

# Who is Going to Reform the UN, Anyway?

by Ekram Kabir

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tions at 25 per cent (down from the current 33 per cent) of the total UN budget. The Washington Post reported that the UN regular budget to 20 per cent, down from the current 25 per cent. The secretary-general has suggested the Assembly a shift to a process of "budgeting for results" under which it would specify the results it expects within a specific budget. Then there will be agenda for achieving greater goals.

Initially, Annan's reform programme failed to meet US demands. And now, a few months later, the secretary-general is receiving eulogy by the US President. And reports revealed that, at a September 19 briefing at the State Department, US Secretary of State Madeleine Albright emphasised, in dictating terms, that the US Congress was willing to pay the nearly \$1 billion America owes the UN if the world body adopted financial and management reforms.

But some Americans have argued that in fact the UN owes the US billions of dollars. These are based on the assertion that the UN should pay the US for all the peacekeeping activities that are authorised under UNSC resolutions. The US credits itself for contributions to all formal UN peacekeeping operations.

The Clinton Administration is determined, suggest wire agencies, to work with the US Congress to meet the US's financial obligations to the UN and, simultaneously, wants to ensure that the UN meets its obligations to the US. And, reportedly, legislation nearing completion that would allow the US to pay its arrears in exchange for a strong, effective UN. The US interest is clear when Albright said: "The US needs the UN, and the UN needs the US." (Indeed, the secretary-general has a very tough job ahead.)

America's iron lady went further as saying: "Our crusade for reform is not just an effort to save money, but an effort to focus the UN's limited resources on the priorities we share."

Question is: why is the reform

has to be a "crusade" unless there's an impending setback for America at the international level?

Another "core mission" of the UN, Clinton said, "must be to defend and extend universal human rights" and to "help democracy's remarkable gains endure." "Fifty years ago," he reminded, "the UN's Universal Declaration of Human Rights stated the international community's conviction that people everywhere have the right to be treated with dignity, to give voice to their opinions, to choose their leaders; that these rights are universal — not American rights, not western rights, not rights for the developed world only, but rights inherent in the humanity of people everywhere."

This idea sounds like an eye-wash, for what is most significant about America's legislation is that it recognises its abiding interest in a strong, effective UN. Given a choice between giving up on the UN and making US investment work, Congress is choosing the responsible course. It is choosing to keep America engaged more than ever before which is an expression of American pragmatism. According to the US, it is aimed to keep UN inspectors in North Korea and Iraq so that it can prevent those nations from building weapons of mass destruction, to keep UN war crimes prosecutors on the job so that it can deter genocide and hold killers accountable, to keep peacekeepers in some of the most strife-torn places where America needs them to go alone, and in favour of programmes that immunise children and prevent the spread of diseases.

With Annan's far-reaching programme, supported by almost all the member-states, the world may be off to a promising start. For the first time in history, according to slap-bang West, more than half the people represented in the UNGA freely choose their own governments. Free markets are growing, spreading individual opportunity and increasing national

well-being. Early in the 21st century, more than 20 of the Assembly's members may be able to lift themselves from the ranks of low-income nations. The UN must play a leading role in this effort, filling in the fault lines. The pivot it has pursued during its first half-century should be just as relevant during the next half-century: the pursuit of peace and security, promoting human rights, and moving people from poverty to dignity and prosperity through sustainable development.

The US is asking the UN to be prepared to respond, not only by setting standards but by implementing them. To deter abuses, US will strengthen the UN's field operations and early warning systems. To strengthen democratic institutions, the 'best guarantor of human rights', America intends to pursue programmes to help new legal, parliamentary and electoral institutions get off the ground. To punish those (Lybians and Iraqis) responsible for crimes against humanity and to promote justice so that peace endures, it must maintain its strong support for the UN's war crime tribunals and truth commissions.

But progress perhaps is not yet everyone's partner. Tens of millions lack the education, the training, the skills they need to make the most of their natural abilities. The UN has a special responsibility to make sure that as the global economy creates greater wealth, it does not widen the growing disparities between the 'haves' and the 'have-nots', or threaten the global environment.

The reforms will be nothing Earth-shattering, because the point of US foreign policy is to keep the Earth from shattering, since it has become the global policeman after the Soviet demise. This will simply be the opportunity of doing America's business, what they call bread-and-butter diplomacy. But on the top of everything, the weighty question remaining is whether the developed countries have the vision and the "heart" necessary to imagine a future — by not making the developing their scapegoats — that is truly different from the past.

At the dawn of a new century, apparently so full of hope, but frowning with peril, more than ever the world needs a "more-than-a-definite" body to ensure that a world where people can work with shared problems and take action to confront them, where nations with goodwill can join in the struggle for prosperity, and shape together a future of progress.

## BANGABANDHU MURDER CASE

### Verbatim Text of Cross Examination of Twenty-fifth and Twenty-sixth Prosecution Witnesses

Continued from yesterday

Cross-examination of the 25th prosecution witness in Bangabandhu murder case, Naik (retd) M Yasin, began when the court resumed on Tuesday.

