Founder-Editor: Late S.M. Ali

Dhaka, Wednesday October 18, 2000 Food Security

DANGLADESH observed the World Food Day on DMonday against the backdrop of having attained what is rather euphemistically called 'self-sufficiency in food for the first time in 1999-2000.' By past standards therefore, our observance of the day has been marked by a greater aplomb this time around.

Yes, we should congratulate ourselves on the achievement of autarchy in the staple food item viz. cereals, even be jubilant over it but not certainly euphoric. In fact, this is something on which we would like to apply a reality check to be on the right track insofar as the entire gamut of the food security issue is concerned. Essentially, the successive bumper crops which helped us reach the autarchy stage are attributed to a blend of good weather conditions and an effective agricultural management policy. But how far the effectiveness of that farm policy will stand the test of natural vagaries in severe forms only future can tell. Furthermore, the cornerstone of self-sufficiency being the avoidance of food import any serious output deficit caused by natural calamity could upset the apple-cart of self-sufficiency as it would impel grains procurement from overseas.

That said, we now move to the crucial question about availability of food being not the same thing as access to food. With the majority of our people having a very poor purchasing power for lack of employment they cannot buy the food they need. Little wonder, the rural poor gets 1932 kcal per capita per day as against the minimum requirement of 2310 kcal. The safety-net food handouts, praiseworthy as these are, cannot feed all of the 30 million hard-core poor going virtually famished now. The biggest safety-valve for them is job.

The other cogent point is that if food prices can be stablished at affordable levels access to food would be automatically widened. The government usually tries to ensure this by releasing food stuffs into the open market from its own stocks as a price control mechanism. But this time gluts in the silos kept new procurement at bay with the result that the food security reserve could not be built up to a level commensurate with the availability position. The moral is: we learn the art and science of surplus food management before any more good crops overwhelm us.

Break the Cycle of Violence

WHEN the emergency peace summit began at the Red Sea resort of Sharm el-Shiek in Egypt Monday, there was widespread apprehension that the talks would prove a futile exercise. The first few hours of summitry interspersed with instances expressive of intense antipathy Israeli Prime Minister Ehud Barak and Palestinian leader Yasser Arafat bore towards each other only fuelled the fear of a collap-se of the talks. But, full marks to US President Bill Clinton, the summit ended with what the world had hoped for - consent from the belligerent lea-ders to work towards a cease-fire in the West Bank and the Gaza Strip. Mr Clinton proved once again his prowess in persuasion as he shuttled from one leader to the other well into the early hours Tuesday to finally talk them into an agree-

Although the post-summit reaction from both leaders still bore indignation and mistrust for one another, their consent to disengage from violence offers the silver lining in the deep dark cloud cast over peace in the region. As if to prove that effective cease-fire is still a long way to go, violence continued in trouble-torn area while Mr Clinton pronounced the good news. The situation is still volatile. The fate of a rather fragile accord would be decided in the next few days. Now is the time for both Mr Barak and Chairman Arafat to behave responsibly. A provocative statement from either side could blow out the slim chances for revival of the peace talks.

As Mr Clinton has suggested at the start of the summit, both leaders need to avoid recrimination. They have to stop attaching conditions to an effective cease-fire as well. Wasn't it Israeli opposition leader Ariel Sharon who had instigated the violence in the first place? Besides, is Israeli presence in the West Bank and the Gaza Strip not trespassing? How can then Mr Barak equate pulling back his troops with an end to agitation by the Palestinians? We believe that the Palestinians have been doubly wronged in this instance. Aren't they the ones counting more casualties at the end of the day?

Anyway, the mayhem in the West Bank and the Gaza Strip should end now and both leaders must realise that irresponsible behaviour at this juncture could very well lead to a full-blown war like the one the region experienced some three decades back.

