

PM's FAO Speech

It was an eloquent speech. Well written, with the right mix of appeal to the heart and the head. It also incorporated some practical proposals. In sharp contrast to her UN speech, Sheikh Hasina sounded visionary and passionate in her speech at the FAO. Even though she came after the charismatic Castro, she was able to hold her own because of the depth and feeling in her speech.

The most important idea broached in her impressive speech is that of building a grand alliance of "people's organisations, non-governmental organisations, private enterprises, governments and international organisations." What our Prime Minister now needs to do is to develop this idea in more details. For example, she will have to elaborate how she visualises this alliance to be formed, and more importantly, what the alliance will actually do. Give it its terms of reference.

The fact that a new global alliance is essential for achieving food security is beyond question. There is also no doubt about the fact that an all out global effort has to be undertaken if the millions below the poverty line are ever to see any improvement in their lives. Scientific knowledge holds the key to the success in our battle against poverty. At present it is monopolised by the West whose vast and powerful multinational companies often use this knowledge more for profit than for human welfare. While we are totally opposed to any government interference in the activities of the private sector, yet a strong case can be made for far greater watchfulness about many of the activities of these multinational corporations, especially in the developing countries.

As has been pointed out, the challenge before us is to double our farm products in the next twenty five years without destroying the environment. Not only having appropriate scientific knowledge is at issue here, we also need to address the issues of equity and empowerment. As Sheikh Hasina said "Hunger cannot wait". Nor can the dispossessed people whose lot has not changed at all as the world around changed dramatically. To serve them, let us now take the first step in forming the "Grand Alliance" that our PM has called for.

Of Cultural Voids

Porno films in Joydevpur movie houses. The five-column screamer on The Daily Star should rather have read town movie houses instead of pointing directly at only Joydevpur. This is a situation that prevails in many cinema halls in most of the district and subdivisional towns and lesser places. Placing lurid inserts into Bangladeshi family-value pictures has been a regular practice with these halls. Now the charge is that some are showing full-length films of uninhibited porno. And Sunday's Daily Star report says some of these display censor board's certificate of approval. Where to look for the root of the problem then? Movie houses have been taking liberty for many years now.

The cinemas are selling contraband ware — something very near to narcotics. But they are doing it with impunity. This is patently a police and administration failure which must not be allowed to continue.

Call it what you will — culture or entertainment — there is not much of it for the ordinary citizen living in the towns and villages. The profit-mongers in the film exhibition business find an easy prey in the starved minds of the millions and make the most of it by offering a feast of bare female bodies.

The answer is, as it is to the satellite TV challenge: to develop our own arts and cultural products, both in quantity and quality, to standards that can compete with these imported dirty stuff. Jatra, our traditional theatre, has been doing exactly that for decades. But look at our indigenous circus — most of it is dead. And the rest is gasping for life in the village melas. Why?

We must have a consistent policy of monitoring the national, particularly rural, cultural situation and filling the voids through a constant and consistent nurture of the local arts and entertainments.

Abiding by the People

Like the trinity of Christianity or Hinduism, the politics of the Bengali Muslims' liberation — if there can indeed be such partial development leaving aside the consideration of the whole — had also its trinity: A K Fazlul Huq, Abdul Hamid Khan Bhasani and HS Suhrawardy. These top ones led the Bengalees to become instrumental in the partition of India and in the carving out of that gargantuan territory a foredoomed Pakistan.

Of the three, Maulana Bhasani rose from plebeian roots and was true to his people to the very last, living among the masses till the day of passing and giving voice to their needs as no other man did. He was not only the leftist of the top leaders, but also as abiding a socialist activist as he as a devout Muslim. Mahatma Gandhi's act of proletarianising politics opening the preserve of the zamindars and other high people to the hapless millions, did not have opportunity to influence the lives of Bengali Muslims. It had to wait for the Maulana to come over from Assam and found the Awami League.

