

Involve the UN

Take all countries on board to fight terrorism

THE US fire power is perilously close to dropping its lethal payload in Afghanistan. Osama bin Laden is sought to be 'smoked out' from his hideout in that war-torn and drought-stricken beleaguered country. Speculations abound, however, that he may have already left the company of his benefactor Molla Omar, the supreme leader of the ruling Taliban regime in Afghanistan, for some other haven. If indeed this has happened then the Taliban regime will be facing the full fury of the US attack, not to mention the civilian casualties to be entailed.

What makes the scenario look dangerously loaded is a hint dropped by a *New York Times* report, based on a purported discord between the Secretary of State and the Assistant Secretary of Defence, that Saddam may be a target alongside Bin Laden. To the best of our knowledge, the US did not officially link Saddam Hussein to the terrorist attacks in the USA. But the only country to do so has been Israel from the very beginning. Tel Aviv has apparently played on the notion that only Saddam could have such a motivation. Whatever maybe the Israeli assumptions, the fact remains that if the US takes on the Iraqi leader afresh it will send a negative signal to the Arabs that the US paid heed to Israeli words. To that extent, they might feel put off in extending their crucial cooperation to the US to fight terrorism. In fact, several Arab states have already made it known that they would join the coalition against terrorism if Israel is not in it.

Over the last week when the US warships and fighter planes were being moved close to the Middle East and Afghanistan we thought the US was putting in place some arrangements for global policing. But the latest reports suggest that their operations code-named 'Infinite Justice' or 'Noble Eagle' are perhaps a whisker short of taking place in reality. President Bush's utterance -- "you are either with us or with the terrorists -- reverberates".

We are for a consensual international approach towards combating terrorism which in terms of its network has assumed the veritable character of a global scourge. The European Union representing NATO, so to speak, has called for initiative to fight terrorism under the auspices of the UNO. The basis for a UN role has been already postulated through the Security Council resolution No 1368 of 2001. It "condemned in strong terms the terrorist attacks in the US and called upon all states to work together to bring the perpetrators to justice". The UNGA is scheduled to discuss international terrorism on October 1. The occasion should be used to form a committee and assign it to follow up on the UNSC resolution so as to hammer out a comprehensive strategy to checkmate terrorism for the greater interest of the greatest number.

Turning a blind electronic eye

The non-use of airport surveillance TV points to a bigger malaise

THE Civil Aviation Authorities in Bangladesh (CAAB) are making a strange point by refusing to use their close circuit TVs (CCTVs) to ensure security in the ZIA airport. It means, you can drag a horse to the water tank but you can't make it drink. One may install all fancy electronic gadgetry at huge expenses, but who shall switch it on? The problem is deeper than an inefficient electronic eye. It is in the system of security that has virtually crashed at the airport.

Had shutting off CCTVs been the only woe one could have repaired that problem. Unfortunately, it's only one of the ills that plague the ZIA complex. Apparently, these CCTVs are used but to spy on each other. Although there many instances of passenger harassment to downright smuggling recorded by the cameras they have never been used to end such situations. This is probably a case of turning the proverbial blind eye.

But why would that happen unless of course there is more to it than what meets the electronic or eyes of other sorts. This is no secret that much goes on at the airport that qualifies as "off limits" activities and this sort of refusal to use CCTVs could well be linked to that. Such accusations are inevitable when despite claiming to have electronic evidence, it's never used. Something certainly smells.

Transparency will happen only when the higher authorities too believe in it and practice them. It's difficult to have only a section within the airport management acting responsibly when the rest roll merrily along doing their own thing. It isn't just CAAB but the immigration, customs or baggage sections are also derelict denizens there. In fact the space outside the airport has been often called a high yielding variety crime zone that is protected by political muscle.

What is happening at CAAB is only part of the problem, just one symptom of the malady. The disease is far deeper, which is a refusal by public organizations to be accountable to the people. That sense of service must be installed before they can be traced on surveillance cameras. And for that a TV channel switch isn't enough. A system switch is necessary.

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.



Mike menace!

Call it like that if you please. For microphones or loudspeakers have been a source of suffering for many in most of the localities since long. Whenever one is pleased to hold a function, even as private as within one's household, he would resort to air his 'choice' through loud speakers playing at shrill full volume continuously past midnight, caring a fig for others' plight and privacy. Now indiscriminate use of microphone by party campaigners during this election time has added fuel to the fire in volumes much more than the suffering public can bear, while the authorities have already turned a deaf ear to their plight.

STAR PHOTO: ANISUR RAHMAN

A time for introspection not war



M ABDUL HAFIZ

enemy, with its unprecedented skill, daring and precision in hitting its chosen targets, changed those equations in international relations. It caused a geo-political earth quake drastically altering the familiar contours of the world's strategic landscape. Indeed, the world seems to have spun out of its pivot that America has, so far, been within its supra-national stature.

