

## Slobodan Milosevic: Beginning of the end



ARSHAD-UZ ZAMAN

THE arrest of Serbian leader Slobodan Milosevic by the Yugoslav authorities marks the end of a bloody decade in the Balkans and beginning of a new phase. He is the architect of brutal bloodshed in the Balkans, the like of which the world has rarely known.

The life of Milosevic has not lacked in drama and his arrest, with gun in hand either to kill himself and his family or face his opponents, was all one piece of theatre. It was cool headiness of the Belgrade police that finally won the day. It is remarkable that a warrant of arrest had been issued quite some time ago by the Yugoslav authorities. Hanging on his head was the indictment of the International Court of Justice at the Hague, where he is wanted for War Crimes Trial.

With the arrest of Milosevic one colourful figure disappears from the world stage. He has been a Serbian nationalist through and through. His entire career has been built

upon whipping up ultra nationalist feelings of the Serbs and his dream has been to build a Great Serbia. He really made his grand entry into the international political arena a decade ago following the splintering of Yugoslavia of Josip Broz Tito in the early eighties. Milosevic wanted to establish domination of the Serbs on other ethnic varieties forming the former Yugoslavia.

His first target was Bosnia-Herzegovina. There was a special reason for the ferocity of attack on Bosnia. The population was Muslim

and in the building of Taj Mahal. (such was the hatred of Milosevic of everything Ottoman that he had the Mostar bridge reduced to rubble). Yet for all those five centuries the Serb children were brought up with extreme hatred against the Ottoman rule. There is a small town at the border of Yugoslavia and Bulgaria called Nis and there is a museum where objects of Ottoman atrocities are exhibited. Thus hatred of Ottoman rule has been ingrained in every Yugoslav child.

As Yugoslavia started splintering,

joined their Bosnian brethren. It was finally the NATO coalition through its bombing of Serb strongholds, that brought a recalcitrant Milosevic to the negotiating table. In the bloody warfare waged by Milosevic, he had applied his brutal prescription under the nomenclature of "ethnic cleansing". The hatred of the Muslim Bosnian was so profound that he felt that his nation the Serbs must be cleansed of the "Islamic virus".

After Bosnia the target became Kosovo, which too decided to part

from the other Serb nation Russia. Yet as his country went on splintering has he received massive blows from the world of Islam and NATO, his popular support went on dwindling. Elections were held in Yugoslavia that created world wide interest. He was soundly defeated at the polls in the hands of Vojislav Kostunica, who became the new President.

Although his career appeared to be coming to an end Milosevic was not ready to throw in the towel. Cases for corruption to murder were

figure in the eyes of the Yugoslavs. A tussle is bound to ensue regarding the fate of this extraordinary personality. Authorities in Belgrade are bound to feel the pressure from across the world for the trial of Milosevic at the Hague.

A small incident in Yugoslavia, ignited the First World War in 1914. The last decade of conflict surrounding Yugoslavia brought the world on the brink of a potential conflict. Fortunately since the madman in Belgrade, Milosevic, was effectively isolated the conflict did not spread beyond its borders. Anyhow the great powers had no stomach for warfare but were rather eager to douse the embers of war.

As Slobodan Milosevic languishes in a Belgrade jail he would have time to reflect on the horrible bloodshed he was caused in the name of Serbian nationalism. We live in a time of nation states and attempts go apace to build larger units like the so far successful experiment of European Union. Regional groupings like ASEAN and many others are flourishing. Sadly SAARC continues to flounder caught in the tussle between two of its biggest members India and Pakistan.