Moulana Bhasani was not quite the fellow traveller next door. At a time when all brands of leftists would not even imagine of Pakistan coming to any harm, not to speak of physical dismemberment, the unique Maulana very unequivocally bade Pakistan a farewell Assalamu Alaikum if it failed to mend its pernicious colonial ways. That was in 1957. And in 1969 his was a pivotal role in shaping the Great Mass Uprising, the movement that finally decided Sheikh Mujibur Rahman on the politics of the Bengali people's independence.

Demostheues we know by name only — the man who roused Greeks against the Macedonian invader Philip — through oratory alone. We did not miss much for we have heard Maulana Bhasani electrifying the Bengalee masses against Pakistani oppression and exploitation. Although he himself did not go the whole hog in championing Bengali nationalism, it is difficult to imagine Sheikh Mujib graduating into Bangabandhu under the influence of Suhrawardy, the aristocrat, alone. It was the Maulana who made all the difference in the political development of this nation right from 1948 to 1972, when he retired for good to his Santosh retreat. We pay our greatest respects to the great leader.

On Eliminating Terrorism

What is terrorism? What kind of people are capable of perpetuating terrorist acts? What is the source of terrorists' power? Answers to these questions must be known in order to eliminate terrorism from our national life, writes Dr Khandakar Quadrat-I-Elahi.

The objective of producing some kind of political result. This definition identifies the nature of terrorist acts as having the following elements: (i) all terrorist acts are crime as they involve the explicit threat or use of violence; (ii) all terrorist activities have some kind of political purpose; and (iii) all terrorist acts are perpetrated by some organised group.

The hallmarks of terrorism, states the Encyclopedia of Sociology, is that all terrorist activities are intended to produce some kind of psychological damage. This means several things. First, the actual victims and the target audience of terrorism may not be the same people and therefore, the connection between the actual victims and the target audience may be remote. Second, the identity of the victims may be secondary or even irrelevant to the terrorists. Finally, it is the motive that differentiates terrorism from all other crimes: the motive of terrorism is political.

WHO ARE CAPABLE OF PERPETUATING TERRORIST ACTS? Since terrorism is a crime, the terrorists must be violating the laws of the society. What are these societal laws?

John Locke, the theoretical architect of modern democracy, says that there are three groups of laws regulating our lives in the society. First, there are divine laws which determine the duty and sin, right and wrong, and good and evil in our personal lives. The second group of laws are those of opinions or reputation. These are by far the greatest in number and are enforced by the mere fact that humans cherish their reputation and do not desire the condemnation of their companions and friends. Finally, what Locke calls the civil laws are those which we all generally understand as laws. These laws are created by the state machinery and determine crime and innocence of the members of the society.

WHAT IS TERRORISM? Terrorism is a slippery term that is used advantageously by different people in order to serve their specific purposes. For example, during the war of liberation, the Pakistani army was a terrorist group to all who were in favour of freedom. But the freedom fighters, nicknamed Indian infiltrators, were terrorists to those who did not want freedom.

For our purpose, however, terrorism may be defined as an act perpetrated by an organised group through the explicit threat or use of violence with

The forces executing these laws are different for the three groups. There are no formal forces or authorities behind the first and the second groups of laws. Personal beliefs and values in religions are the power enforcing the divine laws, while the fear of social censure and/or the desire for social recognition are the motivations enforcing the second group of laws. The civil laws are, however, enforced by the state and the authorities of the state.

What kind of people are capable of breaking laws? We obey laws because disobeying or breaking laws invites punishment. The nature of punishment, however, differs from one group of laws to another because the nature of authority and forces executing them are different. Punishments inflicted for disobeying divine laws are the deprivation from divine blessings and/or severe physical tortures in the lives after death. Social disapproval and banishment are the punishments for not respecting the second group of laws. Finally, the state can perpetrate a horrendous number of physical and financial punishments including death sentences for breaking civil laws.

