ISCOURSE on security has

in the post-Cold War era.

with substantial ramifications

in international policy

pursuits, regional strategic

culture and national virtues.

Indeed, the term 'security'

currently has multiple

meanings. Security is one of the

few concepts perpetually related

to the situation of threats or

perception of insecurity. As the

notion is related to the

psychological component of

threat perceptions, the current

emphasis is not merely on the

structure of international sys-

tem and regional society or on

nation-state for that matter,

but also on social components

and even on the individuals

who constitute them, a depar-

ture from the traditional state-

centric and power-based secu-

rity concerns of the previous

era. Security debate now en-

compasses multidimensional

threat perceptions, taking the

notion at multilevel, both in

theory and in the paradigmatic

shift as well as in its applica-

Gender Security

level context of security debate

that the question of gender se-

curity or feminine perspective

on national security has

emerged. Traditionally, na-

tional security and military

strategy were perceived as mas-

culine domains, but in the ear-

lier era even peace and conflict

resolution issues were also

stereo-typically associated with

the feminine and gender issues;

for a long time the issues were

generally thought to be irrele-

vant to the theoretical assump-

tions and explanations of these

fields. The fact that men and

women occupy different and

usually unequal roles in na-

tional and international insti-

tutions is not assumed to be rel-

evant to understanding the be-

havior of states in the interna-

tional system. Peace studies, for

It is in the ongoing multi-

undergone radical change

Gender Security: Agenda for Action

by Dr Abul Kalam

Needed are a conceptual reappraisal as well as a concurrent effort to modify substantially the existing "rules of the game" in the country's security perspective? There has been fewer studies on the national security concerns of small powers like Bangladesh . . .

lence, and environmental degradation. Experiences over the years involving the positions of men and the predicament of women reveal the stark realities of a male dominated society. Evilocal level. dence suggests that women are disproportionate victims of structural violence, and that it

is gender inequalities that are often responsible for women's particular vulnerability. Women, along with children, suffer when social welfare is traded for miliary spending; high military budgets typically mean decreases in domestic social programmes, which result in particularly harsh effects on female heads of household (who are disproportionately poor).

instance, rarely investigated

how women are differently af-

fected by war, structural vio-

Analysts concerned with environment suggest that the international system may require major restructuring, with statecentric solutions giving way to global agreements if environmental security is to be achieved. The introduction of feminist perspectives on environmental security offers a new way of thinking about these issues. Going beyond environmental management, certain reminists are suggesting that we must also reconsider human's relationship with nature.

There are reasonable grounds for such an advocacy. It is often women who are the worst victims of environmental degradation; as gatherers of firewood and drinking water in rural areas of the developing countries like Bangladesh. women are facing ever-greater constraints on providing these resources for their families. Moreover, toxic pollution and environmental disasters impact on women's reproductive systems. It is often women who organize local communities to fight such calamities and become victims of the politics of

environmental security at the Feminist Perspective It is the foregoing sense that

the utility of new perspective involving the feminine gender would seem relevant. Gender perspectives can help analysts to think at a macro-level, about more subregional, regional and global - less statist perspectives - on security. Women have always been less identified with the state and its institutions than have men, because they have generally been situated far from the seats of power. Likewise, the sort of citizenship and patriotism that have legitimized war and traditional concepts of national security have not valorized the contributions to society typically made by women. Feminist perspectives can help us to think about new, wider definitions of citizenship that would validate activities associated with caring for the earth and its inhabitants.

At the micro-level, the usefulness or relevance of the approach would seem still more convincing. The feminist perspective exposes the aspects of gender inequality in each society and seeks to incorporate women's experiences, and hence it has emerged as an important category in security analysis. A noticeable increase in organized crime and violence against women, greater unemployment and lower wages, atrocities such as the strategy of rape of women in the course of our Liberation War or in the war in Bosnia, and a perception of greater or multiple sense of insecurity of women as of eco-

by Jim Davis

nomic and environmental vulnerabilities to women's position - all these have led to a worldwide consciousness against the traditional military oriented notion of security of the state, predominantly concerned about issues which are considered "masculine."

