Founder-Editor: Late S. M. Ali

Dhaka Wednesday, February 25, 1998

## **World Opinion Triumphs**

Kofi Annan has succeeded in his difficult mission to Baghdad giving a lie to the doubting Thomases. More important, he has given the whole world a sigh of relief. The sense of deliverance is somewhat reminiscent of Khruschev's turning away from the Bay of Pigs where Kennedy had laid his threatening cordon off the coasts of Cuba. Only that this is a one-superpower era and the slanging match has been between military unequals.

It is diplomacy and not a military strike that has, thank God, secured unrestricted access to Iraqi sites suspected to be where the banned weapons or the materials for them are hidden. Even the two-month Iraqi deadline for completion of inspections has been replaced by such an openended, accommodative phrase like "within a reasonable period of time".

The diplomatic triumph over the forces of confrontation has come about not by any miracle but as the end-result of a processive development doggedly opposed to the use of force in resolving the crisis over Iraq. Most of the US' former allies in the Operation Desert Storm, both European and Arab, could not agree on a military solution and the world opinion was entirely in favour of a peaceful resolution of the dispute, including we suspect, the US public opinion. The controversy by its very nature was not inter-state, it was wholly international in character. So, when Kofi Annan delivered his master stroke of diplomacy at the doorsteps of Saddam he knew he had the support of many important countries and the moral power of world public opinion behind him. While giving Kofi Annan the credit for his spearheading the diplomatic effort through the words of caution, including some used by the British Foreign Secretary Robin Cook, we have a great satisfaction in noting the fulfilment of a consultative process.

We regard Kofi Annan's success as a comprehensive victory for the whole UN system. The prestige and efficacy of the UN appear in better light.

In an initial reaction to the agreement signed by the UN Secretary General Annan with the Iraqi Deputy Prime Minister Tariq Aziz, president Clinton has vowed to keep his forces in the Gulf intact and the threat of a military strike up his sleeves till such time as Iraq has not fully complied with the UNSC resolutions. We only wish the US were equally serious in getting Israel to abide by all the UN resolutions relating to the Palestinians.

### Again an Unhealthful Patch

Mayor Hanif had one clear mandate, clearest among many. To eliminate the mosquito menace. Hanif is more than an honourable man. But what can he say about this mandate? Save that he has failed. Not only his constituency but himself too. The mosquitoes are here and has been on a particularly numerous and ferocious spell. Traders in insecticides and mosquito-nets will, for sure, bless him but that may not ease his mayoral tenure or a re-election to mayoralty. Dhaka is now back into that notorious historical patch when this swampy city was thoroughly unhealthful mainly because of its mosquitoes. Which led Mr Mitford, Collector of Dhaka in the mid-nineteenth century, to donate his life's savings — some 19 lakh taka — to build the hospital that now bears his name. Hanif may well be reminded of another incredible piece of history. The Sunderbans was once a thriving crowded place, much of it urbanised. That it has long become the sylvan resort of that matchless combination of beauty and the beast, power and grace is due wholly to malaria caused by the mosquito. The Mayor certainly would not like Dhaka to be consigned to that fate.

One report claims that the stock of the chemical agent DCC uses to kill flying mosquitoes has long run out. And the mosquitoes are making the most of the reprieve. The DCC claim that shipments of the stuff were awaiting release at the Chittagong port has been found to be outright false.

Another report claims that the agents DCC were so long using in its operation against flying mosquitoes were quite ineffective. Experiments done in a sealed room did not show more than 10 per cent death after saturation use of that chemical. It is understood that this all relates to the stuff used in aerial spray. What about spraying the breeding grounds strewn so generously all over Dhaka? While the right chemical is found and the stock rises to capacity with the effective stuff, why not the manual sprayworkers get busy destroying the breeding grounds?

We cannot, for our life, imagine Hanif enmeshed by the mosquito problem without hitting a way out for the whole of his mayoral term. He must rid us all of this silly problem and dangerous vermin.

### Encouraging

We welcome the government approval of the financing institution proposed by the Finance Ministry to increase employment opportunity among the poor. Only that the idea has been hit upon rather belatedly. We have been goading country's policy makers for long to have something established to this effect. We now hope the government would make sure the project does not become a casualty of any bureaucratic tangle.