The first and foremost characteristic required in people to break any or all the three groups of laws is the lack of conscience reflecting the dearth of ethical and moral values. The threat of divine wrath that may befall in this and other worlds can not prevent those people from doing wrong things and/or harming other fellow humans who have little ethical and moral values. They also care very little about social condemnation and/or personal reputation. But the lack of conscience is not enough to break the civil laws as they are enforced by the power and authorities of the state. To break the civil laws, the criminals, terrorists in particular, must have the backing of the forces that can control or defy the power of

the state.

WHAT IS THE SOURCE OF TERRORISTS' POWER? The terrorists, individually or collectively, are not capable of defying the power and forces of the state, and the resistances of their victims. Because all terrorist acts are guided by political motives, the source of terrorists' power is the political parties. Thus, it is our political parties, both in and outside the government, that are behind all sorts of terrorism in our society. In educational institutions, terrorist acts are being perpetuated by students organisations which are directly controlled by political parties. Labour unions are often found connected with terrorist activities occurring in the mills and industries. A careful investigation should reveal that our political parties and/or their leaders some way or other are involved with all sorts of terrorism in our society.

The deduction reached here is not any new information; in fact, people of all walks of lives know quite well the connection of our politicians with the terrorists in our society. But what we perhaps do not realise are the alarming implications and grave consequences of the linkage between terrorism and political parties. First, the paper argues that the only people capable of perpetuating terrorist activities are those who are deficient in moral values. The politicians need the help of these people to achieve their political goals. Thus, our political parties are assembling and organising the people in our society who are lacking conscience.

Second, our political parties are encouraging and propagating terrorism in our society and therefore, destroying all our hopes of transforming our country into a developed and honourable society. To understand this, we should have some knowledge of the Economic Theory of Crime pioneered by the Noble laureate economist

Gary Becker. The theory assumes that a criminal, like all of us, is trying to maximise his earnings by investing his time. But unlike us, his choice problem involves an optimal allocation of time among competing legitimate and illegitimate activities rewarding pecuniary and non-pecuniary returns and bearing consequences. In making the choice, the criminals evaluate the relative costs and benefits available to them. The costs are the probabilities of apprehension, conviction and punishment, and the marginal penalties imposed. The benefits are marginal returns on competing illegal and legal activities as well as the risk of unemployment and initial wealth. The entry into a specific criminal activity is shown to be related inversely to its own deterrence variables and directly to the differential returns in provides.

There may be free entry in the terrorism industry (to use economists' terminology), but the exit is not certainly free. A person may join the terrorist group by his own free will, but he can not quite the group by his own volition, because of the likelihood of severe penalties including death sentence, not only from the state authority, but also from his fellow terrorists. Once a person becomes a terrorist, voluntarily or involuntarily, he may have to pass the rest of his life as a terrorist.

Both the assumption and the prediction of the Theory are acutely relevant and immensely important in our situation. The terrorists (criminals in general), the Theory says, are ordinary people like us trying to maximise their incomes. Their choice to commit crime is being made easier by reducing the deterrence variables and increasing the expected incomes in the face of massive unemployment and low returns from legal activities. Additionally, faced by the choice between becoming unemployed or accept-

ing lower income and amassing large wealth at the risk of fewer and lower penalties for committing crimes, people are being encouraged to join the army of terrorists. Finally, the terrorists usually stick to their groups, as quitting the group is very risky and therefore, the prospects of returning to normal lives are slim.

CONCLUSIONS: We now know what is required to eliminate terrorism from our society: the first and foremost requirement is to uproot the source of power of the terrorists. This in turn requires that all formal linkages between the political parties and the non-political organisations be cleared. Without doing this, terrorism can not be exterminated from our society. What our Home Minister can do at best is forcing the terrorists to go for a hibernation.