The carnage in which thousands of innocent men, women and children perished was a human tragedy

introspection, sobriety and going deep into the possible dynamics behind repeated acts of terrorism against her. Instead, to bring a recalcitrant Taliban regime to its heel the US, reminiscent of nineteenth century gunboat diplomacy, is briskly mobilising troops, dispatching warships to the operational theatre, rallying support of the allies and arousing its own people with the battle cry for a long protracted war against the bases of international terrorism. In tandem, with this

grievances of the disadvantaged, backward and weak nations of the world it wants to silence them with sheer weight of the strength. It does work for a while but the backlash is bound to reappear in much more violent form.

We mourn for those who were dead in recent mayhem in America, sympathise with those who were maimed and crippled and share the griefs of those who lost their kith and kin. But do not the Americans also owe the display of similar senti-

perturbed at the violence of rock-throwing Palestinians but look the other way when Israel brings in F-16 to strafe the civilians in Palestinian West Bank. In the garb of honest broker in Middle East peace process she clearly takes the side of Israel and attempts to coerce an old decrepit Arafat into signing a document that neither gives Palestinians a viable state nor a control even Al Aqsa in Jerusalem. The US also backs Israeli stand in blocking the return of the millions of Palestinians

image as a 'crazy brave' mujahid fighting a Jihad against Soviet infidels. It is an irony that Laden is labeled a 'terrorist' by the same people! America is known for its double standard but it has reached a peak with regard to its role in Afghanistan. Afghans were 'Mujahideens' in the eye of the Americans only decade ago. Now they are terrorists because the assertion of their way of life no more suits American interests. No wonder that even George Washington was once called a terrorist.

Nevertheless, the Americans are a great nation, the torch bearer of the modern civilization and the champion of democracy and freedom at least, in their own country. One likes it or not, the destiny has placed them in a position to shape this world in certain mould. Therefore the international community has a great expectation from the Americans whose forefathers suffered persecution, deprivation and discrimination before they undertook perilous voyage to an unknown land and built up a great polity. The global community, weary of a conflict-torn world, is unanimous in their yearning for the end of terrorism, violence and coercion. But war is certainly not the way that would lead to the fulfilment of that yearning. If the history is any guide, no settlement through war had ever been enduring. It is aptly said that the treaty of Versailles itself contained the seed of the second world war. The result of fighting terrorism without stamping out the causes of it is bound to be illusory. It is impossible to fight an enemy having blind faith in his cause and little to lose.

It is only with love, compassion and a deep understanding of the suffering, deprivation and injustices meted out to the weaks and vulnerable that one can adopt a positive approach to combat terrorism. The revenge, hatred and use of force will only breed further terrorism and intensify it. And it is always the privilege of the powerful to be magnanimous, compassionate and understanding.

Brig (Rtd) Hafiz is a former DIG of Bangladesh Institute of International and Strategic Studies.

PERSPECTIVES

If the history is any guide, no settlement through war had ever been enduring. It is aptly said that the treaty of Versailles itself contained the seed of the second world war. The result of fighting terrorism without stamping out the causes of it is bound to be illusory. It is impossible to fight an enemy having blind faith in his cause and little to lose.

WHEN on 11 September last the terror struck the United States smashing down two of its great symbols of power, the World Trade Centre in New York and the Pentagon in Washington, it significantly changed the traditionally held notions of the security of the nations. Because the world's most formidable military and the largest arsenal remained in their places while the devastation overtook the nation exploding, in the process, the myth of American power. It also turned a new leaf in the history of conflict as an invisible enemy sneaked through the intricate layers of the country's defence and a complex web of national surveillance to strike at the heart of 'fortress America' also guarded by the world's largest mass of water. The stunned Americans who have been dealt with a total surprise are still gasping to understand what awaits them next.

The Americans avenged their defeat at Pearl Harbour in 1945 when the history's first ever atomic bomb was dropped on Japan. But they could hardly get over the trauma of Vietnam which cost them 58,000 American lives. Now their disaster in the hands of a traceless enemy will haunt them for a long time to come and it will be far from easy to overcome its emotional shock on national psyche. Even when the life is back on the rail and the normalcy is fully restored, the United States will perhaps never be the same again; neither will the perception of the rest of the world remain unchanged about the world's sole superpower. A phantom

per se and has been appropriately condemned throughout the world irrespective of race, religion or region. Although the enormity of the damage caused by the senseless crime is yet to be measured in all socio-economic, political and psychological terms its fall out is going to be horrendous and has already started to be felt both by the Americans and the international community. The perpetrators of the crime who left no tell-tale evidence behind would, however, deserve no sympathy from any quarter and be regarded responsible for cruelty against humanity. President George Bush called that terrorists' action an attack against democracy and civilization and vowed to hunt them down. So far, so good.