Canine Dishes

Dog meat has entered the food chain, so it Dseems. A Prothom Alo report yesterday revealed that 80 restaurants at the Aricha ghat cooks 300 kilograms of mutton to serve, of which 50 kg is dog meat. How this business has gone on undetected so far, if not totally unnoticed, if only one cared to look at the kitchen backyard, remains a big surprise. It seems that a racket has been at work to defraud the customers of those hotels with impunity. Manikganj happened to be the source of supply for those dogs, even though there is an abundance of stray dogs in the neighbourhood of Aricha, or for that matter, any cross-river ferry point. Funnily, nobody these days sees street dogs being hauled up by the municipality anywhere. Where do they go? Therefore, in a peculiar way, this demand-supply market for dogs is thriving, not for domestication of the animal or for veterinary research purpose, but to be inexorably put into the supply conduit to various eating houses.

Wicked and greedy people will always look for profiteering and they would like to invest as little as possible to reap huge profits - all this is a familiar business tactic followed by the socially uncommitted businessmen. But the question is: what is the government doing to deter them? We see a clear-cut lapse on two counts. First, the sanitary inspector at Shivalaya upazilla Shahidul Islam admits that he was not informed a priori of any slaughter being on the cards, which according to the law, the restaurant owner ought to have kept him posted about. Secondly, the meat trader did not care to take out a certificate from the veterinary surgeon of the locality which also he was legally bound to do. And what does the existing law provide as punishment? Just Tk. 50-100 as fine. Given the magnitude of the problem we want: a) supervised and certified slaughter; b) a deterrent penalty prescribed against the law breakers; and (c) exemplary punishment to dog meat sellers.

The Crisis: Image or Identity?

The RSS wants to have Advani in place Vajpayee. Regional parties may go along with it because they only want a share in power at the centre and it does not matter to them who the Prime Minister is: Vajpayee or Advani. Vajpayee may prefer to retire because he has neither the inclination nor the stamina to fight the hard-liners, who are now breathing down his neck.

once the government settled down, with little challenge from the opposition, the battle for The RSS was in the picture. supremacy within the BJP began Sushma's entry is also a vicright away. Initially, Prime tory for Home Minister L.K. Minister Atal Behari Vajpayee, Advani, who is trying to acquire a leading the liberals, emerged tall. new image neither that of a hard-He had his way. Even RSS liner like the RSS core, nor that of ideologue K.N. Govindachari had a liberal who would raise eyeto resign from the post of brows in the RSS camp. He is secretary-general of the BJP collecting a group of loyalists because he had forfeited around him. The recent changes Vajpayee's confidence. in the cabinet add to the group's Govindachari is the one who had described Vajpayee as a mukut to warn that his liberalism is a mask Poor Law Minister Arun Jaitley to hide the RSS face. Not only did was a victim of the cross-firing between Vajpayee and Advani. Vajpayee get rid of him, he also put his own man, Bangaru Jaitley was keeping both sides Laxamn, at the head of the party. informed of what he did in his ministries and consulted them Vajpayee ticked off the RSS again before taking any decision. Perwhen he said in public that it had

T was a cease-fire first

Liberals and hard-liners in the

not to snipe at each other. But

BJP had an understanding

nothing to do with the BJP. haps both wanted his exclusive loyalty. First, the portfolio of Everything was going his way. Disinvestment was taken away The hard-liners the RSS took their own time to hit back. They from him and then the Information and Broadcasting. He should chose the occasion, when have been made at least a cabinet Vajpayee strode over dissentions minister. Maybe, he is a threat to in the party, after a successful tour to the US. In his hour of the camp followers of both because he is a Prime Ministerial triumph, he was made to face the timber. That Vajpayee has been fact that the RSS was supreme. purposely pulled down goes The organisation could not dilute without saying. But what the RSS Hindutva for the pottage of his has conveyed is that it does not liberal image. like any effort to change the BJP's The message came in the anti-Muslim ethos. The way shape of Sushma Swaraj's induc- Vajpayee was pushing the party