As a result of all these advantages favouring gender consciousness, women generally favour conceptualization of security in multi-dimensional terms, defining of security that is people-oriented and transcends state and even regional boundaries. For violence of various order against women is higher in militarized societies. Women are known to be particularly vulnerable to war and militarism, as the women are normally excluded from military combat and are perceived as second class citizens. Precisely, these are the reasons why the women want to free concept of security from the lock of traditional security analysis into its statist frame-

The notion of gender security is also consistent with the extended security concern at the individual or grassroots level, conveying the sense that people must be regarded as equally important as the security of states. This means that the concept of security must be broadened to include the protection of people as well as the security of neighborhood.

Indeed, security analysis has witnessed a paradigm shift involving the feminine gender in recent years. There is thus the question of enhancing development performance of women through the efficient use of resources, as emphasized by the Cairo Conference on Population and Development, seen as a major step forward for women. It adopted a programme of action directed at the empowerment of women and calling for major increases in global resources. The Fourth World Conference on Women (FWCW) held in Beijing in 1995 also injected new vitality into the worldwide movement towards an achievement of women's cause and the "grand gathering" ceremoniously sanctioned "the Platform of Action" so as to advance the cause.

As the Commission on Global Governance emphasized in its 1995 report, "the security of people must be regarded as equally important as the security of states ... " and "all people, no less than all states, have a right to a secure existence, and all states have an obligation to protect those rights."

The Concrete Reality

The state of insecurity of our feminine gender is a cruel reality but has hardly been articulated candidly by their masculine equivalent. One needs to open dailies every morning and see the number of horrifying tales of murder and rape victims, a number which has been

growing everyday. The all-toofamiliar story of Yasmin and Sheema Chowdhury, the brutal victims of double crime of alleged gang rape and murder by the very security personnel who were supposed to provide them with a "safe" passage and "safe" custody are critical reminders to the nation about insecurity of the feminine gender in

Bangladesh.

Indeed, no segment of people feels more discrimination in our society than the womenfolk, although it constitutes almost half the population. The degradation starts at the very birth, for on an average the girl child is almost unwelcome, and the process of degradation continues as the child continues to grow through teenage to adulthood. How many parents in our society spend the same amount of money for the education and upbringing of their daughters as they do for their sons? The feminine gender is the victim of sex lust of the male maniacs, yet it is the target of portentous fatoas of the self-professed organized 'moralists' of our society. The discrimination is also felt in family rights and social hierarchy, in property rights and vocation, politics and governance. Even women's voting right is often denied.

The downgrading and degradation of feminine status is very much a global phenomenon, but Bangladesh's status in this regard is one of the poorest. It may seem ironic, because the country is one of the very few in the world blessed with feminine leadership on either of the political spectrum. Truly speaking, the feminine gender has little role in decision making at any level of our

ECENT studies use the

dea of "ecological

footprints" to describe all

the resources used by a single

individual as a way of

measuring whether our current

lifestyles are sustainable. If the

world's 6 billion people con-

sumed and polluted in the

manner that most Northern

peoples do, we are told, it would

take three planet Earths to ac-

countries are small because

most people still live in extreme

poverty, although they aspire to levels of comfort enjoyed by the

wealthier countries. Economic

growth is currently higher in

developing countries than in

the North. Pollution is also in-

much greater savings by becom-

ing "cleaner and greener". Most

of the energy, water and trans-

port services we pay for are wasted before we are able to use

them. Only 3 per cent of the en-

ergy from a nuclear-or coal-

fired power station becomes

light in an incandescent lamp

(about 70 per cent of the original

fuel energy is wasted before it

reaches the lamp which, in

turn, converts only 10 per cent

energy generated by burning

petrol is wasted in the car's en-

gine and drive-train before it

gets to the wheels. Most water

evaporates or spills away before it reaches the roots of a crop.