Reeling out of the initial shock and suspense of the catastrophic event an enraged US President, however, chose within hours when not even the preliminary investigations were afoot, to raise his finger of suspicion, albeit the accusation against a ragtag Afghanistan sheltering Saudi dissident Osama Bin Laden, now on the FBI's most wanted list. Whereas for an United States in crisis it was the time for an

ominous developments she has subtly likened terrorism to an assertive Islam which has apparently been put in the dock. Simultaneously a powerful western media is dutifully whipping up a war hysteria not experienced since World War II.

While world is anxiously watching the brinkmanship of President Bush and his close allies particularly Prime Minister Tony Blair and wondering if an individual, people or a nation can be targeted for retaliation for the recent terrorists' action purely on conjecture the plethora of debates and discourse on the incidence failed to focus even on the fringe of injustices perpetrated by the West's neo-colonialists which could have led to some of the terrorist attacks in the past, if not the present one. There is little realisation that the terrorism is a strategy for the weaks and vulnerable, who, when pushed to the wall, can instinctively resort to it to register their protests so that their grievances can be remedied. But an arrogant Bush administration, unable to come to terms with the ugly reality, is bent upon avenging the ignominy inflicted on them. Instead of addressing the genuine

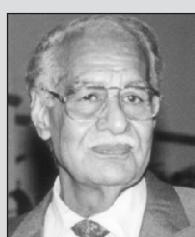
ments for those unknown million who perished in Hiroshima and Nagasaki? Do they have a prick of conscience for 1.7 million women and children who did as a result of US-manipulated UN sanction on Iraq for more than last ten years? Weren't they as innocent as the victims of Twin Tower and Pentagon? Is it because she also believes in a state sponsored terrorism a belief that led the US to bomb Tripoli to kill Libyan leader Muamar Gaddafi? The US marksmanship was not of the standard to hit Gaddafi but it was enough to kill his minor daughter. Who would alone the death of that innocent child? In Suharto-led pro-US counter-coup in 1965 millions of Indonesian 'suspects' were butchered obviously with a green signal from the United States, the champion of Human Rights!

The US earnings from its vast Arab-Islamic market come back to Israel in the shape of military hardware to take care of Arab dissidence and, as most trusted ally, keep control over huge Arab oil wealth. Look at US' Arab policy vis-a-vis Israel all of whose atrocities are unabashedly condoned. The US is

now in diaspora. The US continues to patronise Ariel Sharon, the butcher of Sabra and Shatila the refugee camps where thousands of homeless Palestinians including women and children were bombed to death. How and where were the concerns and conscience of the west over the tragedy? What was the US role in overthrowing the democratically elected government of Salvador Allende in Chile and killing him later? Under which international norm Noriega, the president of Panama could be kidnapped from his palace? Remember the overthrow of the regime of Dr Musaddeq in Iran in 1952? A few countries in Asia, Africa and Latin America escaped the overt or covert US intervention in post-second world war world.

Iran was a friend when it toed an US line under the Shah. It became an enemy when Iran challenged the US who then propped up Saddam Hussein as a counterweight to Iran. Iraq earned US' ire when as a burgeoning Arab military power it became threat to Israel. Even Osama bin Laden had once been the darling of CIA, who impressed by former's talent, built up Laden's

A wishy-washy foreign policy



KULDIP NAYAR

writes from New Delhi

against terrorism, why is it averse to endorsement by an international forum? Many countries are suffering from the acts of terrorists. All would like to participate in any action to chastise the terrorists. But if the US acts unilaterally, it sends the message that it cares little if others come or not.

India under a Nehru would have asked for a UN meeting.

But the Atal Behari Vajpayee government is so concerned over America's tilt towards Pakistan that

are two sides of the same coin. His approach is different. He relies on force as one of the levers to obtain the objective in the foreign field. Little does he realise that violence cannot lead to a solution of any major problem today. It can only breed violence. If an ideal society cannot be created by big-scale violence, can small-scale violence help? It will only produce an atmosphere of conflict and destruction. The end of the cold war gave India an advantage.

The US itself began to say that in certain fields it had overreacted.

India was regaining its prestige and respect for its foreign policy. New Delhi felt gratified when even the Bush administration said that "it had a different type of relations" with India. It is not clear what came over

the cold war days, Pakistan. Whether it is only a short-term arrangement or not is yet to be seen. But when Washington begins to share the intelligence with Islamabad, it means a type of kinship the two aligned countries have. The Musharraf government may exploit the new relationship to the disadvantage of India. New Delhi has only to blame itself for jettisoning non-alignment.

On the economic front too, all the concessions, proposed by the

man's doctrine, an assistance of billions of dollars that put Europe back on its feet. Europe is indebted to America. Its favourable attitude towards Washington and America's leadership of NATO is understandable. But India has no such obligation. Why does New Delhi kow-tow before Washington?