Will our political parties come forward to sever their relations with the non-political organisations as an act of performing their responsibilities to the nation? Will our politicians sever all their relations and contacts with the terrorists out of their consciences and awareness of their responsibilities and duties to the nation? I very much doubt it. When in power, our politicians use not only the force of these non-political organisations, but also the forces of the state to stay in the power. (The Awami League promises to make a difference by not using the state forces to its advantage. But it would really make no difference as the system and the forces creating terrorism remain intact. It is just a matter of time for the terrorists to wake up. Politicians in opposition use these non-political organisations to pave their way for the state power. Thus, we can hardly expect that our political parties would voluntarily come forward to sever their linkages with the non-political organisations. It is the public pressure that will make them do it. What we have always known: The mother does not feed the baby unless it cries, is true universally.

The writer is on a visit from the University of Guelph, Canada.

Managing Development Aid in Bangladesh

Needed Greater Accountability and Better Utilisation

Development aid can be wasteful and unable to deliver tangible benefits if its objectives are not clearly specified, management plans are not in place, and workplan details are not established. Harmonisation of the various project activities are vital to the successful utilisation and management of development aid, writes Dr. Syed Saad Andaleeb.

BANGLADESH has been receiving development aid since its inception. However, its development record is disconcerting. After having received substantial aid, the problems of poverty, unemployment, underemployment, food scarcity, malnutrition, poor health, disparities in the distribution of income and related concerns continue to be conspicuous. In effect, development aid appears to have had marginal, if any, impact on the country.

A variety of rationales have been offered to explain these marginal effects. A major weakness is in the management of development aid. For example, according to one report, promising pilot efforts have suffered when extended on a wider scale either because key managerial positions and could not be filled or because of "system overload". Failure was also attributed to deficiencies in utilising appropriate managerial and administrative personnel in the projects. Other studies have indicated that non-achievement of project goals were largely due to weak planning agencies, inappropriate administrative structures, and the inability of the projects to deliver required services.

Lack of supervision, undefined job descriptions, and other managerial problems have also been identified as factors that have encumbered the effective utilisation of aid. By strengthening the managerial component, the utilisation matrix of development aid can be improved.

The management of development aid must begin at the highest policy planning level where national development priorities should determine the type and amount of aid that the country should seek. This calls for aid policy that: a) channels aid flows into priority development areas; b) is based on a negotiated settlement that addresses interests of both parties (donors and recipients). It needs to be recognised that aid and donor interest are often inseparable. c) ensures that the aid can be used (i.e. fits the country's absorptive capacity); d) ensures that there will be long-term gains rather than

marginal short-term (visible) gains only; e) can develop and/or take advantage of local skills; and f) minimises any burden that could accumulate from receiving aid and have far-reaching adverse economic and social consequences.

Only after policy makers are committed to these broad policy perspectives, can they expect positive impact of development aid. A model based on five essential components is proposed for this activity and is outlined for potential use by relevant individuals and groups.

Managing Development Aid

Objective Setting: The starting point for managing development aid is in the establishment of a set of objectives. These must take into account: a) Short-term and long-term goals; b) Goals appropriate to different organisational, programme, or project levels; and c) Goals appropriate to different tasks or functions.

The specification of goals creates a common language by which managers with different tasks in different parts of a programme or project can better understand one another and coordinate their efforts.

The objectives that are set at the different levels of the management hierarchy can be strengthened by applying a criteria represented by the following questions:

- 1. Results-Oriented? (Is the output of the project or task specifically described, preferably in numbers? Can the objectives be seen and verified objectively by others?)
- 2. Degree Specified? (How much is to be achieved in terms of financial targets, physical targets, per cent changes, etc.)
- 3. Time Dependent? (Are deadlines for achieving targets specified?)
- 4. Requirements for Success Identified? (Have the resources, circumstances, and obstacles likely to affect the achievement

of the objectives been identified and assessed?)

5. Related to Other Objectives? (Do the activities and results have a logical place within the hierarchy of objectives?)

6. Commitment of Relevant Managers? (Have responsible managers of the project or task made a commitment in writing to execute the proposed work on time and within the budget?)