Moving goods over vast dis-tances where the same or simi-

lar locally made products could

be used is another example of

the pattern of "costs without

benefits" inherent in our cur-

rent economic model. In fact, as

much as 93 per cent of materi-

als bought and "consumed" do

not end up in finished products,

according to a recent study by

the United States National

Academy of Engineers. Some 80

per cent of goods are discarded

after a single use and many oth-

ers do not last as long they

should. By one industry esti-

mate, 99 per cent of the original

materials used in the produc-

tion of goods made in the

A new approach, dubbed

"eco-efficiency", is now being

promoted by the World Business

Council for Sustainable Devel-

opment and the United Nations

Environment Programme's

Cleaner Production Pro-

gramme. Eco-efficiency which

calls for both economic effi-

ciency — using fewer resource

and producing less waste mean

saving dollars and generating

profits - and ecological effi-

ciency - less waste and fewer

raw materials — also protects

the environment by conserving

non-renewable natural re-

sources and creating less pollu-

tion. Savings, by at least a fac-

tor of four, could be made in the

next 20 to 30 years by adopting

the eco-efficiency model, ex-

perts say. Production could be

doubled while the input of re-

sources, including energy, and

pollution could be cut by half.

Industrialized countries could

United States are thrown away

within six weeks of sale.

Some 80 to 85 per cent of the

of the remainder into light).

All economic can make

"Footprints" in developing

commodate us all.

creasing.

society. There is also presumably a strong current of feminist movement in the country, with a fairly strong element of support from the network of non-governmental organizations (NGOs) and international donor agencies. Yet the liberation of women is nowhere nearer to its ultimate destiny; they remain very much in bondage and servitude.

Future Agenda

Of late there has been a renewed emphasis on gender rights in our country, with considerable importance attached to ensure women's voting right, their representation in the political structures from Jatiya Sangsad to the local self-governing bodies, job quota in various service sectors and as much as on offering incentives to promote girl education up to higher secondary school level.

What is needed, however, are a conceptual reappraisal as well as a concurrent effort to modify substantially the existing "rules of the game" in the country's security perspective. There has been fewer studies on the national security concerns of small powers like Bangladesh, though security requirements of small states such as ours seem more complex and challenging in terms of qualitative excellence than those of the bigger powers. What needs to be understood that national security in many a developing coun try like Bangladesh is "the end result of a total process of development." That means that one can hardly conceive of development in its true sense, with half of its population left in the dark.

Certainly, the country did have the privilege of having

feminine leadership as the exenhanced to the same level, and ecutive head of government for be strictly enforced, with regualmost three quarters of the lar monitoring by an adminislast decade, but the fate of the trative watchdog and by a parwomenfolk has not gone much liamentary committee. beyond sloganisings. The idea of inducting the feminine gender into the law and order of the security forces, the police, dates back to the late 1970s, but the

security of women is no more

guaranteed than in the earlier

stage what it was. Similarly,

there has been legislation pro-

viding for feminine quota in

the various sectors of the gov-

ernment, but that commitment

has rarely found honour in im-

plementation. What seems evi-

dent that legislation itself is

not good enough. Indeed, time

has come to address the ques-

tion whether legislation itself

made any qualitative change in

the fate of the female folk of our

What we need now is a radi-

cal change in outlook if we wish

to ensure a sustainable devel-

opment of the country. Obvi-

ously, no development of

Bangladesh would be sustain-

able with half the population

being left out of the develop-

ment process. In other words,

the feminine gender must have

their due participation in the

development process and that

should be ensured sooner than

later. As part of the process of

equitable representation of

women in the decision making

process many countries of the

world, including neighboring

India, are debating whether the

feminine gender be guaranteed

one-third representation in the

national parliament and in

other representative bodies. In

Bangladesh also there should be

a national consensus offering

women one-third of seats in

Jatiya Sangsad. Why can't we go

beyond the current practice of

'tokenism' in offering cabinet

positions to women and ensure

that they get at least one-third

of the available cabinet posi-

tions? The current job quota

provision should equally be

ENVIRONMENT

Every time we turn on a light, use the clothes washer or listen to music on the stereo in a country that

produces power by burning coal or oil, we add to the amount of carbon dioxide (CO2) that is released into

the atmosphere. When we jump into the car to run an errand or visit a friend, the petrol we use also emits

carbon and other wastes which cause global warming and ground-level smog. It the petrol is leaded, particles

are released into the air, causing health problems for local people. Whenever we turn on a tap to wash the

car, water the lawn or irrigate farmland near a city which draws water from a distant aquifer, we drain an

increasingly scarce resource which is freely available and perhaps often is taken for granted. These are some

Civilization Under Siege

country.

