

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...

DISCOURSE on security has undergone radical change in the post-Cold War era, with substantial ramifications in international policy pursuits, regional strategic culture and national virtues.

Instance, rarely investigated how women are differently affected by war, structural violence, and environmental degradation.

Gender Security

It is in the ongoing multi-level context of security debate that the question of gender security or feminine perspective on national security has emerged.

Analysts concerned with environment suggest that the international system may require major restructuring, with state-centric solutions giving way to global agreements if environmental security is to be achieved.

There are reasonable grounds for such an advocacy. It is often women who are the worst victims of environmental degradation.

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.

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.

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economic 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.

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growing everyday. The all-too-familiar 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.

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.

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.

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.

feminine leadership as the executive head of government for almost three quarters of the last decade, but the fate of the womenfolk has not gone much beyond sloganising. 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.

What we need now is a radical change in outlook if we wish to ensure a sustainable development of the country. Obviously, no development of Bangladesh would be sustainable with half the population being left out of the development process.

enhanced to the same level, and be strictly enforced, with regular monitoring by an administrative watchdog and by a parliamentary committee.

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 self-supportive.

To overcome the current strategy of rape and such other violent treatment by the neurotic male folk, women's self-defence training programmes should be popularized. The NGOs, the BNCC, Scouts, and the Girls Guide movement can play a role.

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Garfield



Tom and Jerry



by Jim Davis



by Hanna-Barbera



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.

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 Rezul Islam Khan were elected members.

Suryabarta

Suryabarta, a children organisation, observed Basanta Utsav (spring festival) in the city on Friday, reports UNB.

Maitry Parishad

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.

Attorney General of 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.

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.

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 BSS.

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 house.

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

Mashur Rahman, former Regional Director of Bangladesh Small and Cottage Industries Corporation (BSSCIC) and an expert on micro-credit and rural financing issues, died in the city on Friday. He was 68, says a press release.

Civilization Under Siege

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.

RECENT studies use the idea 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 consumed and polluted in the manner that most Northern peoples do, we are told, it would take three planet Earths to accommodate us all.

All economic can make much greater savings by becoming "cleaner and greener". Most of the energy, water and transport services we pay for are wasted before we are able to use them.

Some 80 to 85 per cent of the energy generated by burning petrol is wasted in the car's engine and drive-train before it gets to the wheels. Most water evaporates or spills away before it reaches the roof of a crop.

A new approach, dubbed "eco-efficiency", is now being promoted by the World Business Council for Sustainable Development and the United Nations Environment Programme's Cleaner Production Programme.

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 needs to go far beyond technological innovation.

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.



Courtesy: Sunday Times (London)

In an eco-efficient society, rather than individually owning 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 lawnmowers, concrete mixers, photocopiers and other business machines.

house with a cleaner, renewable, energy like natural gas or use oil? Most Governments have signed international legal agreements which commit them to alter patterns of production and consumption in order to protect the environment.

The link between CFCs and halons — widely used in refrigerators, air conditioners, solvents, transportation, plastics, insulation, pharmaceuticals, computers, electronics and fire-fighting equipment — and the hole in the ozone layer was first made by scientists in 1974.

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.

Scientists warn that CO2 and other wastes spewing from industrially smokestacks and the exhaust pipes of an ever-growing number of motor cars are dramatically changing global climate patterns and causing the earth to become warmer.

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

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.

Tomorrow: Environmental "Goods" and "Bads"