

America's Post-Gulf War Gulf Policy

The end of the Cold War already eliminated a major strategic concern for the US which no longer had to fear Soviet efforts to gain a foothold in the Gulf

Patch-work on Campus

Dhaka University authorities have decided to flush out ineligible residents of most of the male dormitories by tomorrow in order to ensure their occupation by bonafide students of the institution.

While the decision to leave three female dormitories out of this purge plan is understandable, the one to keep Surya Sen Hall — the apple of discord between JCD and BCL in their highly improper and unethical tussle to establish supremacy on the campus through a vicious grip on the halls of residence — is a questionable one.

The latest trouble-shooting bid of the DU authorities deserves to be wished success so long it is deemed as a beginning of a long and arduous process to uproot the causes of trouble. It cannot be allowed to be forgotten as an end in itself.

Professor Golam Ali Fakir is again in the news. His term as Vice-Chancellor of Khulna University expired and he saw no reason to wait for his reliever to come.

Better Avoided

Times are such that a matter-of-course incident which should have passed without notice seems to have stirred up academic commotion strong enough to send waves to Dhaka.

Setting logic aside, it is a fact that Dr Fakir's has not been the wisest of actions. So much so this has been taken up by the leader of the Opposition to open a new barrage against politicisation of the university by the AL government.

Elevating Achievements

Marlene Ottey, the legendary sprinter from Jamaica about whom we had written in these columns out of unbounded appreciation for her athletic quality and Robert Bruce-like perseverance, was beaten at the Athens World Athletic Championship on Friday by, incredibly, Susanthika Jayasinghe, a 25-year-old athlete from Sri Lanka.

A similar kind of a sense of elevation was felt by readers of the morning Press on Sunday. Thirty Bangladesh police officials were awarded the United Nations Medal for meritorious service with the UN peacekeeping mission in Bosnia-Herzegovina.

The medals have been well-earned. Nation is the name of an idea, in most cases this is an abstraction. Our performance in Bosnia-Herzegovina and its international recognition are among things that concretise a nation.

THE world's backwater till about early '60s the Gulf region of the Middle East shot into prominence almost overnight and gradually occupied a position of importance second only to that of the central theatre of original Cold War — Europe.

The western interests in the region first by the British date back to early nineteenth century although the US involvement in the Gulf is a recent phenomenon. During the heyday of Pax Britannica, the entire region remained under British tutelage.

area to her allies in the region. For the purpose she helped developing regional influential who would eventually turn into the US surrogate to serve her interests.

In less than a decade the twin pillar of security collapsed with the Iranian revolution in 1978-79 as was the fate of Baghdad Pact when in 1958 monarchy was overthrown in Iraq, then the closest of the US allies in the Arab world.

not be overlooked. But even as the American military role in the Gulf became more direct, the Reagan and Bush administrations considered Iran and Iraq as the key strategic players.

Iraq's defeat in Desert Storm made a major turnaround in US policy in the Gulf. This is not without a reason although its wisdom is questioned even in the US itself.

the US aims at isolating both the countries regionally, cutting them off from the world economic and trading system, and encouraging a regime change in Iraq. It has strongly supported the continuation of UN sanctions against Iraq and made efforts to persuade Europe, Russia and Japan to deny Iran's access to international capital and arms markets.

On May 18, 1993 the special assistant to President Clinton

tries not to engage in military transactions or normal commercial relations with Tehran.

While the idea of containing both Iran and Iraq has a face geopolitical appeal it is fraught with difficulties. Two of the America's closest allies in the region, Egypt and Turkey are already calling for easing of sanctions on Iraq. The regime change in Iraq, it is feared, would entail the disintegration of Iraq, given the country's demographic dispensation.

Dual containment places a substantial political burden on the Gulf monarchies. As Iran and Iraq rebuild their militaries the deterrent aspect of the policies requires a continued and expanding American presence in the Gulf.

American military profile in these countries the greater the risk that it would become a lightning rod for domestic discontent. Moreover, there are some risks inherent in the coupling of the US approach to Iran and Iraq. To the extent they are pressured they may be driven together in their efforts to resist the West.

Also, a Vietnam syndrome already seems to have been in the offing. The Carter doctrine of 1980 formally committed the US to preventing any 'hostile power' from dominating the area.

Although the context has by now thoroughly changed the nearly contemporaneous events of that time i.e. the Iranian revolution, the Soviet invasion of Afghanistan and doubling of world oil prices between 1979-81 led the US to be significantly and inextricably drawn in Gulf affairs.



PERSPECTIVES by Brig (Rtd) M Abdul Hafiz

Cold War already eliminated a major strategic concern for the US which no longer had to fear Soviet efforts to gain a foothold in the Gulf.

for Near East Affairs at the National Security Council outlined the dual containment. He said that the US would no longer play the game of balancing Iran against Iraq.

Protesting Zionist Sacrilege in Bangladeshi Style!

by Kazi Alauddin Ahmed

Scanning the whole 'hartal' scenario one can easily conclude that it was just a pretext to choose the sacrilege of our Prophet (peace be on him) and of the holy Quran, for an issue.

THE citizens of Dhaka metropolises in particular and the people at large all over the country were thrown into a world of confusion by the callers of hartal on last 15th July, 1997 because of two different time schedules.

Against such a highly controversial and provocative hartal called by two identical platforms, loud cries of vehement protest were heard and observed from hundreds of thousands 'musullis' supposed to be the dihard followers of the Holy Quran and Sunnah.