Following are excerpts from examination by advocate Khan Saifur Rahman defence counsel for accused Lt Col (dismissed) Syed Farooqur Rahman:

Q: On which point of the radio station you discharged your duty?

A: At a sentry post in the north-eastern corner of the radio station.

Q: Did you never go to Magh-bazar area?

A: No, I never went to Magh-bazar.

Q: You took ammunition from your regiment armoury as part of your preparation for going to Serniabat's house.

A: This is not true.

Q: Did you return the two chargers of ammunition?

A: I returned the chargers along with all the ammunition that I took.

Q: By signing on register?

A: My ammunition was deposited against my name. We were not to sign while depositing ammunition... we had to sign while receiving.

Q: Did you tell anyone of your colleagues or relatives or law enforcing agencies that you took part in closing formation operation at Serniabat's house?

A: I told the IO of the case.

Q: Was the IO first person to whom you said it?

A: Yes.

Q: Did you come to the IO voluntarily?

A: No, I was informed by local police.

Q: Did you ask the IO how he was informed of you?

A: No.

Q: You were an accomplice in killing of Serniabat.

A: This is not true.

Q: Or, you were the killer.

A: This is also not true.

Q: Who did control the Serniabat's house after the incident — police or military?

A: This is not known to me.

Q: Was the notice of August 14 night parade hung on board?

A: I can't recall.

Q: Aminur Rahman (PW-24) was from which battery of your regiment?

A: Headquarters Battery.

Q: You — Artillery and Lancer personnel — didn't assemble together before the incident. You met together in the town law and order.

A: This is not true.

Q: Did you come to know that martial law had been imposed

while you were at the radio station?

A: I can't recall.

Q: You are a self-confessed killer of Serniabat through your deposition made for Bangabandhu murder case.

A: Not true.

Examination by advocate Sharfuddin Mukul, defence lawyer for accused former state minister Taheruddin Thakur:

Q: How many days did you go to CID office?

A: Two days. First, after receiving a notice for giving statement and second time also receiving a notice before coming to the court.

Q: Notice from this court?

A: Yes.

Q: In which case did you make your statement?

A: Bangabandhu murder case.

Q: Did you not make a statement in any other case?

A: No.

Q: Can you say the name of the road and house number of official residence of Serniabat?

A: No, I don't know.

Q: Were you arrested for the killing of Serniabat?

A: No.

Q: Do you know whether you are an accused in that case?

A: I am not an accused.

Q: The killing incident at Serniabat's house is fabricated. You have been taught to say so.

A: This is not true.

Q: Was there any other house adjacent to Serniabat's residence?

A: I don't know.

Twenty-sixth Prosecution Witness

Excerpts from cross-examination of PW 26, Naik (retd) Jamrul Islam, by advocate Gazi Zillur Rahman, state defence counsel for accused Khandakar Abdul Rashid:

Q: How many personnel did discharge their duty at the store?

A: The key was kept at the Quarters Guard. I kept the key on that day at the order of CO Major Khandakar Abdul Rashid.

Q: Was the system of keeping the key at the Quarters Guard a written one?

A: I took the key after writing on register and also deposited it after writing.

Q: It was your duty to give ammunition to anyone with written issuance.

A: One had to receive ammunition from the store with written issuance.

Q: You were responsible for general mismanagement of the store.

A: Yes.

Q: Rashid saheb became CO of 2 Field Artillery after returning from India in March, 1975.

A: I don't know he became CO after returning from where.

Q: But you told the IO that he became CO after returning from India.

A: I didn't. I told him Rashid saheb became CO in March, 1975.

Q: Were you informed that night parade takes place on every second Thursday of a month.

A: I depended on CO. If he wished, the night parade took place on weekly, fortnightly or monthly basis.

Q: Were there arms in the store?

A: Yes.

Q: Yes, but I was not responsible for that day. All responsibilities are of CO Major Khandakar Abdul Rashid.

Q: The order for distributing ammunition usually came through Quarters Master.

A: Yes, on that night Quarters Master Captain Jahangir saheb himself was present. CO saheb was also there.

Q: Did you write on register while receiving order for distributing ammunition?

A: Yes.

Q: CO saheb didn't make such order directly.

A: Not before. He came on August 14, 1975.

Q: Were you in uniform while discharging duty at the store?

A: We had always to wear uniform during duty.

Q: Had you to wear uniform while remaining stand-by in the unit line.

A: Yes.

Q: And it included your duty.

A: Yes.

Q: There is no scope of sleeping in duty.

A: Sleeping is possible in rotation.

Q: You were in charge of the store alone. So, there was no scope of taking rest or going to sleep.

A: The person who is in charge of the store has no shifting duty.

Q: You didn't tell the IO that soldiers accompanying Rashid took away ammunition at his order.

A: I told him.

Q: He didn't order you to keep the key.

A: This is not true.

Q: You went on voluntary retirement as you could not make tally of the ammunition.

A: Your statement is not correct.

Examination by advocate Khan Saifur Rahman, defence counsel for accused Lt Col (dismissed) Syed Farooqur Rahman:

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