the political scene with his Motherland party. I remember those days well. Mr Ozal as Deputy Prime Minister of Turkey had been elected to preside over an affiliate body of the OIC in Jeddah, where I was serving as the Assistant Secretary General. Following the 1982 elections Mr Ozal swept the pools and has really dominated the political scene until last year's elections. Mr Demirel, the winner has taken as his coalition partner Mr Inonu, the leader of the SHP. He is the son of the famous Ismet Inonu, comrade in arms of Ataturk and held the highest offices of the country, including that of Prime Minister and President. This coalition by all accounts has so far been a happy marriage. Mr Demirel has emerged as

Arshad-uz Zaman writes from Istanbul

Prime Minister and Mr Inonu Menderes is reported to be his coalition partner because of making some moves to revive lifting of ban on political parthe Democrat Party, which at ties. Recently the Turkish Parthis point of time does not liament took the matter to its look like a serious effort, it is logical conclusion. The party of the rebirth of the CHP which Mr Ozal as well as the party of is making the political land-Mr Demirel are offshoots of scape of Turkey go through the Democrat Party of Mr Adprofound convulsions. CHP has nan Menderes, who was toprecently elected as its leader pled in a coup of 1960 and Mr Dentz Baykal, who is young later tried and hanged. The and vigorous. Members of parparty of Mr Inonu is an offliament deserting Mr Inonu's shoot of People's Republican SHP and some others now are Party (CHP), founded by reported to total 21 and have Ataturk. Another offshoot is gathered under the CHP ban-Democratic Left Party (DSP), ner, a number sufficient to led by the former Prime Minisform a group within the parter Mr Bulent Ecevit. The preliament. The DYP-CHP coalisent Assembly by a recent detion, which so far had a comcision has lifted ban on all the fortable majority, has now political parties and this has fallen to a dangerously low led to the reemergence of level. If the coalition is feeling such great names as the CHP the strain, the situation within and DP. Although the son of the ANAP, is not comfortable the slain Prime Minister Mr by any means. Although Mr

Ozal moved upstairs by his election to the post of President, he has chosen to remain very much in the political arena, rather than the olympian heights of the Cankaya Presidential palace. The replacement of his handpicked successor Mr Akbulut by Mr Yilmaz, has led to overt strains within the party. Since the coalition number

has dangerously shrunk, parties big and small are manoeuvering for a place in the sun. Partial elections are due in Turkey on 1 November and that will surely give an indication of the thinking of the Turkish public.

All this politics would not be any more than business as usual were it not for the high drama that is being daily enacted in the south eastern part of Turkey. The Kurdish Work crs Party (PKK) is locked in battle with the Turkish Security Forces and daily casualties on both sides are in the double figure. The PKK is often striking out at targets in big cities including Istanbul. Turkish leaders have held lengthy discussions with their neighbours, specially Iran and Syria. It seems the Kurdish problem will be around in Turkey and the region for a long time.

In the late seventies Mr Demirel and Mr Ecevit were involved in coalition making and the combination in those years were truly incredible. Turks like authority and a clear chain of command and in those years developed a holy fear of the word coalition. The present coalition has been a balm to the Turkish psyche. The question agitating the minds of all observers-is it going to last?

The author is retired Ambassador and Assistant Secretary-General, OIC

The Chief whose Voice was Heard like Thunder

LOSE to the middle of the political storm that has covered Canada for many months stands a man of calm and dignity. Most Canadians would fail to pick this 46-year-old lawyer out in a crowd, or even in an office lift. for he is short and looks unassuming. But in his first year in a top political job, he

has made a permanent mark. This is Chief Ovide Mercredi, who has the title of National chief of the Assembly of First Nations. This means he is the elected head of the nearly 600,000 Canadians who have legal status as Indians, but his influence goes a good distance further than those numbers. And he is noticeable enough when he wears his ceremonial headdress made of the tail feathers of a bald cagle.

During the past year, he has proved himself the most skilful of negotiators. Even Jacques Parizeau, leader of the Quebec separatists, recently paid him a grudging compliment.