tion into the cabinet. Only the showed that he was prepared to

other day had she denounced lock horns with the Hindutva

Vajpayee at BJP's Nagpur ses- elements. This may not be possi-

sion. He has not expanded the ble. The problem with him and

cabinet without any reason in the the liberals even outside the BJP

past. He had no option this time. is that they underestimate the

RSS. It wants to control the political scene and sustain its identity. Its agenda is the creation of a Hindu Rashtriya and it has been relentlessly pursuing the task of Hindu revivalism for the last 75 years since its birth. The BJP rout in the Gujarat panchayat polls, its bastion, has come in handy to the RSS. The Muslims and the tribal have reportedly voted en bloc against the BJP.

tained links with the RSS, will be preferred to those with liberal ideas. The RSS sanchalaks in the different states are busy preparing the list of candidates on that basis. This alone is not enough. The RSS, as was seen in the recent past, is going all out to reinvigorate the thesis of Hindu nationalism. Both Christians and Muslims have been told to 'Indianise' themselves. The Since this has happened in the Christians have been asked to

appease the Muslims. The Hindu card has brought dividends to the party. The RSS wants to tread the same path and try to win back the electorate which, they believe, has got alienated because the BJP does not own the Hindutva as firmly and openly as it did

before forming the government. The RSS is not, however, opposed to coalition politics. When means become an end by itself, they are reduced to a stratagem. That is how the RSS is going about. It is using the NDA constituents through the BJP to expand its base. Indian political scene is also emerging likewise. The Hindutva forces are gaining ground by using contacts of regional parties in the NDA. Regional parties too are reaping some benefit. They are calculating whether the BJP's limited vote in their area can tilt the balance in their favour. This happened in Andhra Pradesh. The Telugu

Desam got a majority in the state. Some time the arrangement can have an opposite effect. The RSS was really worried over the threat by Trinamool Congress chief Mamata Banerjee on scaling down the prices of petroleum products. That it has turned out to be a damp squib has convinced the RSS that the NDA government will last for the rest of the term. Therefore, the harld-liners want to pursue the Hidutva agenda with a vengeance. I sus-

Advant in place of Vajpayee. Regional parties may go along with it because they only want a share in power at the centre and it does not matter to them who the Prime Minister is: Vajpayee or Advani. A few days ago when I met West Bengal chief minister Jyour Basu at Calcutta, he endorsed my viewpoint. He said he had no doubt that the NDA allies would eventually accept Advant in place of Vajpayee. They are interested in power, not in person," he said. He has a point. I know of many NDA leaders, who have strong views on the RSS but they do not want to be without a share in power at the centre. If their animus against the BJP can change why not against the RSS which controls the BJP? True, the BJP wants a government of its own at the centre. Vajpayee was frank enough to say at a conclave of Non-Resident Indians at New York that BJP will "build an India of its dreams" when it gets a twothirds majority in the Lok Sabha.

pect that the RSS wants to have

I do not see that happening Vajpayee is the onlyvote-puller the party has. But he has said many a time that he will not contest the next election. The pressure may make him relent. But will the RSS be prepared to pay the price? He would like the party to move towards the centre, a policy which the RSS has rejected categorically. My fear is that Vajpayee may prefer to retire because he has neither the inclination nor the stamina to fight the hard-liners.

who are now breathing down

BETWEEN THE LINES

Kuldip Nayar writes from New Delhi

wake of the party president's promise to rectify the mistakes committed against the Muslims. the inference is that the Muslims have expressed their distrust through voting. The BJP, with no cadre of its own, has no option except to move closer to the sine- to re-articulate its demand on cure of the RSS.