While the government thrashes out the details of the project and synchronises it with country's economic policy we would like it consider a few relevant aspects. What will be the operational focus of the proposed Self Employment Bank? Will it only give credit? Lending money is a good idea to help people to be on their feet, but the government should also give active consideration to the notion of developing entrepreneurial skills of the educated youths. Half the battle against poverty is won if and when we turn the educated unemployed youths into a skilled work force. Improvement in the economic sector will have spain-offs in other areas of our consciousness. Lot of our social prob-

lems will be automatically taken care of. In this respect we would like to remind the government of an idea we had floated earlier in this column. Establish a youth bank. A bank that will exclusively deal with the unemployed young men who are full of ideas and enterprise but shackled only by their poor economic condition. The Youth Bank will address this constrained mass.

# Fresh Wind in the Aegean

Due to the events surrounding Iraq and US preparation for a massive strike, other events have a hard time finding space in the media. Yet the situation surrounding the Aegean deserves attention of the international community.

Even with the 6-mile limit Turkey has little room for manoeuver and should this be extended to the 12-mile limit, Turkey would be boxed inside the Aegean sea. An examination of the map would make the situation very clear. At present numerous islands and rocks are clearly visible from the coast of either country and should it be changed to 12 miles they would nearly gaze each other. The Aegean is a semi-enclosed sea located between the Turkish and Greek mainlands and is dotted by thousands of islands, islets and rocks. Six miles breadth of territorial waters is. therefore, directly related to the preservation of vital and legitimate interests of Turkey and Greece in the Aegean and as such constitutes the core of the

HE Aegean sea divided

Greece, is marked more by

tension between these two

neighbours than by concil-

iation. It has been theatre of

many conflicts and the two

countries have come perilously

close to blows. In this context a

latest attempt by the Turkish

Foreign Minister for talks on

the subject with the Greek For-

eign Ministry deserves careful

territorial waters is generally

accepted as a guiding principle.

exceptions are acknowledged

due to peculiar local circum-

stances, mainly of geography.

Between Turkey and Greece 6-

mile territorial limit has been

recognised mutually by the Lau-

sanne Agreement of 1923.

Greece holds approximately

43.5 per cent of the Aegean sea.

Turkey 7.5 per cent and the re-

maining 49 per cent is high

seas. Should the territorial sea

be extended to 12 miles as often

advocated by Greece, the Greek

territorial limit would extend

to 71.5 per cent and Turkey's to

8.7 per cent. The area of the

high seas would reduce to 19.7

until now, he seemed poised to

do something very un-

intelligent. As a fellow Rhodes

Scholar, and as someone who

voted for Clinton in the Presi-

dential elections of 1992 and

1996 and wishes him well, I be-

seech the President not to be

rash against Iraq. That could

begin the downward spiral of

what has so far been a stellar

ways led, and has been led by

public opinion. On Iraq, he is

way out of whack! Propelled by,

some say the Israeli lobby in

his administration, President

Clinton now finds himself go-

ing against the mainstream

American public opinion on

Iraq. Imagine his rude awaken-

ing last week when he sent the

three head honchos of his ad-

ministration - Secretary of

State Madeleine Albright, Sec-

retary of Defense William Co-

hen and the National Security

Advisor Samuel Berger - to

"America's heartland", Ohio

State University, to make his

case against Iraq. This effort at

public diplomacy was televised

around the world by CNN. Ac-

cording to ABC television's

news anchor Peter Jennings.

"the Administration took it

had opened the meeting saying.

"We are very pleased to be in

America's heartland." Her

smiles dissolved into a glare

after her opening remarks to

the crowd of 6,000 were

drowned out by students chant-

ing, "One, two, three, four! We

don't want your racist war!'

The students startled the three

top Clinton aides with their

skepticism and hostility to-

wards the Administration's

Administration has the might

and means to attack the Iraqi

state, but does it have the moral

right to attack the Iraqi na-

tion?", one listener asked. Co-

hen's response: "Does Saddam

Hussein have the moral right to

policy. "The American

Secretary of State Albright

right between the eyes."

President Clinton has al-

per cent.

Presidency.