He said the Chief had gained more from the lengthy round of constitutional talks than had Quebec Premier Robert Bourassa. "Where Bourassa sowed, Mercredi harvested," growled Parizcau.

It is, of course, the role of the Parti Quebecois leader to be little the efforts of Bourassa, his rival; others have said of the agreement reached between prime Minister Brian Mulroney and the 10 provincial premiers on August 22 that it was 'a win-win situation," that every side gained something. But Chief Mercredi has certainly seemed to gain

the most of all. Which is remarkable because, for much of the time. neither Mercredi nor any other native leader was invited to the bargaining table. But he made sure he was there when it mattered.

Canadians vote on October 26 in a referendum to approve the premiers' agreement on radical changes to the way Canada is governed.

It will almost certainly be the most important vote in the country's history. If a majority of Quebec voters, who make up about one-quarter of the electorate, say No in the referendum, it will be a halfway house to seceding from the rest of Canada.

The country would probably break up within five years, after the separatist Parti Quebecois won the next election in Quebec.

Despite the concentration on Quebec's demands to take over more powers from Ottawa, Chief Mercredi managed Clyde Sanger writes from Ottawa

Canadians soon vote in a referendum that will almost certainly be the most important poll in the history of their country. They will decide whether to approve changes in the way Canada is governed. The provinces would get new powers and Quebec would become "a distinct society". But the big gainer will be the Indian peoples-thanks to the remarkable Chief Mercredi.

to keep the issue of aboriginal rights near the top of the long

He may seem an odd person to be a champion of aboriginal rights. For a start, he has newer lived on an Indian reserve. In fact, he was only officially recognised as an Indian a few weeks before he was elected their national chief.

The reason lies in the antiquated Indian Act. His grandfather was a French-Canadian trapper in northern Manitobia; so his father was Mctis fol mixed blood). He himself has married a non-native, so their daughter Danielle is in turn not officially recognised as having the birthright of a Cree In-

Early in life Ovide showed he was a fighter of his rights. lle grew up speaking only Cree, but when at seven he first went to school the teachers told him he had to speak English all the time. His response was to say nothing at all in class during his first year.

As one biographer, Rmy MacGregor, has related, the young Mercredi reached a turning-point in his life one afternoon in a Catholic priest's house. He was by then the church organist, an on the priest's table he found an old copy of Life magazine which was full of photographs of the life and death of Mahatma Gandhi, the funeral pyre and

the thousands of mourners He was profoundly impressed, and came to adopt the Gandhian principles of non-violent confrontation, while arming himself with the same stubborn determination of that earlier lawyer.

At 14 he first felt the impact of white racism. His leg was poisoned after stepping on a rusty nail while picking berries, and he was airlifted to a hospital in the town of Le Pas. where he spent a month in a segregated "Indian" ward.

A second ugly experience came when the high school principal in Le Pas told him he lacked intelligence and was wasting the school's time.

He quit school, and started drifting and drinking around Manitoba towns. But he pulled himself out of that pit, and got accepted as a mature student at university. There he met Elijah Harper, and the two Cree students became vigorous activists for native rights, persuading the university to start courses in native studies.

In 1990 as an established lawyer Mercredi was at the elbow of his friend, now Chief Elijah Harper, who as a member of the Manitoba legislature played a crucial part in preventing the ratification of the Meech Lake Accord. They opposed this set of constitutional amendments because it dealt only with Quebec's concerns and ignored aboriginal rights. They had been pushed aside

too often. In 1983 a far-sighted report of seven MPs under Keith Penner urged the government to recognize Indian self-government and create "a third order of government" for the 630 Indian communities, separate from provincial and municipal levels. The Penner committee also argued for special representation in the federal parliament, as the Maoris have in the New Zealand parliament.