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## THE HORIZON THIS WEEK

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and of Turkish extraction. It may be recalled that when the Ottoman rule spread far and wide and established itself in the Balkans, people in Bosnia-Herzegovina and some neighbouring areas voluntarily converted to Islam. True to the Islamic faith, the religion was never imposed on the local population. The Ottoman rule lasted nearly five centuries and the Muslims and the Orthodox Serbs lived side by side in perfect harmony. During the height of the Ottoman rule Sultan Suleyman the Magnificent built an architectural marvel of a bridge at Mostar by his world famous architect Sinan, whose disciple had a

Bosnia-Herzegovina wanted to go its own way. The Bosnian aspirations were put down with incredible brutality and the war continued for many years. Under the inspiring leadership of the Bosnian Muslim leader Alija Izetbegovic, the Bosnians mounted a spirited defence, which drew the admiration of the world. For once the Islamic world awoke and extended its hand of help. I recall that in Istanbul a class friend of Izetbegovic, a Sudanese gentleman, opened an office where he collected arms and shipped them to the Bosnian fighters. The Saudis extended powerful financial help and Turkish fighters

levelled against him in Yugoslav courts. Meanwhile Milosevic had caused such universal condemnation that the International Court of Justice set up a tribunal and accused him of the worst human rights violations. The International Court of Justice wants that Milosevic must be handed over to them.

With the arrest and sending to Yugoslav jail of Milosevic the new phase of his life has begun. President Kostunica has said that Milosevic will be tried under Yugoslav law and inside Yugoslavia. It is difficult to gauge popular sentiment regarding Milosevic. Although he was defeated at the polls, he remains a formidable

company from Yugoslavia. The Serbs had been nurtured with the belief that the origin of Serbian nationalism was Kosovo. So Milosevic sent his army against tiny and hapless Kosovans. Once again thanks to the energetic leadership of President Bill Clinton of the US, Milosevic was brought to his senses by sustained bombing of his hide-outs. Milosevic played cat and mouse game with the NATO forces but ultimately caved in.

From the battlefield Milosevic had to face the electorate of Yugoslavia. He had built his career by whipping up Serb sentiments and managed to get a semblance of support

feasible to indigenously develop or import a system. If import option is chosen, Defence Attaches at Indian embassies abroad identify potential suppliers, to present their proposals. These are sent to the DRDO, the DDP&S and the Finance Division of the MoD for comments. The amount of foreign exchange involved dictates whether the Financial Adviser to the Defence Minister or the Secretary of Expenditure at the Ministry of Finance must approve the transfer. The MoD then either approves for trial evaluations of the weapon system in India or sends its study teams abroad.

This complicated process is supposed to make the procurement effective and corruption-free, but the opposite has become the norm. Moreover, the decision-making process is civilian-heavy. The Indian Air Force asked for a jet trainer almost 15 years ago, it has now just reached the evaluation stage, it will be obsolete before it reaches the operational line, if ever Tehelka showed how complicated systems are prone to be easily corrupted by those controlling the system. Corruption is alive and well in Pakistan but our systems are less complicated and more user-oriented.

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## Arms trade: Second oldest profession

IKRAM SEHGAH

THE Vajpayee Government has been rocked by the Tehelka scandal, the scam exploding the self-propagated myth of BJP's pristine conduct while in governance. For the moment the Parliamentary decorum of Lok Sabha is in shambles and sessions have been repeatedly adjourned in the face of violent protest by the Opposition bent upon exploiting the widening chink in BJP's armour.

Outspoken Defence Minister George Fernandes (and leader of his own party in the BJP-led coalition) has resigned in the face of his close friend and party colleague Jaya Jaitli accepting a bribe in front of a hidden camera. The carefully crafted facade of the corruption-free administration has been blown away by an enterprising investigation team that has exposed the utter degradation of the arms procurement process of the Indian Armed Forces. Several holier-than-thou uniformed luminaries recently appeared on various Indian TV channels to squeeze the last drop of anti-Pakistan Army propaganda out of the Hamoodur Rahman Commission (HRC) Report. But is there anything more demeaning than to see uniformed officers on videotape not only engaging in polite conversation how to short-circuit the procurement process but also receiving bribes?