Although 12-mile limit of

examination.

between long time

adversaries Turkey and

problem. With a view to finding a solution to various problems afflicting Turco-Greek relations US Secretary of State Madeleine Albright brought

settlement to every Aegean

Turkish President Suleyman Demirel and Greek Prime Minister Simitis together in Madrid in 1997, during a NATO meeting of the Heads of State and agreed as follows: 1) the two parties reached a convergence of views on a basis for promoting better relations on a) mutual com-

lateral acts on the basis of mutual respect and willingness to avoid conflicts arising from misunderstanding and e) commitment to settle disputes by peaceful means based on mutual consent and without use of force or threat of force.

Through a Note Verbale the



# The Horizon This Week Arshad-uz Zaman

mitment to peace, security and the continuing development of good neighbourly relations; b) respect for the principles of international law and international agreements; c) respect for each other's legitimate vital interests and concern for the Aegean which are of great importance for their security and national sovereignty; d) commitment to refrain from uniTurkish Government on 12 February has drawn the attention of the Greek Government 'to the existence of a set of unresolved questions over the Aegean, the two countries are facing tensions in their relations and this situation could escalate into a serious confrontation.' The Turkish foreign Minister Ismail Cem told the Greek Ambassador 'let's

talk, conciliate and make peace.' Pointing out that the effort originated from the USA. NATO and the EU. Cem stated that their proposal contained the following: 1) jointly identifying the Aegean problems between the two countries; 2) formalizing the Madrid Declaration of 8 July 1997, which was agreed upon by Turkey and Greece with the initiative of the US Secretary of State Madeleine Albright; 3) developing and mutually implementing the 'confidence building measures in the Aegean' with the collaboration of the NATO Secretary General. The Note Verbale concluded with the wish that a high level meeting between the Foreign Ministries take place before the end of March 1998.

Turkey has an ongoing conflict with the Kurdish fighters (PKK) which has been continuing for close to 13 years with no end in sight. Nearly 100,000 members of the armed forces are locked in battle which has

cost more than 15000 lives and destruction on a massive scale. Recently Turkey has sent a large number of her troops across the border in Northern Iraq, safe sanctuary for Kurdish guerillas coming across the border into Turkey. Turkey has taken precautions against the Kurds of Northern Iraq, who are expected to stream into Turkey, should the US strikes into Iraq, as it appears a possibility, given the massive preparation made by the US armed forces with the UK as usual collaborating. Due to the events surround-

ing Iraq and US preparation for a massive strike, other events have a hard time finding space in the media. Yet the situation surrounding the Aegean deserves attention of the international community. Skirmishes and rising of tempers have been frequent phenomenon in the Aegean. In the light of the Madrid Declaration and particularly in the light of the fresh Turkish initiative for talks urgently on the Aegean, it is to be hoped that a positive response will be forthcoming from Greece. This is essential if only to lower the tension in a critical area of the world, which has not received the attention due to it.

### LETTER FROM AMERICA

### "We Don't Want Your Racist War!", American RESIDENT Bill Clinton Students Tell Pesident Clinton is a very intelligent man. Yet, on Iraq, up

Dr. Fakhruddin Ahmed writes from Princeton

The days of western pontification, and the rest of the world saying "Amen" are coming to an end. People are beginning to ask: "How can you demand full compliance with UN resolutions from Iraq, and be satisfied with no compliance from Israel?...

use weapons of mass destruction?" "If we are the superheroes and we are the role model for the rest of the world. what kind of model is that if we are going and bombing Iraq?", lamented another attendee.

Other questions: Q. "..none of Iraq's neighbours feel threatened...the international community is opposed to bombing. If nobody is asking for help. how can you justify further US aggression in the region? " (Albright: "I have talked to the neighbours. They are concerned.") Q. "If push comes to shove and Saddam will not back down, are we willing to send in troops?" (Cohen: "Our men and women who are out there are prepared to do whatever is necessary in order to contain the threat.") Q. "President Carter says 100,000 innocent Iraqi civilians could be killed?" (Albright: "We care more about Iraqi people than Saddam Hussein.") Q. "Why do other members of the Security Council not support military action, other than Great Britain?" (Albright: " All support full implementation of resolutions.") Q. "Six countries in the Middle East have chemical and biological weapons. It is puzzling why it is O.K. for these other countries to have the weapons?" (Albright: "It is a question of whether there is a proclivity to use them.")