A final requirement for setting useful objectives is that of participative iteration. Because writing clear and meaningful objectives cannot usually be accomplished on the first attempt, this procedure should lead to writing a series of increasingly better statements of objectives which should gain increasingly broad approval and commitment of personnel at the various levels. Iteration is also useful in resolving conflicts, identifying and improving weak statements, and finding language that serves differing internal and external needs. It also allows different stakeholders to make explicit their legitimate claims in the programme and strengthens the sense of "ownership" of the participants, creating conditions for them to make potentially valuable contributions.

Developing Management Plans: Many development aid projects lack explicit attention to project management. In other words, vital details are left out in project documents that fail to assign responsibility and ensure accountability. It is important, therefore, that project documents incorporate project organisation charts that name responsible government agencies involved with specific projects and name responsible government officials by title or name. The document must also specify the roles and skills required to achieve project or program goals and name responsible donors or their agents' officials overseeing the

projects. The above measures establish "accountability" for effective, on-time, and on-budget performance. Without defining the management structure in explicit terms, it will be impossible to establish project management procedures that facilitate effective implementation and control of the required project activities. In the early stages of developing the management plans, it may be difficult to identify and name specific persons with defined responsibilities. This is all the more reason to engage in the process of identifying key persons from the very beginning.

The management plan should also indicate how the project will seek assistance from persons, groups, or organisations outside the proposed project organisation. Finally, it should indicate how the project will be kept on schedule in the event of major changes in project organisation (e.g., retirement or transfer of key project staff).

Developing the Workplan: The third step involves the development of a workplan. This is a schedule of activities that should reflect immediate or short-term objectives (i.e., monthly target or annual project plans), the timing of the different critical activities, the outputs, and persons, groups, or individuals responsible for the activities to achieve the immediate or short-term objectives which, in turn, will be instrumental in realising the long-term objectives. The workplan should be relatively detailed for the foreseeable, early tasks of a long project. It may also define later tasks generally but still define specific points in the project when it will become possible and reasonable to translate general plans into specific plans.

Specifically, project activities should be grouped into logical and manageable phases. Each phase should begin with a discrete task dedicated to de-

tailed work planning, leading to a series of detailed steps, and each phase should end with a small but discrete step dedicated to management review. Work plans should also be amenable to periodic re-planning to respond to changing conditions in the economic, social and political environment. In the final step, a bar-chart should be drawn on a weekly or monthly time scale as a visual aid to monitoring project activity schedules and to determine whether the timing of each activity conflicts with others.

Developing the Financial Plan: The activities in the workplan should serve as the basis for budgeting. To carry out each activity requires the coordination of men, materials, machines, and moment (time) which can then be translated into money (the budget) terms. The overall project budget should be estimated from each activity in the workplan and may be categorised under personnel, training, equipment, subcontract, etc.

The project plans should identify and justify all the different sponsored inputs which are required for achieving the immediate objectives of the project. Without proper and realistic justification, the project approval may be delayed because the availability of funds is, not automatic as soon as a project document is submitted. All requested inputs must be logically justified so that they can serve as strong negotiating points. This would also help avoid unnecessary and time-consuming adjustments by the donors and aid agencies.

Developing Future Plans and Related Activities: This step should be used to suggest possible continuation of several activities at the end of the planned project. It must be indicated whether such activities will be self-sustaining or will need any assistance to maintain continuity. This will make

the sponsoring organisation aware of the need for further support if the proposed project produces successful results and help in allocation of funds in future.

This step must also indicate how the outputs of the project would be put to use. For instance, if there is a training component, it must be specified how the trainees will be used or where they will be placed after they have completed their training. Unless this is done, the entire purpose of training may be unfulfilled. For equipment obtained, specific details of where and how they would be used should be included. Thus, the future plans should bring together the various project components and outputs together in building a future perspective.