Whether civilian or army officials, politicians or party activists, all were recorded by hidden TV cameras to be part and parcel of a giant corruption combine that has been milking India dry for decades. Those belonging to the world's oldest profession held an open air world convention in Kolkata (Calcutta) a few weeks ago. These ladies may have been some way ahead in morality when compared to the arms trade, the world's second oldest profession. The transcripts make amazing reading, the videotapes amazing viewing. The entire gamut of civil and military leader-

ship in India is seen on prime time TV as being not only thoroughly corrupt but being dangerously ignorant of defence equipment and their potential value.

Col (Retd) Ravinder Pal Singh (of the Mahar Regiment) wrote two books on "Arms Procurement Decision-making" when he was leader of SIPRI's Procurement Decision Military Project in Stockholm. I have taken the liberty of quoting extensively from his research. The effectiveness of a free press in democratic India holding defence procurement accountable is limited by a number of factors. Academic

Soviet Union and the UK. In a way that circumscribed a thorough evaluation process. Rajiv Gandhi's Government made large purchases during 1984-89, gradual improvements were made in research and development (R&D) and systems integration for in-country assembly of weapons.

India was shocked by the 1962 border war with China. Defence Minister Krishna Memon had turned his arms factories into manufacturing consumer items, an ASC officer, Lt Gen Kaul made it to the command of a theatre of operations, the net result was disaster. System-

international and regional security affairs; (b) defence policy; (c) weapons and equipment; and (d) financial planning. The COSC coordinates broad military objectives and strategies and forwards its recommendations to the MoD. After its advice to the MoD on military strategy has been accepted, each of the Armed Services plans its own force levels and related weapons and equipment procurement.

The 1987-88 parliamentary inquiry into the Bofors contract exposed the inner workings of the Indian Army's formal arms procurement process, mostly it was a

atic defence planning began with the introduction of five-year defence plans in the mid-1960s. The first two plans (1964/65 and 1968/69) proposed building a defence production base to gradually reduce external dependence. The Minister of Defence (MoD) Planning Cell draws up the five-year defence plan for approval by the Defence Minister and the Cabinet Committee on Procurement Affairs (CCPA). Each Armed Service bases its annual plans on this plan. Long-term plans with a 15- to 20-year time-frame, called perspective plans, are drafted by the Armed Services. In 1986 the Government of India set up the Defence Planning Staff (DPS), a multidisciplinary body consisting of representatives from the three Armed Services, Defence Research and Development Organisation (DRDO). DPS provides inputs to the Chiefs of Staff Committee (COSC) on a variety of issues related to defence planning including: (a)

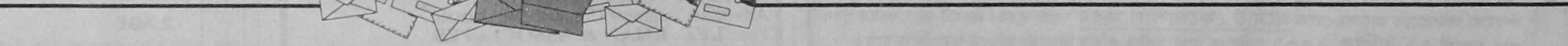
bureaucratic chain, a fig leaf for outside observers. It is reasonable to presume that the Navy and the Air Force would follow similar roadmaps.

The preparation begins with a Philosophy Paper, broadly identifying the characteristics and advantages of new weapon systems in broad terms. The General Staff Equipment Policy Committee (GSEPC) is then chaired by the Vice-Deputy Chief of the Indian Army and includes representatives of the MoD, the DRDO, the DDP&S, the Finance Division of the MoD and other agencies. GSEPC formalises weapon and equipment requirements in policy statements based on data from the army's directorates of military operations, staff duties, and weapons and equipment. These policy statements serve as guidelines. The DRDO comments on the feasibility of indigenous development. On the basis of the Philosophy Paper and DRDO's assessment, the MoD then examines whether it is

