

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 Khrushchev's turning away from the Bay of Pigs where Kennedy had laid his threatening cordon off the coasts of Cuba.

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 Even the two-month Iraqi deadline for completion of inspections has been replaced by such an open-ended, accommodative phrase like "within a reasonable period of time".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.

Again an Unhealthy 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.

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 relieve. 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.

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.

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.

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 Aegean sea divided between long time adversaries Turkey and Greece. It is marked more by tension between these two neighbours than by conciliation. 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 Foreign Ministry deserves careful examination.

Although 12-mile limit of territorial waters is generally accepted as a guiding principle, exceptions are acknowledged due to peculiar local circumstances, mainly of geography. Between Turkey and Greece 6-mile territorial limit has been recognised mutually by the Lausanne Agreement of 1923. Greece holds approximately 43.5 per cent of the Aegean sea, Turkey 7.5 per cent and the remaining 49 per cent is high seas.

Secretary of State Albright 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 chanting, "One, two, three, four! We don't want your racist war!"

To the Editor...

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 concerned.

Whereas, whenever there is any news item or a non-item in 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 disrespect.

It proves once again that the arrogant and supercilious self-estimation 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 fraternity.

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

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 manoeuvre 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.

With a view to finding a solution to various problems affecting Turkish-Greek relations US Secretary of State Madeleine Albright brought commitment 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 unilateral 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.

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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 impetuous personalities like the President of Peru, Prime Minister of Italy, President of South Africa, and Prime Ministers of India and Pakistan.

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.



The Horizon This Week

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 commitment to peace, security and the continuing development of good neighbourly relations;

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Turkish 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.

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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 guerrillas coming across the border into Turkey.

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LETTER FROM AMERICA

"We Don't Want Your Racist War!", American Students Tell President Clinton

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?.."

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."

With demonstrations against the war taking place in 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.

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 aid?"

OPINION

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.

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.

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.

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.

Political Cashing in on CHT Issue

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 Treaties, both the treaties could perfectly be termed. "Historic ones".

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!