From all accounts, it is clear that the party has surrendered before the RSS. The hard-liners have taken the charge of assembly elections, scheduled for 2001 in six states including UP, Tamil Nadu, West Bengal and Assam. The candidates, who have main-

sever their relationship with the Vatican and Muslims with the Ummah (a people or a community which transcends ethnic or political definition of nationalism). The Vishwa Hindu Parishad seems to have got the green light building the mandir at the site where the Babri Masjid stood before demolition. All this is meant to revive Hindu chauvinism of pre-Ayodhya vatra days to create "favourable climate" before the polls. The RSS honestly believes that the BJP is losing the sure Hindu vote by trying to

People's Power Propels Kostunica as President

New Era of Democracy Dawns in Yugoslavia

by AMM Shahabuddin

hat President Clinton failed to achieve about a year and half back by mounting large-scale air action on Belgrade and Pristina to force that "bloody and brutal dictator" (to quote British Prime Minister Tony Blair) Milosevic to stop the bloody-massacre of the innocent in Kosovo, and to oust him from power, the Yugoslav people, in a sort of 'rapid-fire revolt' on the streets of Belgrade in the first week of the current month, successfully accomplished that unfinished job by driving Milosevic out from his seat of power. It may be recalled here that in

the early part of last year, Clinton ordered NATO to go ahead with air action and missile attack on military installations and 'defence projects' in Belgrade and declared that it would continue until Milosevic steps down from power. But NATO air action seemingly failed to make any dent on Milosevic's determination to carry on his mission, nor did he feel unnerved to step

When millions of demonstrators thronged the streets of Belgrade to express their solidarity with and support for the opposition leader Kostunica, who won the presidential election held on 24 September last, Milosevic refused to accept the people's verdict. He immediately used his autocratic power to annul the election results through a Constitutional Court order to cling to power at any cost. But the people revolted against Milosevic's notorious game and literally forced him to accept his defeat The Daily Star editorial called it "People's Power Triumphs Again' (8 October). This popular upsurge can be compared with the late 18th century French Revolution against absolute monarchy of Loui's XVI.

Sinking Dictator The sinking dictator, knowing

fully well that his days were numbered and his sun was about to set closing his sordid chapter. made a desperate last attempt to catch the straw to save himself from imminent and ignoble fall. He sought help from the Constitutional Court, which is said to be filled with his so-called loyalists and sycophants, to annul the presidential elections. The opposition leader and President-elect Kostunica dubbed it as another trap being laid by Milosevic to gain time to cling to power. Thus, despite the court ruling annuling the election results, the opposition went ahead to hold a grand rally in Belgrade for a show-down with the fallen dictator.

The angry crowd comprising cross-section of the people, from miners to factory workers to farmers and the middle class, young and old, stormed the parliament building and occupied it driving out the policemen on duty there. Then they put the state television building on fire, which had so far served as the most faithful mouth-piece of the dictator, projecting him day and night as the only national hero. The chief of the State Television, while running away from the building to save himself from the wrath of people, was caught by the demonstrators red-handed on the spot and roughed up with kicks and punches. The sycophants have always their worst of times after enjoying the best of times.

World Support With apparent fall of the most hated regime of Milosevic, and emergence of the new leadership of Kostunica, poured in international support from America, European Union (EU), China and other nations. Russia, the closest ally of Milosevic providing him full support all through, was dilly-dallying to the last moment. But, realising that it is going to be isolated from the rest of the world, suddenly took a 'v-turn' to cast its lot with the world opinion,

Ivanav arrived in Belgrade with the congratulatory message from President Putin. Thus the last anchorage on which Milosevic had banked throughout was gone. With the deck being cleared of all obstacles, President Clinton announced that all sanctions imposed on the Milosevic regime would be withdrawn by the west. He complimented the people of Yugoslavia saying that they were "trying to get their country back".

Yugoslav Contributions

With the tragic end of the bloody autocratic regime of Milosevic perhaps closed the black chapter of the history of Yugoslavia which had lived for the last 13 years or so an isolated and pariah (social outcast) life almost away from the general international order.

Now with the emergence of a new Yugoslavia under the leadership of Kostunica, the country is expected to receive a welcome return to the international fold to which it once belonged and made a mark by its remarkable contributions.