The current educational effort is positive; there is, however, yet little perceptible move to offer technical and vocation training to the girls that would make them productive and selfsupportive. There should be more scope for recruitment of women as security personnel and in the various defence services. The very notional principle of recruitment should be the standard one of "an equal opportunity employer" and to that end the women should get the incentive of positive discrimination.

To overcome the current strategy of rape and such other violent treatment by the neurotic male folk, women's selfdefence training programmes should be popularized. The NGOs, the BNCC, Scouts, and the Girls Guide movement can play a role. What seems critical is to declare fatoabazi illegal at the village and mahalla levels and be made a punishable offence so that the hapless girls are not punished inhumanly for the offenses committed by the male perpetrators of crime. Most importantly, there should be organized research and studies on the whole set of issues so that the malaise be diagnosed more closely and appropriate prescriptions offered for symmetrical development of either segments of population who are both nature's creation. A conscientious but activist stance by all concerned — the media, the NGOs, the government agencies and, above all, by organizing women vigilance squads (that may include caring male components as well) at every level can perhaps guarantee the much-needed security for the feminine gender of our society.

The author is a Professor of International Relations, University of Dhaka.

Garfield ®











Metropolitan —



A 12-day exhibition of photographs on nature, 'Ah Wilderness,' by Enam ul Haque opened at the gallery of Alliance Francaise de Dhaka on Saturday. - Star photo

HERE and THERE

Official Reporters' Association

Abdul Hamid and Mohammad Mizanur Rahman were elected president and general secretary respectively of the executive committee of Bangladesh Official Reporters Association, reports BSS.

Mohammad Azizur Rahman and Mohammad Enamul Haq Majumdar were elected the vice president and treasurer of the association respectively. Ms Aleya Begum, Mohammad Enamul Haq and Rezaul Islam Khan were elected members. The official reporters record the proceedings to the Jatiya Sangsad as officials of parliament.

Suryabarta

Suryabarta, a children organisation, observed Basanta Utsav (spring festival) in the city on Friday, reports UNB. Children of the organisation enthralled the audience render-

ing songs and performing

dances at Gulshan.

Maitry Parishad Manob Seba Sangstha

A seminar on Ekusher Chetonay Ganotantra O Manabadhikar (Democracy and Human Rights in the Spirit of Ekushey) was held at the Karitas auditorium in the city on Friday, says a press release.

The seminar jointly organised by Maitry Parishad, Manob Seba Sangstha and the Bangladesh Manobadhikar Foundation was chaired by Brother Jarlath D' Souza.

The key-note paper was presented by Borhan Ahmed, executive editor of The Janakantha. Father CW Timm was the main discussant in the seminar. Justice Abdul Malek was the special guest.

Attorney General o Bangladesh Barrister KS Nabi who attended the function as the chief. The seminar ended with the open discussion participated by a number of human rights activists.

Madhu Palli to be built at a cost of Tk 9 crore

The government will build Madhu Palli at Sagardari at a cost of Tk 9 crore in commemoration of poet Micheal Madhusudan Dutt, reports UNB. Education Minister ASHK

Sadeq said this while inaugurating a week-long 'Madhu Festival and Madhu Mela' at Sagardari in Keshabpur in Jessore yesterday to mark the 174th anniversary of birth of the poet.

The proposed Madhu Palli will be built to expose the contributions of the poet in Bangla literature to the next generation and to uphold the national heritage.

The function, organised by the Ministry of Cultural Affairs, was addressed, among others, by State Minister for Youth and Sports and Cultural Affairs Obaidul Kader and former Secretary Enam Ahmed.

The Madhu Mela will continue till March 7. Discussion meetings and cultural functions will be organised in the evening everyday.