The foreign minister believes that the advisors he has appointed in his ministry are his sounding board. They may be experienced people but their training and tenure were during the cold war. India needs a dynamic foreign policy, with the moral content which Nehru tried to give it. The advisors are also coming in the way of foreign ministry's normal functioning. The work of the ambassador-at-large in Washington came to light when the Sikhs and other members of the Indian community were attacked after the New York incidents. And how do haphazard transfers help? The ambassador in Colombo has been moved to London when he is needed in Lanka at a time the country is passing through a crisis. The person put in his place was once removed from his No. 2 position from Colombo because the then High Commissioner thought he had "unauthorised contacts with outsiders."

One cannot understand why the High Commissioner in London has been given an extension of two years when the ambassador in Washington three.

Jaswant Singh may have his own logic. But this kind of wishy-washy foreign policy does not go with India's ethos. We must have a foreign policy with a moral content.

As we had in the days of Nehru.

Kuldip Nayar is a leading Indian columnist.

BETWEEN THE LINES

One could have appreciated India's attitude if Washington had offered it the same quantum of aid which it gave Europe for the post-war reconstruction. It was Truman's doctrine, an assistance of billions of dollars that put Europe back on its feet. Europe is indebted to America. Its favourable attitude towards Washington and America's leadership of NATO is understandable. But India has no such obligation. Why does New Delhi kow-tow before Washington?

Foreign Minister Jaswant Singh wants to become Washington's yes-boy. He does not talk about non-alignment, a movement that India is supposed to be leading. Probably he thinks that in a unipolar world, non-alignment is nothing but a cliché. True, the disintegration of the Soviet Union has weakened the non-aligned world. Even then New Delhi would have been heard—numerous nations would have lent their voice — if it had said that war against terrorism would not give military forces a right to undermine small nations or the civil liberties that shape the character of the free world. But it is too much to hope from Jaswant Singh who takes pride in saying that foreign policy, the portfolio he holds,

Although it tilted towards Moscow, Washington respected India for staying democratic and keeping the society open. That probably explains why after the cold war, the Clinton regime tried to span the distance with India and did not give up the effort even after the Vajpayee government exploded the bomb. The Jaswant-Singh-Lalit Talbot meetings were a marathon series. The purpose was not so much to attend to the fallout from the bomb as to repair the damage between the two largest democracies. President Clinton's visit to India gave the impression that America was keen on improving relations with India. Lifting of sanctions was never discussed with Clinton or the high-powered delega-

Jaswant Singh to give full support to President Bush's announcement on the still conjectural defence shield against missiles. It could not be a rush of blood.

Whatever it was, Jaswant Singh made no secret of his desire to sup with Washington. The Bush administration did not discourage him. India seemed to be in a hurry to hitch its wagon to Washington. At its instance, New Delhi even abandoned the condition that Islamabad must stop cross-border militancy before Vajpayee met General Pervez Musharraf.

Perhaps, America would have come closer to India. But the carnage at New York and Washington seems to have changed the US. It looks like going back to its ally of

World Bank and IMF have been given by New Delhi to multinationals. Even the abnormally high-priced Enron power project is sought to be settled 'amicably' because of the threat that no American capital would come to India if the Enron people remained unhappy. But there is yet no proof, except a few observations that the White House has changed its policy. America must be pleased to see how easy it is to tag along India to have free access to a huge market or to have its support on foreign affairs.

One could have appreciated India's attitude if Washington had offered it the same quantum of aid which it gave Europe for the post-war reconstruction. It was Tru-

paper work and noting down testimonies and other information from the public will in no way help to justify nor remedy the wrong doing. If the persons engaged by the authorities concerned thoroughly investigate and, in particular, question all the persons concerned who had been ordered to cut the trees with all fairness the truth will be revealed. We do hope and pray justice itself does not go in vain.

Shamsuz-Zaman

Baitul Aman Housing Society, Dhaka

Osmany Uddyan!

Surely it was not the work of Aladdin's magic lamp genie that cut down over three hundred trees at the Osmany Uddyan! In and around the Uddyan there were many people belonging to government offices.

Besides, there were also those law enforcement personnel to look after the area. Then how could such a thing take place?

Formation of any committee with Law and Justice Affairs Ministry etc. to investigate the incidents linked to the felling of the trees will not help the trees to rise up and be as they were for as many years. Why does not the present government work quickly and honestly and 'book' the real mischief mongers so that deterrent punishment may be meted out to the real culprits? Mere

gains as PM, the opposition leader also he/she holds some power by people. Any action taken against the ex-PM would create strike sometimes leading to killing of people.

We need to bring some new rules and regulations that once any political party lost in an election their leader has to resign from the party. That will give the new generation a chance to serve the country. At the same time whoever would become a PM has to think not to do any injustice, as he/she shall have to pay the price when a new