The contemporary history recognises what role Marshall Tito of Yugoslavia played through the thick and thin, keeping his country at a distance from the 'protective umbrella' of then Soviet regime. Tito followed boldly his own breed of socialism keeping close link with the West for necessary economic cooperation. Yugoslavia was one of the 51 original members of the UN since 1945 when the world organiza tion came into existence. It had played a very vital role in world affairs, particularly during the post-war cold war period. It followed a neutral stance between the two camps the Western and the Soviet or Socialist. Marshal Tito, a dashing European leader, played a constructive role, along

when Russian Foreign Minister ers, namely, Pandit Nehru of India, President Nasser of Egypt and President Soekarno of Indonesia, in establishing the Non-Aligned Movement (NAM) which played a remarkable role as a neutral third force during Cold War period, particularly in the sixtles and seventies. It is a pity that with the 'exit' of four of its founding father, NAM today remains just a historic name, a sort of land-mark of post-War

"Belkan's Butcher"

But the ghost of Milosevic will haunt for many years to come not only the Yugoslav people but also the international community because of the war crimes and genocide perpetrated under his leadership on the Muslims of Kosovo because they wanted to be free from Yugoslav rule. The Kosovo Muslims can't forget the hell let loose on them by the neo-Nazis belonging to the Milosevic regime, for which the ousted Balkan's Butcher', as Milosevic is known in the West, has been convicted by the International War Crimes Tribunal in the Hague. But the long arm of the tribunal couldn't catch him because of the 'invincible' fortress' that he had built around him. But as every action has its reaction, the inevitable began with Milosevic when his fortress of power was demolished by his own countrymen, bringing him out as a hard criminal before the world. Now it is to be seen whether any country comes forward to give asylum to the fugitive criminal or hand him over to the Hague Tribunal for final judgement and punishment.

Why Not Kosovo?

The new president has declared that the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia will henceforth remain an integral past of Europe. With the assumption of power as President Mr Kostunica

has promised to work for democracy. The world will watch with great interest how the new democratic government handles the Kosovo problem which has become a terrible pain in the neck for Yugoslavia. Macedonia, which was a province of Yugoslavia had seceded in 1991 as an independent state and neither party had to fire a single shot. So what today's Yugoslavia consist of is Serbia, of which Kosovo is a province, and another province named Montenegro. If the former Yugoslav authorities could be so liberal when Macedonia said good-bye, then the present democratic government of Mr Kostunica shouldn't be hasty enough to solve the Kosovo problem militarily. They should adopt a more civilised approach to come to an honourable understanding through dialogue, keeping the wishes of the Kosovo people uppermost in their political

As they say, where angels fear to tread, the devils rush in. And

his predecessor, the Devil did rush in to make a hell of Kosovo. without much gain. In case of any future hostility, breaking the present artificial peace, maintained by the NATO ground forces, KLA (Kosovo Liberation Army) would certainly receive most helpful responses from two of its friendly neighbours Macedonia, where a huge chunk of ethic Albanians crowd the villages bordering Kosovo, and Albania which is allout, despite its own internal difficulties, to extend any possible help to KLA. So the only option left to the new Yugoslav government is to search for an amicable settlement with the Kosovo leadership, maybe giving it an independent status. That may guarantee a more peaceful environment, strengthening the friendship and stability between the two countries. Let not the simmering Kosovo flame ignite again.

The writer is a retired UN offi-

OPINHON

A Sigh of Relief in the Middle East?

Zakir Husain

point of no return. The UN Security Council had earlier con-

Israel with the US abstaining. The Palestinian trust in the US as an honest broker has been undermined during and after the failed Camp David 2 under the stewardship of President Clinton who has accused Chairman Arafat for not making even more

salem issue. Indeed, the US President has spent much time and effort in the peace process. But has the US position been truly that of an honest broker? What has made Israel a "monster" in the Middle East which is now defying all international law and behaving like a superpower? Apparently Israel has now assumed the role of the policeman of that region by

Even to a detached observer the so-called peace process since 1993, so assiduously steered by President Clinton himself, has become a mere "surrender process" for the Palestinian people. They had lost their original homeland when the state of Israel was created without any semblance of negotiation with the inhabitants of old Palestine. Subsequently, the people of Palestine were driven out of their homes and villages to make room for Jewish settlements: they became refugees in their own land.

invite sanctions on Israel.

