

US-China relations: Signs of strains

HARUN UR RASHID

President Bush's national security team of defence and foreign policy chiefs is rich in experience but their views do not seem to sit well with the existing global political reality.

The strained relations between the US and China does not augur well in particular for Asian countries because relations with America and China are both important to them.

President's National Security Adviser Ms. Rice (46) appears to be more hawkish. A tough-minded academic who sees China as a potential threat, she argues that the US should never be afraid to confront Beijing when its interests collide.

There is a view in the Bush administration that the US, under Clinton presidency, has made 'dangerous and military concessions' to the Chinese.

administration's emphasis is being placed on Japan which hosts 47,000 American troops under a Security Treaty that forms the bedrock of the US Asia-Pacific security for 50 years.

In the light of this scenario, the news of alleged Chinese involvement of laying underground optical fibre in Iraq to improve its ability to detect and target US and British military aircraft is likely to increase tensions between the two countries.

credentials in recent days. General Powell appears to be so concerned that he reportedly raised the matter with Chinese officials at the UN.

It is reported that the air raids on Iraq were carried out on 16 February by US and British jets out of concern that Iraqi radar and command/control stations were about to become more effective due to fibre-optic connections.

against Yugoslavia in 1999.

Political analysts believe that there is no small irony in the fact that Powell, a Gulf War hero, has to confront again Iraq equipped with its new air defence network allegedly installed by Chinese technicians.

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Barrister Harun ur Rashid is former Bangladesh Ambassador to the UN, Geneva.

Goodbye Tulu Uncle

SHUMIT REHMAN

WITH great regret we had to say farewell to Zeaul Huq, known as Tulu to his friends and Tulu Chacha or Uncle to the sons and daughters of his friends.

He befriended the offspring of his friends like no other. He knew most of us from birth and kept in touch till death. Not from Tulu Uncle came a brief hello or the usual pleasantries that one gets from other friends of parents, but a genuine interest in your well-being, your career, your marriage and your future.

Then to sit down in front of him and tell him what you were up to was something quite exceptional across the two generations. And whenever you left you would be implored to return soon, with your wife or your kids and only sometimes with your parents.

Much of his interest in the younger generation stemmed from his love of culture. As his contemporaries got older and stayed longer at home, he would ask the kids what the best films were, where the best theatres were on and when should we go.

he saw and was hardly ever critical. The films he really appreciated, he would speak glowingly about for days with enthusiasm.

Just last year in London we went



Late Zeaul Huq (Tulu)

to see a play with his daughter Tuli and nephew Shakil. He turned up in the foyer immaculate as ever. He easily won the prize of best-dressed Uncle. Blazer and trousers, matching tie and handkerchief and highly polished shoes.

they have not mentioned that the kids were often invited as well. And when we arrived we would be given as big a greeting as our parents and always looked after by our host whether our age was 6 or 60.

I was present on his wedding day to Jolly Auntie. He asked me matter-of-factly what I thought of her. I was, as I think most men were, in awe of Jolly Auntie so my answer was very positive.

When his body was due on Friday night from Singapore I was surprised to see so many other children of his friends waiting sadly for the coffin to arrive.

Our last meeting was shortly before I left for London in December. His last words to me were 'and next time bring your wife and daughter'.

I am so glad I didn't have to face him in his last days and I am left with a memory of an upright man without a walking stick, still handsome, with a strong voice and a full head of hair.

Bangladesh-Kuwait Maitry Hospital

A two million dollar baby without care

M SHAFIULLAH

Two huge sign boards on Isa Khan Avenue, Sector 6, Uttara Model Town, 15 km north of Metropolitan Dhaka unmistakably draws attention to the existence of Bangladesh-Kuwait Friendship Hospital.

A group of Kuwaiti philanthropists donated the General Hospital Building to provide medical care to the poor. KJRC Dhaka office executed the project on the plot of land allocated by RAJUK.

The tender committee comprised of representatives of the relevant Bangladesh Government Departments was headed by Kuwaiti Ambassador Ibrahim Najran.

Strangely enough KJRC encountered another set of problem in handing over the building. There was no taker or conversely there were rival claimants.