Trials are usually conducted on a 'no cost, no commitment' basis. The technical aspects of the proposals are examined by a "Technical Evaluation and Negotiating Committee" against the requirements identified by the Armed Forces. The proposals found technically acceptable are forwarded to the Price Negotiating Committee (PNC) for commercial negotiations. Both are MoD committees, but the PNC also has a representative from the Ministry of Finance and can invite revised quotations from the competing firms during the negotiations. Contracts for purchase may include an agreement for or commitment to licensed production, which is signed by the DDP&S. Corresponding credit agreements can also be negotiated simultaneously. Financial authority for procurement up to Rs 200 million (\$ 5.5 million) rests with the Secretary of Defence, for amounts up to Rs 500 million (\$ 13.7 million) with the

feasible to indigenously develop or import a system. If import option is chosen, Defence Attaches at Indian embassies abroad identify potential suppliers, to present their proposals. These are sent to the DRDO, the DDP&S and the Finance Division of the MoD for comments. The amount of foreign exchange involved dictates whether the Financial Adviser to the Defence Minister or the Secretary of Expenditure at the Ministry of Finance must approve the transfer. The MoD then either approves for trial evaluations of the weapon system in India or sends its study teams abroad.

## TO THE EDITOR TO THE EDITOR TO THE EDITOR TO THE EDITOR TO THE EDITOR



PHOTORIAL  
Readers are invited to send in exclusive pictures, colour or black and white, of editorial value, with all relevant information including date, place and significance of subject matter. Pictures received will not be returned.

### Unhygienic eatery



THIS PHOTORIAL HAS BEEN SENT BY AZIZ AMIRUL FROM UTTARA. WE WOULD LIKE MORE CONTRIBUTIONS FROM OUR READERS. PLEASE SEND US YOUR CONTRIBUTIONS!

Roadside eating places for the less affluent are seen everywhere in the city where food is prepared in earthen stoves or maatr choola. In one such place at Uttara, a group of starving people are relishing their meal. But are they aware by eating this unhygienic meal, they could be exposed to diseases like hepatitis, typhoid or cholera? Is there anyone to raise social awareness about food cleanliness and hygiene?

## Politics of atrocity

Opposition should realise that life is not expendable

AS we mourn the death of Badruddin, the unfortunate rickshaw-puller who yesterday succumbed to the injuries he had sustained the day before, we would like to ask the opposition, where have you dragged politics down to? The poor man didn't bring out his rickshaw to defy your haral call. He did it because he had to. Otherwise, his family might have had to do without food for days together. Now, thanks to your overzealous activists who didn't even hesitate before hurling an explosive on his rickshaw, his family might have to starve anyway. Badruddin is not the only victim in this recent spate of confrontational politics. Saidul Islam, the hapless autorickshaw driver who decided to work additional hours for some extra money to see his family of eight through three days of haral, has also fallen prey to this politics of atrocity. At six o'clock Sunday morning, when the 60-hour haral kicked off, opposition activists dragged him out of his autorickshaw, doused him in petrol and set him afire. Now, with 72 per cent of his body severely burnt, he is fighting death. We ask again, is this what you call politics for people? Who do you mean by people? Certainly, not those like Badruddin and Saidul who live from hand to mouth.

Let us remind the opposition, lest they forget, this is not the first time that such an act of sheer savagery has occurred. Remember, more than a year ago, it was our activists who had set a rickshaw-puller ablaze for plying his non-motorised three-wheeler during haral hours. The poor chap later succumbed to his burn injury. Every time there is a haral or some other agitation programmes, we are greeted the next morning with impersonal statistics on casualty -- one killed and few hundreds injured, and likewise. The present ruling party, now full of concern for innocent citizens, itself committed similar atrocities in the past. Our politicians never bother to keep the count. Saidul and many others, it seems, are expendable as they pursue their political objectives.

There should be a limit to the orgy of harming people and destroying their properties the political parties have mindlessly indulged themselves in. We would like to remind both the ruling and opposition parties that they have been entrusted with the grave responsibility of representing people, protecting and promoting their interest. So far, they have toyed with popular demands and wishes, and unleashed monsters in the name of political activism. The politics of atrocity must end, and end now. Life is not expendable, our politicians must realise.