Three times the First Ministers - that is, the prime minister and his 10 premiers - held a conference with native leaders, but could not agree how self-government could work in practice for tiny Indian bands, the largest being 12,000 Mohawks in Ontario. In 1987 the First Ministers gave up, and turned to the problem of Quebec's demand to be recognised as "a distinct soci-

The summer of 1990 changed all that. Elijah



CHIEF OVIDE MERCREDI Bringing the gentle rain

Harper's stand was followed by the armed resistance of Mo hawks behind the Oka barricades and the blockade of roads, bridges and railways in several provinces. The protests were for land rights, or for preserving forests against log-

ging companies. But when the new round of constitutional talks began a year ago, Mereredi still had to use unconventional tacties to get his points across. He effectively took over a Toronto conference scheduled to debate another issue. In August, when only the premiers were invited by Mulroney to a lakeside retreat, he stood outside with the reporters to grab the premiers' attention.

He was also prepared to match his strength against Quebec. He caused a storm in a committee of the Quebec National Assembly by questioning whether self-rule was legally possible for the whole province.

The northern part of Quebec, where some 10,000 Cree fear further disruption from the Great Whale phase of the massive James Bay hydroelectric scheme, was a late addition to the province. If French Canadians can claim self-determination as a people, so can

In the agreement that now goes to the referendum, he has won a remarkable amount of ground. Natives, whether they

live on reserves or in towns, are deemed to have 'an inher-

ent right to self-government",

that is, a right that predates

the arrival of Europeans. Returning to the Penner report, a "third order of government" will be created alongside the federal and provincial governments. The constitution will entrench the rights of native peoples that

were written into the treaties made between 1870 and 1920.

A point close to Mercredi's own heart, the Metis peoples in Ontario and western Canada will for the first time be recognised as having land and resource rights.

To gain these points, he gave some ground. Native leaders will have to spend five years working with governments to define self-government before they can take cases to court. They gain no new land rights from the August 22 deal, and have to conform to Canadian laws in matters of 'law, order and good government.

Nevertheless, the new government heralds a totally new era for Canada's native people Each Indian band council will work out what services they will provide for their own people - from schooling and clinics to courts - and negotiate their own patterns. It acknowledges them as a "distinct society," but without imposing apartheid.

Chief Ovide Mercredi will ave carned the praise which Saskatchewan elders heaped on him when they gave him the eagle headdress and said; Your voice will be heard like thunder. You will be heard from afar. At the same time, your voice will be what the thunder brings, the gentle

- GEMINI NEWS CLYDE SANGER is a former Director of Information at the Commonwealth Secretariat. A journalist in Britain, Africa and at the UN, he has lived in Canada since 1967.

OPINION

The Importance of Operational Research

A Mawaz

one aspect, namely, research.

In the developing countries, there is a tendency to ignore need to build up research acoperational research in adminery office or organisation. Even in pure research establishments (declared as such), the priority accorded is usually so low that the R & D results. even if useful, are ignored, or at best treated with indifference, as there are so many other administrative priorities to keep the policy-making officials busy. These day-to-day priorities are so urgent that it more or less becomes a standard practice to go in for ad hoc decisions ("First do this,

then we will see"). We are so much deprived of the basic necessities of life that we like to see 'action' and visible efforts all the time, maybe for psychological satisfaction. Research is an 'invisible' activity, behind the scene, not of much interest or attraction to the laymen; forgetting that the long term effect of a good research application might be of considerable benefit to the nation in the

It we look at the research setups in the various offices, it will be found that in the majority of cases there were no research cell where one was necessary; or the existing cells

were more or less languishing. The periodical 'progress reports' from the research units would not make exciting reading all the time. Research is time-consuming and silent work, so the results can not be ordered within a time limit; but data analysis reports should be available without notice, depending on the availability of ready inputs. The executives studying the research reports should be research oriented, which is not generally the case in the LDCs.

Research cells should be manned by senior, experiists, with smart, young research assistants trained, for research work. The cells must be provided with the standard tools. The problem is input Prime Minister.

I am reacting to Mr M A sources, because data compila-Baquie's article published in tion and storage arrangements The Daily Star (Sept 15), limit are weak everywhere. The ing my observations to only communication gap is stagger-

Hence there appears to be a

tivities from scratch. That istration, and in practically ev- means re-organisation and modernisation exercises, preferably with outside assistance, to draw up an integrated model, for implementation during the decade of the '90s. The motivation is clear: think ahead and reap the benefit.