The most lively exchange occurred between the Secretary of State Albright and a 22-year old who aid, "What about Indonesia who is slaughtering people in East Timor, and Israel which is slaughtering Palestinians." Albright: There are various examples of things not

right in the world. I am really surprised that people feel the need to defend Saddam Hussein. when we should be trying to eliminate his weapons of mass destruction." The questioner shot back: There needs to be consistent application of US foreign policy. We cannot support people who are committing the same violations because they are political allies. That is not acceptable. We cannot violate UN resolutions when it is not convenient to us."

(Albright: "We do not.") Questioner: "You are not answering my question. Madame Albright!" If Ms. Albright truly cares about the Iraqi people, by stressing that the economic embargo, which does not hurt Saddam personally but kills thousands of Iraqi children daily, remain in force, she has a strange way of showing it!

One questioner summed up the feeling of the world when she addressed Albright, Cohen and Berger and said: "How can these people sleep at night? We are not going to be able to stop Saddam Hussein. We are not going to be able to eliminate his weapons of mass destruction all of them. President Clinton admitted it. All he wants to do, Clinton said, was to send a message to Saddam Hussein. If he wants to send a message, we the people of Columbus and central Ohio and all over America ("and the world", she could have added) will not send messages with the blood of Iraqi men. women and children! If we want to deal with Saddam, we deal with Saddam, not the Iraqi

The following day, the Ad-

ministration sent its Ambassador to the UN. Bill Richardson, to one of the most civilized places in America, the University of Minnesota, to make its case against Iraq. Richardson could not put in a word! The students drowned anything he wanted to say.

Originally, the US Administration was quite unhappy about the UN Secretary-General Kofi Annan's trip to Baghdad. "Kofi, do not jam me, jam Saddam", President Clinton had pleaded with Annan over the phone before he left for Baghdad. The Administration was worried because Annan did not work for the US, and if he struck a deal, it was going to be hard to go against it. Any deal has to be "consistent with the interest of the US". National Security Council Chief Sandy Berger warned rather undiplomatically. Mr. Berger. why do UN resolutions have to be "consistent with the interest of the US?"

With demonstrations against the war taking place in

**OPINION** 

Egypt, Jordan, Palestine, England, Australia and here in the US, the administration was now looking for a fig leaf. Kofi Annan's "deal" with Saddam Hussein seems to have provided it. It is still not absolutely clear what course the Administration will follow next. Nevertheless, it appears that the unnecessary war, which could have put American lives and institutions at risk throughout the world, has been averted for now. "Desert Thunder", the Pentagon's code name for the military action against Iraq, that envisioned four days of continuous 24-hour-bombing of Iraq. is now on hold. Now please, lift the economic sanctions

against the Iraqi people! The days of western pontification, and the rest of the world saying "Amen" are coming to an end. People are beginning to ask: "How can you demand full compliance with UN resolutions from Iraq, and be satisfied with no compliance from Israel? You are ready to obliterate Iraq because they will not

allow you into Presidential palaces, whereas you veto every UN resolution that is mildly critical of Israel for disobeying every UN resolution! Why do the Arabs get threat and force, and Israel gets compassion and

The only people in the US that will now go after President Clinton is the Israeli lobby. In the arithmetic of the Middle East politics, any military hit on any Muslim country is considered a plus for Israel, by the Israeli lobby. They will not take kindly to the fact that Clinton has temporarily denied them a

Expect the Monica Lewinsky case against the President, in which the principles are Jewish, to flare up. I believe that President Clinton made a mistake here. He probably did what Monica Lewinsky claims. He should have admitted his mistake and apologized. Adultery is very common in the US; over 50 per cent of married couples commit it. That is why Clinton's high approval rating remains unaffected by the scandal. Instead of denying everything and taking the moral high road, he should have taken the sinner's low road! Now he is in a real jam. Perhaps the President's definition of "sexual relation" is different from everyone else's. Perhaps he believes that to have a truly "sexual relationship", one has to make the woman pregnant!

### The martial race?

Sir. During his recent visit to Bangladesh, the Prime Minister of Pakistan, Mr Nawaz Sharif had taken courage in both hands to unlock, at the highest level for the first time in 27 years, Pandora's Box on events leading to 1971 which has been for so long a non-issue as far as Pakistan was con-

He was gracious enough to admit a) that the 1970 Election results should have been honoured, b) that those responsible in Pakistan for the 1971 debacle should be punished and c) he pledged to take back his lacs of his countrymen stranded in Bangladesh for over a quarter of a century. A good enough start which could in due course have flowered to a more comprehensive dialogue on specific issues bedeviling relations between the two countries.