200 freedom fighters in Rajshahi join AL

RAJSHAHI, Mar 1: Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina said here today that her government is totally committed to translate into reality in true perspective the ideals and spirit of the liberation struggle, reports

She said that all kinds of measures will be taken for the welfare of the valiant freedom fighters.

The prime minister was briefly addressing a group of freedom fighters numbering 200 who formally joined Awami League at a simple ceremony at the local circuit

Led by AKM Jahangir, chairman of Rajshahi District Freedom Fighters Cooperative Society, the other members of the group include noted freedom fighters Abdul Khaleque Dulal, Nazrul Islam Khoka, Abdul Wahab, Siddique Ali and Sirajul Islam Mridha.

Welcoming the freedom fighters under the fold of her party, the prime minister noted among others that provision for keeping 30 per cent reserve quota in government jobs for the children of freedom fighters is an epoch making step of her government.

Obituary Mashiur Rah-



man, former Regional Director of Bangladesh Small and Cottage Industries Corporation (BSCIC) and an expert on micro-credit and rural financing issues, died in

the city on Friday. He was 68, says a press release. His qulkhwani will be held after Magreb prayers today at 5. Goal Nagar Lane (English Road),

in the city. Upon retirement from service in 1987, Rahman worked as an co-expert cum consultant on micro-credit and allied issues for welfare of the rural

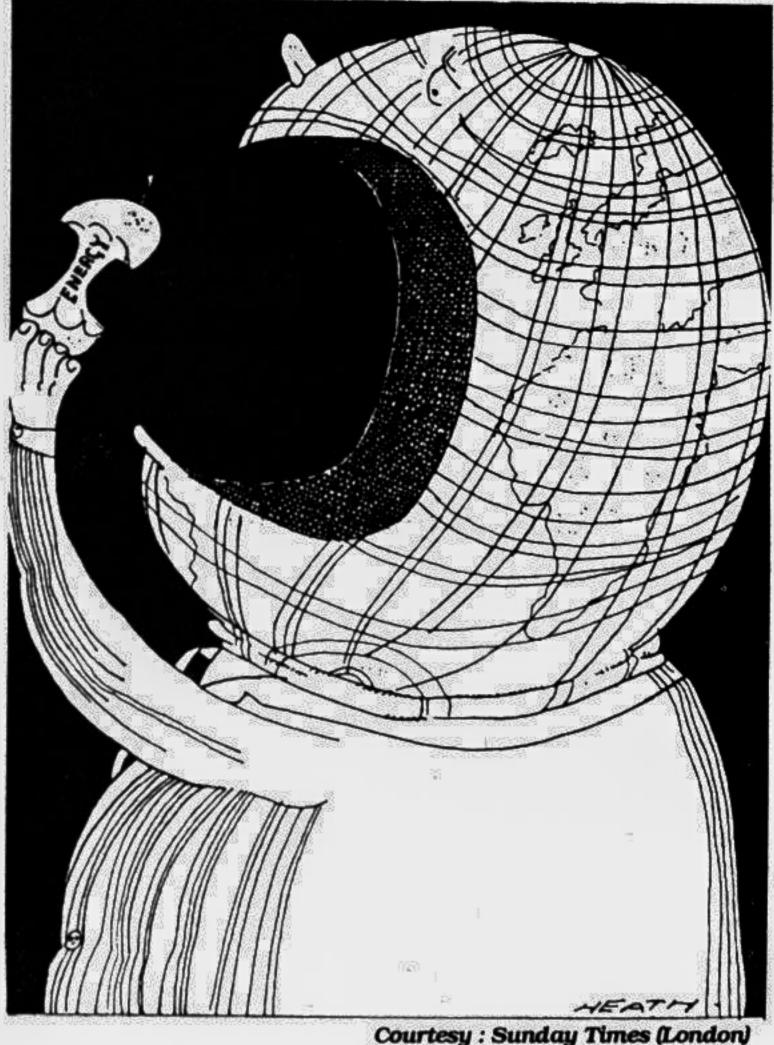
He is the third son of late Khan Bahadur Siddiqur Rahman of Comilla. He is survived by his four brothers, two sisters and a host of relatives.

save some \$ 700 billion over the next 30 years by not having to build the additional power plants necessary to increase energy supply by 50 per cent. Similar initiatives in developing countries could save 40 per cent of current costs, for a total savings of \$ 1.5 trillion dollars.