Conclusions: Development aid can be wasteful and unable to deliver tangible benefits if its objectives are not clearly specified, management plans are not in place, and workplan details are not established. The financial plans and future anticipated projects must also be linked to these activities. Clearly, harmonisation of the various project activities are vital to the successful utilisation and management of development aid. Tasks within projects must be coordinated by the task leaders. Individual projects, then, have to be harmonised at the next higher (Directorate or Agency) level. The task of coordinating the projects of various directorates and agencies at the Ministerial level becomes more complex. In the final analysis, the highest planning body (Bangladesh Planning Commission) must synchronise and orchestrate the programme of different Ministries to gain synergy and achieve national goals. At each level, if the proposed development model is adopted, development aid is likely to contribute better to the country's development goals.

The writer is an Associate Professor at the Pennsylvania State University, Erie. He is presently teaching at Independent University, Bangladesh during a sabbatical leave of absence.

To the Editor...

Absent-minded?

Sir, Thank you for publishing a news item on allotment of plots in Khilgaon area of Dhaka city (DS, 5.11.96). We were shocked to learn that Prof Badruddoza Chowdhury and his brother were allotted a number of plots. I remember that Prof Chowdhury was allotted a plot in Gulshan area several years ago. We also know about his huge house on the city's Outer Circular Road, near Maghbazar. What we don't know yet is how many other houses and plots he and his family own in Dhaka city. We, however, know that a person cannot apply for take possession of a Rajuk plot if he/she already owns one within the Dhaka city. We wonder how it happened that someone of Prof Chowdhury's stature could quietly take delivery of the plots? Was he absent minded

when he applied for those plots? Or someone else applied on his behalf which he was not aware of?

N R Chowdhury Uttara, Dhaka

What a fine story to tell!

Sir, It was heartening to read about Boy Scouts and Girl Guides getting involved in community service — making Dhaka cleaner. Many thanks to our thoughtful young folks and their leaders. Scouting is a training for good citizenship indeed.

Scouts and Guides do not expect any reward for their services. They are always ready to "lend a hand". They need not be given any badge for their noble job by the Mayor — the city fa-

ther. Scouts have their own award system which they obtain in recognition of their services to the community they live in or fellow human beings.

Just thanks from their elders will be enough or the best reward will be if the people start keeping their surroundings cleaner as requested by them.

One thing keeps coming to my mind again and again, ever since these young folks started "Clean Dhaka, Save Dhaka" campaign. That is, when these boys and girls will grow up, they will have a nice story to narrate to their kids. The story will be something like this: "Look we had to clean streets when we were young even though there was a full-fledged municipal squad, responsible for keeping the city free from garbage and rubbish, consisting thousands of sweepers and sanitary in-

spectors to supervise their jobs. And you know one day the Mayor himself came out to see us doing 'his people's' job and patted us very affectionately. The newspapers were full of praise for us and recommended badges for our wonderful service."

What a fine story to tell!

Siddiq Taufiq 5-J Atashi Apartments 109, Elephant Road, Baramogbazar Dhaka

Stock market

Sir, The Dhaka Stock Exchange (DSE) area is totally possessed by brokers of shares and debentures. It is totally impossible to enter into DSE building located at 9-F Motijheel Commercial Area where

all the listed brokers of DSE have offices. Thus the owners of shares and debentures are in great difficulty in respect of disposal of shares and debentures.

Securities and Exchange Commission (SEC) continues to warn the general public in respect of purchase or sell of securities through wayside unauthorised dealers. Under the above facts let SEC devise some temporary means so that one can transact shares through agents of DSE brokers located at many places or through banks or other financial institution — be it public or private. Let SEC bail out the small investors!

Ahmedul Alam 114/Elphat Road Dhaka-1205

Token relief

Sir, The devastating flood in the neighbourhood of Dhaka has caused a large-scale destruction of both human lives and at the same time a wholesale destruction of crops, livestock and homesteads. Millions are affected directly or indirectly.

The government of Bangladesh should send at least a team of doctors to the neighbouring country as they have always extended hands of co-operation whenever this country faced natural calamities.

It is true that Indian government did not ask for international assistance but as a neighbour it is our moral obligation to come to the aid of the neighbour at this time of calamity.

Al-Haj SM Khalid Chowdhury Dhaka