This naturally initiated demands in some quarters in Bangladesh (not officially to my knowledge) that a good beginning would be an apology a la Japan and Germany (for what they had done in World

But lo and behold! no sooner was the PM back home, his State Minister for Foreign Affairs came out with an imperious statement that no apology was warranted thereby giving an official rebuff to an unofficial question. Such insolent and high-handed behaviour is typical of the contemptuous, condescending and overbearing character of the "Ugly Punjabi". a prime reason why we finally decided to go our separate ways at the cost of so much innocent blood.

It proves once again that the arrogant and supercilious selfestimation of the "Superior Martial Race" theory is very much alive and well in Pakistan and that even a Prime Minister has to know - tow to this high and mighty frater-

S Sikander Ahmed 682A/12 BACHS Shyamoli, Dhaka.

### Why belittle Bangladesh?

Sir. We are regular listeners/viewers of the BBC World Programme. The attraction mainly being the objective and true depiction of events of the countries in the region.

Unfortunately for some time now, we are observing some clouding of views and discrimination in BBC presentation of news items originating from Bangladesh. For example, recently we had visitors of important personalities like the President of Peru, Prime Minister of Italy, President of South Africa, and Prime Ministers of India and Pakistan. Not only there were scant reference to these important visits, the picturisation that accompanied these were detastefully negative.

Whereas, whenever there is any news item or a non-item on India there is quite a pleasant background and positive picturisation. But for Bangladesh it appears to be finding the worst kind of views and picturisation that can be picked up. May be this has to do with the stick that India quickly uses like declaring BBC representative persona non grata and ousting him/her at the slightest disre-

I hope BBC will be evenhanded in its coverage and not turnish its appeal by such biased reporting and coverage.

Dr Mushtag Ahmed 9/25 Sir Syed Road Mohammadpur, Dhaka.

### "Head I win..."

Sir, I feel inclined to agree with the views expressed by A Citizen (DS, Feb 17) on the socalled farce of AL's distorted propaganda on the hypocritical celebration of "Democracy Killing Day" observed on Feb

False propaganda is a dangerous weapon, rebounding on the perpetrator, and tarnishing the party's image. Another pro-

paganda is the so-called restoration of the voters' right. Half-truth is more dangerous than suppression of facts, and drawing misleading conclusions from facts, and presenting it to the public as gospel

On the other hand, it is conveniently explained informally that the BKSAL 'democratic movement was right and necessary at that time under the situation. Another observation The name of the late Gen Osmani is hardly given credit where and when it is due by the top AL leaders. Let the inside story be placed before the public for judgement.

What sort of democracy is being followed and practised by the political parties in this country - my/our country? The country belongs to 120 people and not to one or more politica parties. I feel distressed pointing out something so obvious.

### Spikes will do justice

Sir, Have you ever noticed how the traffic still manages to continue as if nothing has happened even after the signal has turned red? And the only time the offending vehicles are forced to comply with the regulations is when the opposite traffic cuts them off. This has turned out to be a norm in our fair city. Just the other day, a driver behind me showed his annoyance by honking when I came to a dead stop for a red

Where is the real justice, eh?

May be the authorities should take a look at Iraq. To stop traffic there in MP check posts, there are spike-like gates that come through the road and stays there until the police are satisfied with the papers you are carrying. What a brilliant idea, don't you think?

Masroor Ahmed Deepak Dhaka

# Rights May Not be Right, but ...

Hamida Rahman

The "news analysis" by Mr Nurul Kabir about recent US State Department report on human rights situation in Bangladesh, which was published on 8th February in The Daily Star' is commendable.

I don't want to contradict the US State Department report, whatever our government might say - human rights situations are definitely not right in our country, but the way US Embassy has released it should be protested. How can any foreign mission hold a Press Conference in a public place without the prior permission of the host country? It hurts our sense of dignity.

How can foreigners ignore the protocol in such a way? A big question arises in our mind: who is responsible for this? Definitely it is our political leaders, especially the head of the state. We feel the higher echelons don't maintain the protocol.