This is vital if we go by the slogan "Export, or perish". Today, for example, we are caught napping on the diversification of value-added jute products, a complete picture of the export potentialities and markets, an out-of-date energy consumption projection, an integrated master plan for natural disaster rehabilitation, and a host of other requirements in the different sectors. We have neither any think-tanks nor any mechanism on futurology (the latter is now a very well established discipline in the advanced countries). Newly emerging countries have to be on their own to husband the national resources, unlike the colonial days when the colonial masters used to plan for their own benefit. Some local help is available,

but we are not using it properly, namely, to bring in the higher academic institutions and the universities into the orbit, to contribute at national level by feeding the government with the research findings in applied and operational fields, as per agreed programmes. The industrialized countries depend heavily on the academic contributions. The know how spills over to the new graduates coming out of the universities, enriching the entry level of the new recruits to the civil service and elsewhere.

Nothing new is being said here, but a proper atmosphere is needed for a perspective enced personnel and special- look by the Administration (confined not only to science and technology). We could start with a National Advisory Committee reporting to the

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.

Utrail school

Sir, Some 13 years ago, on May 4, 1979 precisely late President Ziaur Rahman came to visit our home village Utrail in Shibchar thana under Madaripur district. During his visit, representative of our village and eminent social workers late Al-haj Abdul Kader Chowdhury requested him to turn the local private school into a full government high school. The president agreed to the proposal and instantly granted a Taka two lakh sanction (President's letter No 17/10 (2)-79-456(10)-7th May

But following Zia's sad demise the school never turned into a government institution. The local people. willing to keep a school for their children, however, regularly raised fund to keep it running. On November 11. 1989, the verandah of the school was ravaged by a severe tornado. Presently, the existence of the school is being threatened by the merciless erosion by the Arial Kha river.

Meanwhile, I took initiative to meet the present Health Minister Chowdhury Kamal Ibne Yusuf in their connection. According to his suggestion, I requested the State Minster for Education on July 18 last. The State Minister forwarded the case with his recommendation to the Education Secretary on August 15. But sadly, 1 could not meet the secretary ever since.

So, through your column I would like to appeal to the rellevant authority to take necessary steps regarding the school

Mogh Bazar, Dhaka

Antsul Kader Chowdhury

Sir. Although news-reading is an art experiences impel the listeners and watchers to add a new requirement which does not fall within the domain of art that is, a modicum of at-

tention and sincerity of the

news-readers and the authori-

News-reading

In the Bangladesh Television usually two news-readers read news-items alternately. However, both the news-readers do not appear on the screen simultaneously may be due to technical reasons. Sometimes, at the end of one's turn, when the other starts reading the news, the former continues to remain on the screen and the vice versa, to the displeasure of the watchers. A brief smile with eyes down followed by quick disappearance however proves the sincerity of the authorities to present news smoothly, but only after the damage is done.

in this course of childlike Jugglery BTV can continue to draw the attention of the watchers due to its technological advantage which Radio Bangladesh can't. Radio's strategies to put the listeners to bewilderment differ to some extent. An example, though belated, dovetails the context On August 27, at 7:30 am, the news-reader read, "democracy which has been achieved through a long struggle against democracy", reversing the meaning of the news and turning the national history upside down. Such omissions and commissions urge the listeners and watchers to request the news-readers to add a modicum of attention to their business and also call upon the

extent of sincerity to the du-

Md Abdur Rouf Sergeant Zahurul Haque Hall,

Law and order

Sir. The law and order situation had deteriorated to such a state that traders were thinking to form security force of their own to protect themselves from the hands of toll collectors. Besides theft dacotty, hijacking and campus violence has become so much commonplace to the extreme insecurity of the commonman

But this situation cannot be allowed further. We have to overcome this for the sake of the nation's greater interest. All of us should be cautious against evil-doers. However, government should come forward at first to tackle the situation, because it is sacred duty of a government to ensure security of life and property of the citizens. And certainly, in the meantime, the government has taken some steps to tackle the situation but it seems to me insufficient. I think government should be more strict and alert in taking comprehensive steps to establish peace and security.

Md Noor-a-Alam Department of History, DU authorities to show on equal