BNP used to be very vocal against hartal when in power. Its Chairperson in particular, fiddled with her vocabulary to castigate the proponents of hartal.

The 'innovative' hartal of the extremists had its impact on public property. Prior to it police identified 10-12 hoodlums around Begun Zia who were identified as members of the so-called Juba Command of the Freedom Party.

It may be recalled that a lunatic woman in the occupied West Bank belonging to the Jewish community had affixed a poster on the wall portraying our Prophet (peace be upon him) and defiling the holy Quran.

In spite of the resolution the Jamaat declared a half-day hartal and that too surmamed 'hartal of Muhammad' (peace be upon him).

of freedom fighters within who were compelled by Begun Zia to swallow many a bitter pills. Some dailies have alluded to the expressed reactions of a few unarmed old guards who were reported to have registered their protest with the high command against party's support to Jamaat's hartal.

Hartal of the kind that we in Bangladesh had, was not observed anywhere in the Islamic world, not even in Pakistan, Libya, Saudi Arabia, Malaysia, Indonesia, the entire Arab world and Middle East.

National Mosque, proceed in procession in hundreds of thousands, to Suhrawardy Udayan, demolish the pulpit of Sikha Chirantan and lay foundation of a mosque there.

Scanning the whole 'hartal' scenario one can easily conclude that it was just a pretext to choose the sacrilege of our Prophet (peace be on him) and of the holy Quran, for an issue.

Chief Guest but left the place without giving his address due to the pandemonium created by a group of hoodlums in the guise of musullis.

It is unthinkable that the whole administrative machinery specifically assigned to ensure full security to the Head of State failed so miserably in taking any preemptive action against the probable trouble-mongers.

Anyway, this is a reality in Bangladesh politics and we have to live with it!

OPINION Too Much Paper Work

Alif Zabr

The US-based Centre for International Private Enterprises (CIPE) has come to the conclusion that the Bangladesh government intervention in the economy is still high.

In the emerging nations, many paradoxes are practised. In a country where 70 per cent are illiterate, the remaining 30 per cent consume writing paper many times more than the number of users actually need.

Looking at the government administrative machinery, it is known to all that there is too much paper work in the government offices, because there is too much control.

But we are struck up with the inertia of the flywheel, or the 'flywheel effect'. The bigger and heavier the (bureaucratic) wheel, the more difficult it is to change its current speed.

reduced, and the speed or revolution increased. This sounds contradictory, but it is easier to grasp if the power to the hub is increased.

There are other ways. Process lesser papers. That means less input, and less day-to-day 'control'.

At present, one issue/paper/input is passed through too many officers or sections; and there are too many papers (input) sent to the ministries for approval, sanction or clearance.

The Local Government draft set-up is said to have been finalized for presentation at the Jatiya Sangsad, to be followed by elections to the local tiers.

The bureaucracy may be allowed to indulge in the latest fashion of aerobics, and look lean, slim and smart.

Devaluation of the other sector won't help. The remedy is known. Who will bell the super cat?

To the Editor...

It's a Shah, not a Larsons

Sir, In July 25th's edition of the DS, there was a front-page news titled, 'India storms into final.' It was continued on the last page. It had a picture with it which had a caption: 'Bangladesh batsman Athar Ali Khan runs the ball down to third man during yesterday's Asia Cup tournament match against India in Colombo.'

There is something more that proves it. The man in the picture is using a 'Shah' bat. We all know that Bulbul plays with a 'Shah' bat while Athar Ali uses a 'Larsons'. So, the man in that picture is definitely not Athar Ali.

Civil servants for the future

Sir, Civil servants are the most important incumbents of any government. They can be compared with the blood running in the government's physique.

Besides, preparation for the 21st century is an important agenda of the present government. Government in the meantime has announced it within and outside of the

country. But it seems contradictory to me when I see the 55 per cent of the civil servants is manned by sub-standard people.

According to this agreement, all the privileges that Bangladesh enjoys now will be withdrawn after the year 2004. 'Survival of the fittest,' will be the main philosophy of that world.

Caring for commoners

Sir, It is estimated that over 80 per cent our revenue and development budget is spent on pay and allowances of our government servants.

forces and police, running our white elephants — Bangladesh Secretariat, Prime Minister's Secretariat, Ministry of Foreign Affairs, maintaining our Jatiya Sangsad and also on account of government transports, POL, repair and maintenance of the vehicles, payment of telephone bills, rent of accommodation for government servants, tours of ministers and bureaucrats abroad, expenses on holding state functions, feasts and festivals.

Only a petty sum of money is spent economically for the welfare of the people and alleviation of poverty. It appears that the government servants and the rest others concerned are all in all in the country and the common people don't have the land under their feet.

Following the government decision to observe 2-day weekly holiday, it has emerged that there are two classes of people in our country i.e., the 'ruling' — privileged class and the 'ruled' — unprivileged class.

The shattered conscience of the society

Sir, We have read in details the extracts of the judgement of

Seema murder case. What most people, including the press, seem to forget to emphasise is that Seema was just not raped but also subsequently murdered, and that too, while in official custody!

Now the people are demanding and the authorities have decided to reopen the case, appeal to the higher court etc. But what about all those who connived at rape and murder and tried to convince anyone?

The government has to publicly and believably proceed against these culprits to restore its own image, ensure exemplary punishment for such heinous crimes so that none can dare repeat such act.

Were the authorities not aware of the drama being staged in the name of justice?

5 Bankhaban Mirto Road Dhaka