## Threat to natural food resources

Stop sidetracking the fundamental issue

WE would like to tell our leaders that because of their obsessive preoccupation to hurt each other, they have not only impinged on people's basic right to work and commute in safety, but also have paid the least attention to crying problems of national development. The threat posed to our natural food resources, both indigenous fresh water fish and livestock, has been almost criminally sidetracked.

We used to take our plentiful supplies of fresh water fish for granted. But since the Ershad regime, when policymakers short-sightedly encouraged the import of alien species of fish, indigenous varieties have been seriously depleted. Though the alien fish are larger and more protein-rich, they are devouring fish feed and even local fish, many of which are becoming extinct.

Experts at the Bangladesh Agricultural University (BAU) have launched pilot projects to breed local fish in protective habitats, but the ministry has done nothing to bring this issue into the forefront of the national agenda. Banned alien varieties, such as the African catfish, are still being illegally bred in private hatcheries. Why is the ministry closing its eyes to the harm being done to such a valuable and naturally bestowed resource?

Similarly, the ministry is taking the latent threat from Foot and Mouth Disease most casually. Experts at BAU have disclosed that this highly contagious disease is widespread in cattle here. Normally, meat and dairy products from diseased cattle are not harmful for humans. But outbreaks of the disease have created near-panic situations in Europe where entire herds are being burned to prevent its spread. We would like to know why our authorities are taking this issue so lightly? Does the health of our people count for so little that not even an investigation has been launched to assess the situation?

The Ministry of Agriculture must get its priorities right. Jeopardising natural bounties that sustain and nurture human life smacks of callousness and irresponsibility. Unless it wakes up fast to its responsibilities, we will be forced to deal with disasters that are not an act of God, but entirely man-made.

## A call for sanity

These are difficult times. The hot summer is arriving and our political scene also seems to be heating up. It seems that the whole nation is being held to ransom by two stubborn ladies.

When one puts forward unreasonable conditions to the other for stepping down, the other reacts with ultimatums. The result is chaos for our civil life. No schools for children, the day labourers suffer, office work slows to a halt and street fights, bomb hurling, car wrecking become the order of the day. Just what do these leaders think of themselves that they can jeopardise the lives and property of the citizens of Bangladesh?

I don't know why being part of the silent majority, we have to take all this lying down. I think the time is now ripe for a people's forum to speak out for the vast silent majority. It is about time that we told both leaders that we are sick of them. We are sick of their squabbling, pettiness, use of filthy language, their hired hoodlums.

There is only one sane alternative and I had suggested this five years ago: let there be a caretaker government, for at least two years.

Just imagine, no harals, no car breaking, no mass rallies and thus no traffic jams, two years of unrestricted schooling, non-politicised universities, no walking to work due to strikes/harals. No chandabaji, tadbirbaji or political killings.

In these two years we would want to see the real 'deshpremi' politi-

cians carrying out social work and development work, with the people, for the people. Then with an all out international polling system with international observers let there be for once, a free and fair election in this country.

Where is the brave majority to get this done?

Wasif Islam  
Dhaka

## Indecent remarks

Our politicians' intolerance of all opposing views from all quarters is simply repulsive. Unless they learn to develop respect for opposing views, sanity will never prevail in the political arena.

The Prime Minister's indecent remarks against the Opposition Leader regarding haral on the public meeting held on March 30, clearly revealed the immaturity and incompetence of our politicians. The country cannot be run in a democratic way unless leaders learn to act maturely. It is natural to have differences and opposite views but that doesn't give anyone the right to resort to political unrest like haral or make indecent remarks.

The politicians are the ones who lead the people. Therefore, no matter how much grudge they have against each other, they should restrain themselves and follow the path of democracy.

Nila Khan  
Shantinagar, Dhaka