Eco-efficiency encourages us to think not only about preventing pollution reaching the environment once it has been produced, but about creating less waste from start to finish. It calls for the redesign of the entire production process from the moment raw materials are extracted from the land to the final disposal of the finished product so that any wastes crerather than individually owing certain equipment, we will buy the services of a machine that is used by others and is in operation through the day. We will lease lawn mowers, concrete mixers, photocopiers and other business machines. We will subscribe to laundry and nappy services.

In an eco-efficient society,

This will encourage manufactures to design and produce longer-lasting goods and should lead to an economy that recovers used goods, reuses them on a second-hand market, recycles what cannot be reused for parts and re-manufactures new goods by replacing only the worn-out parts. These activities will help



ated during the life-cycle of the product — such as packaging have minimal impact

Making technology more efficient will play a role in sustainable production and consumption, but it is clear that our effort need to go far beyond technological innovation. Technological changes in cars gave us more miles per gallon and lower emissions, but we have responded to these improvements by driving more miles each year and buying even more cars. In the United States, in particular, efficiency gains have also been offset by the large number of people who choose the new, highly fashionable, four-wheel drive vehicles for city driving. These vehicles are markedly less eco-efficiency than sedans. The transition to sustainability will mean making different choices.

to reduce the burden we now place on the environment. In a service-intensive economy, we will no longer measure the health of a society by the amount of materials used and goods produced and consumed as the gross national product now does. Jobs lost in production will be offset by gains in services set up to repair and

maintain goods. Eco-efficiency calls on both producers and consumers to think about what we are producing, what we are consuming and how it affects the environment, in the same way that we routinely take into account financial, legal and health concerns in our everyday decisionmaking. The Dutch call this using a "green filter". It leads to questions like: Shall I take the train or the car? Use a plastic bag or a string bag? Heat the

of our everyday activities that affect the environment in ways we usually do not notice. house with a cleaner, renewable, energy like natural gas or

Most Governments have signed, international legal agreements which commit them to alter patterns of production and consumption in order to protect the environ-

Scientists warn that CO2 and other wastes spewing from industrially smokestacks and the exhaust pipes of an evergrowing number of motor cars are dramatically changing global climate patterns and causing the earth to become warmer. As concentrations of CO2 and other "greenhouse warming gases" accumulate in the atmosphere, rising sea lev-els could swamp low-lying coastal regions. Bankers and insurance brokers report that hurricanes and cyclones are more frequent and increasingly

Six United states insurance companies went bankrupt in the wake of Hurricane Andrew in 1992.

The link between CFCs and halons — widely used in refrigerators, air conditioners, solvents, transportation, plastics, insulation, pharmaceuticals, computers, electronics and firefighting equipment — and the hole in the ozone layer was first made by scientists in 1974. CFCs release chlorine into the upper levels of the atmosphere, causing a thinning of the ozone layer which shields us from lethal doses of the sun's ultraviolet radiation. "Holes" appear seasonally over Antarctica, the Himalayas and the north-eastern United States, causing cancer and immune system diseases in humans and animals, and mutations in the cellular make-up of other organisms. The 1979 Convention on Long-Range Transboundary Air Pollution targets activities that release sulphur dioxide (SO2) and cause acid rain and soil acidification. It has led to significant environmental improvements in Europe and North America, where pollutants from the United States have been destroying Canadian forests.

In order to implement these three agreements and bring about the needed changes at home, most countries have adopted national legislation, such as the United States Clean Air Act Amendments (1990), which set country targets for reducing polluting substances. Many environmental problems are interlinked, so that reducing a single pollutant can often ameliorate several different problems.' A CO2 tax can help prevent climate change, acid rain, acidification of soils, noise pollution and the pollution of inland and coastal waters. A tax on nitrates will impact on climate change, acidification, local air-pollution, and

inland and coastal waters. A tax on SO₂ will reduce acidification and affect local air quality and the quality of inland waters.

Tomorrow : Environmental "Goods" and "Bads"