Ministry and the PWD was involved in processing the tender documents and day to day supervision of the construction.

Just to recapitulate the backgrounds. In mid 1993 ambassador Najran one day walked in to my office room and gave vent to his frustration over the proposed Kuwaiti General Hospital.

A flash back came in to my mind of a circumstance in Stockholm in 1991. Economic Counsellor Rahman Aziz and myself as the Political Counsellor went to SIDA office to persuade for restoration of full amount of Swedish grant of 150 million kronor out of which 10 million were slashed down.

giving a wrong signal to aspiration of an emerging free society. The response, however, was far from our submission. The officials explained that a significant portion of grant to Bangladesh remain unutilized for successive years.

Some two years after the completion of the hospital building the structure was formally handed over to the Chief Engineer Mokitur Rahman of PWD and the Health Minister [later] Salahuddin Yusuf by the successor Kuwaiti Ambassador H M Abdullah al-Muhateeb and the KJRC engineer Tariq al-Isa on 15 March 1999.

If time and tide wait for none it was more so in the case of the Kuwaiti Hospital. Another two years rolled by. Two front iron gates got rusted and the building gathered its fair share of dust.

was pursuing certain allegations against KJRC brought by some Bangladeshis. PWD invited tender twice to run the hospital on private line. In the middle of last year another tender was floated.

Kuwaitis in general are dismayed at the overall developments of events surrounding the KJRC office and the hospital building.

At this point it would not perhaps be out of place to turn a page of history. Kuwaiti Foreign Minister Sheikh Sabah al-Ahmad al-Jaber Al-Sabah led a delegation of a group of Islamic Foreign Ministers to Dhaka in February 1974 carrying invitation letter of Pakistani President Z A Bhutto for Bangladesh Prime Minister Sheikh Mujibur Rahman to attend OIC summit in Lahore.

the unique opportunity to accompany him. In his first embrace with the then Emir, Bangabandhu remarked, 'You are Sheikh of oil and I am Sheikh of water'.

Kuwaiti Hospital is a small irritant in the context of our overall bilateral relations which must be resolved by taking the following immediate steps at the high political level.

M Shafiullah, till recently was Ambassador to Libya, Tunisia, Malta and the State of Palestine.

M J ZAHEDI

THE federal government recently took several decisions, two of which relate to aliens and 'jihad' organisations. The decision concerning aliens relates to people from other countries, who are said to be in Pakistan illegally; they include people from other parts of South Asia and Myanmar.

Whatever the number may be, there is no gainsaying the fact that the influx of illegal aliens has been having an adverse effect on the country's job-market, especially because Pakistan is already a labour-abundant economy. This

For a timely step to check the slide

influx has also adversely affected the internal security situation, because the illegal aliens live in a subterranean existence that provides ready recruits to the crime and subversion syndicates.

Naturally, every government has tried to come to grips with it. But due

course after a warning) for displaying arms! It has been taken by everyone with a pinch of salt and doubts are being expressed whether the order can be implemented.

the killing of a member of the public, though arms toting, may act as a spark for further violence.

LETTER FROM KARACHI

The actual position is, The News said, the government appears powerless to do anything when arms make public appearances. The arms recovery campaign has not yielded the expected result and crimes continue to be committed with sophisticated weapons, 'almost with impunity'.

to a lack of sustained political will and institutional lapses, no concrete and sustained action has been forthcoming. Therefore, the current drive to tackle the issue will need determination, as The News said, in the implementation stage.

It is indeed difficult to draw out the aliens because it is easy for them to merge into the crowds and, thanks to the many mafias profiting from the lucrative trade, they acquire not only national identity papers but also citizenship, more often by official default.

It must however be kept in mind that while the present attempt to control the damage caused by past neglect is commendable, its success will depend ultimately on a concomitant ability to stem future inflows. This can be facilitated immensely by regional cooperation.

But in any case the mafias trafficking in human cargo will have to be smashed, said The News. Alien registration will have to be backed up by strict and sustained law enforcement. Only by making illegal aliens' entry into the country difficult, if not impossible, and illegal stay riskier than profitable, can there be any hope for the success of the present drive.