We remember how our leaders behaved in recent past when

they had political deadlock (we won't call it political) because they looked like personal quarrel and personality clash, which had no connection with national or country's interest. During that time the foreign diplomats started acting as mediator between them which irritated lots of concerned citizens - and there were lot of reactions in the society.

It was disgraceful, because many of us had to hear the comments of foreign diplomats or their wives, as if they were our saviours. They found the skope to talk like that because they used to be approached by our leaders to solve our problems. Can we think of any country with little bit of self-prestige behave in this way?

Mr Nurul Kabir was right in saying that nationalistic ego of many of us were satisfied when the US Ambassador was summoned by the foreign ministry

to lodge our dissatisfaction about the incident. It was a very correct decision of the government. But they should not say that the report was incorrect, nor the Foreign Secretary should try to defend the government of Sheikh Hasina by giving illogical points. We all know what is what, when a report is made by taking interviews of husbands and from the published news items, it cannot

be hearsay or wrong. The opposition rightly said that the report has partly reflected the human rights abuses. But they should have also mentioned about the US mission's behaviour which is against diplomatic norms. Opposition is a "nationalist" party and this is a point which deals with the dignity and the prestige of a nation. We fail to understand that the country and the people which are the base of our political parties, they always seem to forget them.

It is shameful, sad and re-

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gretful.

# Political Cashing in on CHT Issue

The CHT issue is a decadesold one (actually centuries-old beginning much before the birth of Bangladesh). It has been published recently in the print media that over 30,000 people including both tribal and non-tribal had to die unnatural deaths in the CHT since independence of Bangladesh. Therefore, a complete ceasefire in the CHT was overdue to ensure natural death of people, to contain hostility and to develop

Although every previous regime had both discredits and credits for making the situation more complex in one hand and easing the peace talks on the other, it is the present government that was up and doing and could sign a peace treaty with the PCJSS (Parbatya Chattagram Jana Sanghati Samity) leaders on December 2, '97.

the area as a whole.

I think for lasting peace in the CHT a treaty must he signed between the tribals and the non-tribals living in the region. But at present the 47% Bangalees (non-tribals) are not organised while the 53% tribals are well organized having a militant group. Thus the recently signed treaty must be seen as an INTERIM arrange-

The present Govt. rushed towards signing a treaty and actually did sign a "historic treaty" before implementation of the first "historic treaty"

M A S Molla (Ganges Water Sharing). Did the

Govt. wait to show the people good results of the Ganges Water Treaty and later signed the CHT Treats, both the treaties could perfectly be termed. "Historic ones". But in the present context, the political drumming up of "historic treaties" is simply ridiculous. No political cashing can be have from such treaties.

But what is the opposition doing? The major opposition has been desperately opposing the treat since the last round of talks. After signing, the opposition could find as many as 18 points in the treaty against our national interests and beyond the constitutional provisions! Two of the points have been found repeated apparently and thus the BNP could, perhaps, prepare a 16-point allegations against the treaty (a few are valid ones). The party with some smaller ones are resorting to hartals and blockades defying the people's verdict against such destructive programmes. The only good thing done by the opposition in the CHT in organizing the Bangalees there. But the pattern of organization has virtually reached a premature

the CHT issue by, says, sort of dirty politics. The Constitution places no bar on the formation of Parbattya Regional Council (PRC)

adult stage. Therefore, the BNP

would have no cashing in on

or the Parbattya Zila Council (PZC). However the proposed compositions of three councils are one-sided giving more privilege to the tribals and discriminating against the non-tribals. Besides, the arms surrendering Shanti Bahini members are reported to be appointed in the CHT region as law-enforcers. This may act as a threat to the non-tribals. Furthermore, the circle-chief system instead of DCs may not be better for administration.

If the number of Council members are in exact proportions, the arms-surrendering members of Shanti Bahini are appointed elsewhere and the circle chief system is not there, the treaty would be a more workable one. Well-educated and elected chairmen of the District Council can act as the district coordinators not only in the CHT, but also in other

districts. Both the position and the opposition should give the peace treaty a chance. The government should spontaneously recognize the earlier efforts by the previous governments. while the opposition must realize at least two major achievements in the treaty: 1) the tribals recognized the Bangalees as their neighbours and 2) the Shanti Bahini members surrendering arms. So no-more dirty politics on CHT issue,

please