AN emergency summit meet- 242, and fresh colonisation of

ing is being held at the Egyptian resort Sharm el Sheikh to stop the violence raging over the past two weeks in which more than 100 nearly all of them Palestinians have been killed. The stakes are presumably high. What triggered the Palestinian anger and Israeli reprisal is now old story; events thereafter have taken a grave turn, almost to the demned excessive use of force by

concession, specifically on Jeru-

In the much-touted democratic state of Israel, the Arab citizens of Israel remain without equal rights; they have recently been subjected to "pogroms" and even killed by their Jewish neighbours. This is akin to an apartheid regime though it is hardly talked about let alone

Denied as they are of their rights to nationhood, the Palestinians have been forced to make concessions after concessions while at the same time Israel was allowed to go scot-free in noncompliance of the UN resolution

Palestinian land. The Oslo peace accord, flawed as it was, has been diluted in

favour of Israel during the socalled peace process negotiations under the stewardship of the US. Ironically, throughout this

process it is the victim and the powerless who has been pressurised to make concessions.

The above account does not include the daily indignities being inflicted on the Arabs in Israel which amounts to violation of human rights of citizens and racial discrimination with total impunity.

One cannot but conclude that the "peace process" is a cruel joke and in fact a surrender process that is being forced down the throat of a besieged population.

Now, the "summit" at Sharm el Sheikh is on. Grave are the stakes. The parties are warned of severe consequences if they fail to relent. The warning so deftly orchestrated by the media on cue is actually directed more if not entirely towards Chairman Arafat. For the Palestinians perhaps the defining moment has arrived; they either have to draw the "red line" on the sand and resist the tirade of "negotiations" with an adversary which enjoys unlimited immunity from punishment for its violations of international law and human rights they may chose the path of resistance even at the cost of delays and more sacrifice, or they can choose to surrender and live in a rump second-class state at least for now.

What will the larger "international community" wish to choose is an open question. Whatever it is, there can be no peace that will endure without justice. History is replete with examples. Unless and until the fundamental equation is set right, there will remain instability and strife in the region. At the minimum, while the right to exist may no longer be denied to Israel and this has been done by its arch enemies already, peace will require the return by Israel of all occupied territories it took in the 1967 war, and full sovereignty to the Palestinian state. Anything short of that or any other contrivance would inevitably fail for it would be unjust and untenable.

To the Editor ...

Bad news for BD Sir, A news about the arsenic

disaster in Bangladesh was published in 'The Independent', the highest circulated and popular newspaper of the UK, on October 11, 2000. It was horrifying as well as revealing news for the people of the country. The heading of the news was "Unseen and untold: The mass poisoning of an entire nation". Apart from the report by its correspondent in Dhaka Mr. Peter Popham, The Independent extensively quotes World Bank and World Health Organisation (WHO). The latter's report says, The scale of the disaster in Bangladesh is beyond the accidents in Bhopal and Chernobyl". Below I am quoting a few lines from the news for the kind information of the people of Bangladesh so that they can take proper measures to tackle the problem immediately though it is getting too late. The news also reveals the harsh truth about the insincerity of the pres-

ent ruling echelon of Bangladesh. The report says, 'This country [Bangladesh], beset by famine and disease since its fiery birth 30 years ago, is confronting its biggest crisis: the accidental poisoning of as many as 85 million of its 125 million people with arseniccontaminated drinking water.' The more unfortunate and devastating thing for the people of Bangladesh is (as reported in "The Independent"): "The first cases of arsenic-induced skin lesions were identified across the border in West Bengal, India, in 1983. The Bangladesh government and many international agencies have known the approximate size of the disaster for three years. Two years ago the World Bank and others gave the government as interest-free loan of \$44m (£30m) to begin tackling

the crisis in the most urgent, arsenic-free water supply to affected communities." It goes on, "Yet two years on the \$44m remains unspent while officials haggle over how to use it. In Dhaka there is no feeling that the government is gearing up to tackle a disaster."