The decisions regarding the 'jihad' organisations give evidence of the government's good intentions but The Nation has raised several questions on whether the government can deliver on the decision. One of the decisions gives the police the power to shoot anyone of

part of valour, not to use the gun even in a situation where it is called for.

Besides, as The News points out, arms have also been, on occasions, displayed by elements sympathetic to the government but no action has been taken. Such exceptions encourage even apolitical criminals to take liberties with a ban on the use of arms.

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In painful remembrance

A R SHAMSUL ISLAM

THE news of the demise of my bosom friend Tawfiq Aziz Khan, an eminent journalist, sports reporter and commentator, the executive editor of The Daily Star came to me surprisingly late. I was then confined to a bed of the BIRDEM Hospital after undergoing a six-and-a-half hour operation conducted with utmost loving care and profound precision by a team of doctors led by eminent surgeon ENT Head Prof ZA Amin at my neck that befriended squamous cell carcinoma.

In the meantime a much less acquainted, many years junior, friend of mine broke the news of the demise of Tawfiq by an archaic way of reference. He was probably sure that I must have got that information much earlier since Tawfiq and I are close friends and an affair of one is to reach the other in the quickest of time.

I can't describe how I felt when I learnt that Tawfiq was no more. I was then lying in a hospital bed. I felt the bed was nose diving deeper and deeper into abyssal darkness, chill and uncertainty of a grave. My heart ceased to throb, my voice was choked and my feeling stopped to work for quite an alarming period.

I met Tawfiq last time on the 3rd instant, the evening before my being admitted to BIRDEM, in Salahuddin

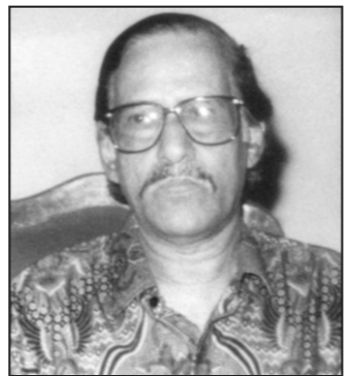
Hospital. I think he was then in a semi-coma. As I looked at his eyes till then open from very close what response he gave was unintelligible. Bhabhi Saheba (Mrs Suraya) remarked that Tawfiq might have identified me. I fondly liked to believe but hard logic did not corroborate it. With my personal knowledge of cancer, I with my own hand examined his lymph nodes, neck nodes that simply declared haughtily to be very aggressive, dangerous and devastating. I had practically no other option than to sink down pathetically and helplessly. In the meantime the most veteran oncologist Mr Karim took a routine check up of the patient and went back leaving an open, gloomy, hopeless indication that none of us including patient's wife, children had any difficulty or doubt to read.

What I did next being hospitalised in the BIRDEM the next day was to abandon purchasing and reading newspapers of all sorts probably in a worst exercise of escapism. An unknown fear of a known calamity must have gripped my mind to an abnormal degree. How foolishly I tried to disown that God's ordain is irrevocable and man is best to accept it in a spirit of calm resignation.

Tawfiq's qualities of head and heart are voluminous. His excellence of journalism, sports reporting and running commentaries, administrative acumen, financial discipline, organising ability, endearing colleagues and inculcating a sense of belongingness in them etc. were indeed vast that have been reflected in the newspapers by way of tribute. It is very likely that his colleagues, friends, admirers will pour out their heart in praise, respect and love of

this giant journalist on the pages of the newspaper, journals and books to remember this ever lovable, enjoyable personality.

I am not going to assess Tawfiq's



Late Tawfiq Aziz Khan

standing in those fields. Painfully aware of my poor limitations I know certainly that I am unfit to take such a scholastic task in my hand. This is the exclusive domain of critics, academicians, analysts.

I will simply remember Tawfiq in some of his personal, private traits of character. I cannot remember when Tawfiq and I were first known. But it must not be later than we used to wear, some undercloth in our 'very first stage of baby'.

As a schoolboy Tawfiq was highly unconventional in mood and method. He ridiculed the idea of a boy memorising his class lessons by burning midnight lamp and vomiting the memorised particles the next day in the class to arrest

mundane appreciation from the attending teachers. He identified this type of labour of memorisation with that of a coolie loading and unloading goods at a station or ghat. Rightly did he perceive that too much dependence on memorisation kills the power of imagination of a disciple rendering him into a 'memory box' unable to move on its own when the path is uncharted which a true fighter has to encounter many a time in his life.

Tawfiq was devoted to reading journals, periodicals, souvenirs, particularly those in English, which were very limited in number and that too poorly available to us in those of our school and college days in forties and fifties. What he read rehearsed to us very softly and submissively obviously to encourage us to extend our reading range and keep us abreast of latest developments. He had a knack to enrich English vocabulary that he mastered quite appreciably.

My friend had an edge over us in that he had a proud possession of a radio in forties a medium that very few organisations, let alone individuals, were equipped with. He heard the national and international news regularly and understood the broadcast-casting voices comfortably that many of us, to speak the truth, got confused to learn. I clearly remember that usually during Calcutta First Division League Football matches played particularly between Mohammedan Sporting Club and Mohunbagan or East Bengal we flocked around Tawfiq's radio set to listen to the running commentaries delivered by Pearson Sureta, Vizzy etc. and when the voices of the commentators, in exciting moments of the match, got drowned by the

loud cheers of the fidgety supporters we looked askingly at Tawfiq to tell us what actually happened on the field as the remnant faint voice of the commentators that could pass through wild cheers of the crowd was in his grasp and intelligibility.

As a friend Tawfiq was unquestionably the loveliest. He was master of the art of endearing one almost to the point of pleasant infatuation. We greatly enjoyed being captured and captivated by his unalloyed love and affection precisely blended with newer brand of wit and humour. He lovingly enquired more of less privileged and less fortunate friends. Mirth and jollity was the hallmark of his character. Gloom hardly dared to come closer to him.

Tawfiq adored play-ground over anything else. He was consistently the first to turn on it daily and unbrokely the last to leave it. He soon proved himself a dynamic game maker. This rare virtue of his transcended other domains like journalism with amazing ease and exquisiteness.

Last time towards the end of December 1999 when I got a part of my cancer-affected tongue excised he was my guide and guardian. What an irony of fate is that when Tawfiq himself was attacked with that fatal disease I could not prove even an attendant of him. This sense of guilt I shall have to bear till the last day of my life which, in a liberal calculation, may not be far off. May Tawfiq forgive me.

Practically I had no inkling that Tawfiq was sick before the middle of December last. When I learnt it I was having a problematic health. Still I dashed to Dhaka by a coach on the 22nd December last. But fate

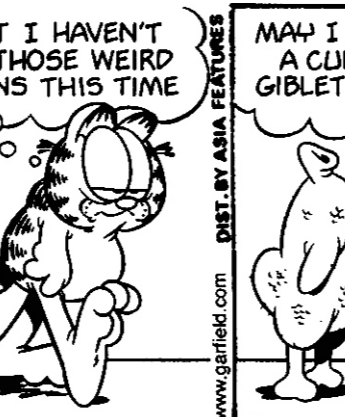
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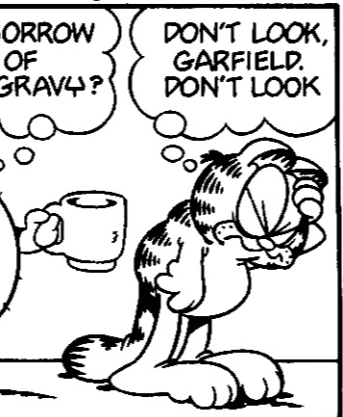
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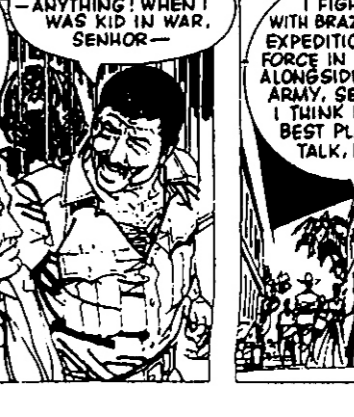
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