The report quotes a World

Bank official, 'There are 80,000 villages in the country [Bangladesh]. So far the government has covered only 1,000. If they go on at this pace, it will take hundreds of years before they reach the villages." It also quotes Mr. Mahmudur Rahman, a professor of medicine at Dhaka National Medical College. He says, 'We have been told to expect an epidemic of cancers in the next 10 years. The victims will be people in their thirties and forties who have been drinking the water all their lives people in their most productive years." The report puts the warning in this manner: "But unless they [the people of Bangladeshl rise to the challenge soon, a disaster to dwarf Bangladeshi disasters past will become unavoidable." This ominous news with a map of Bangladesh occupied almost the whole front of The Independent of October 11, 2000. The map precisely shows that about 95 per cent area of Bangladesh is affected by this disaster. I don't know whether the ruling elite of the country has taken the protection for themselves and for their kith and kin nor I know about what they have done with the money they received from the World Bank and other organisations as interestfree loan to fight the problem. This insincerity and indifference. at least, proves that the govern-

ment has no regard for the life of

the people or for the people of its simple mannerby providing an own party. Is it not a bad news for the people of Bangladesh? So the people themselves should come forward to solve the disaster that claims their lives.

with three other Afro-Asian lead-

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A Cry in the Fire

Sir, Helicopters loaded with

rockets and missiles were flying in the sky. Military tanks were taking their position. War ships were also seen. The helicopters flying were firing the missiles and waves of rockets. No, I am not describing any video or computer game nor I am talking of any action packed Hollywood movie on war. This was the live coverage shown in CNN and BBC World the other night. CNN reporter Ben was describing the live event of the missile-attacks by the helicopters as if he were commentating on a live football match. Hats off to all those reporters along with the crew who took the risk of their life and showed the world the live attacks by the IDF at the city of Gaza and Ramallah in Palestine. The attacks were on immediately after the Joahar Prayers. The helicopters targeted not only the police stations but also the Head Quarter of President Yasser Arafat in Ramallah, the radio station over there and many civilian buildings in Gaza and Ramallah. Anyone who has seen the telecast must have seen how the innocent civilians were running for their life.

The whole world has seen how Mohammed Al-Dura, a 12-yearold boy died on his fathers lap after being trapped under heavy Israeli fire in Palestinian ruled Gaza. What was his offence? A

two-year-old girl was shot dead West Bank by the attacks launched by the Israeli Army. The world witnessed the brutal incidents. Everyone knows the violence started and the peace process was derailed when Sharon. the Israeli leader of opposition, entered the Al-Aska Mosque along with Israeli troops

The world witnessed when Palestinian under different parts of the world gathered in Beirut to fight for their occupied territory dropping their studies, carriers on one call from Chairman Arafat. The freedom fighters were not afraid of death as they had high determination and dedica-

The world witnessed when Israelis targeted the civilians in Lebanon that had provided shelter to the Palestinians with bombing, shelling rockets and missiles. The world saw the way Arafat fought and changed his HQ frequently to survive. The world saw how and when the Israeli attacked the innocent civilians. The world remained silent

We have seen the quick respond from US President, when he sent its army in the Gulf immediately after the King Fahd-Bin-Abdulaziz has requested for its assistance. We have seen the UN to respond to both Kosovo and East Timor. We from this part of the world can do nothing but ask the US and the UN to take necessary steps immediately so as to ensure no killing of Duras takes place and to restore peace in the region. We would urge the Arab world and Muslim world to fight against the situation unitedly.

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