



Response to the US envoy



At last, it is nice to hear some response from the US ambassador. I have been wondering why the ambassador did not explain the US position more clearly before.

The readers are obviously emotional and angry-- they are probably mixing up between terrorists and freedom fighters, oppressed and oppressors, pseudo-religion and true-religion,

but they are certainly not lacking common sense. All these accusations of the involvement of Mosad, CIA and Colombian drug cartel behind the attack, that the US is behind all the evil in the world, must have been refuted by logical explanation of the current situation.

Mahmud Zaman, on e-mail

I am glad that the US Envoy has read The Daily Star Editorial and perhaps sent the clipping to Washington. I would like to ask the envoy how honest the US government is in its own part in giving out correct information on the Afghan situation.

The US has never publicised the anguish of the international aid and humanitarian agencies in Afghanistan. They are even denying the news of its helicopters crashing and killing US soldiers.

We all know that truth is the first casualty in a war. And in this unequal war between the US and Afghanistan it becomes more evident. How does the US envoy know for sure that only military sites are being targeted and not civilian areas?

Being a Muslim is tough in the US

It is difficult being a Muslim college going student in the United States, especially after the September 11 incident. My campus is extremely small, in a college town, tucked away in the heart of the Midwest.

All of a sudden I was afraid to walk out in town alone. When I did go out (the streets, homes, cars, choked with American flags in an almost fervent display of "patriotism", on a store window hangs an "Osama Bin Laden Wanted Dead or Alive" T-shirt, accompanied with friends, I would be stared at.

Emotions are raw, wounds are open, some are trying to heal, to keep their heads straight, but it is hard. The few Muslims on-campus face the greatest challenge, because it has suddenly become their duty to articulate, to convey to (hopefully most) well-meaning Americans on-campus that Islam does NOT support terrorism.

The microcosmic world of my campus seems chaotic right now. Frequent panel discussions and the like is being held protests against the Afghan war with chalking on campus gravel that read: "Embrace your Muslim brothers and sisters" are heart-warming. However, there are still others who believe that "when you make an omelette, you gotta scramble a few eggs".

Rubayat Khan Knox College, USA, on e-mail

Response to the "American opinion"

I would like to respond to the letter "Another American opinion" (November). The writer Mr. Matt asks whether the USA is justified or not in trying to remove the threat against them. Of course they are. But I disagree with him in his naïve, simplistic idea as to where that threat is located.

I would suggest him that he himself could do something about eradicating the source of the threat. It lies within those people who forge America's foreign policy, in the lobbies who push them to forge it the way it is ultimately forged and finally people like Mr. Matt himself who infuriate those who are the victims of American foreign policy.

Sincerely say I am very happy to learn that the writer would rather have his dollars go to USAID rather than the military. But does that make third world countries obliged to you by any chance, because after all one was under the impression that all this was due to altruistic motives with no expectations of retribution?

The Mayor of New York, Mr. Giuliani returned a cheque for the rebuilding of New York from a person who had criticised America's views on the Palestinian-Israeli issue, terming it "moral equivalence".

Afghanistan that these countries even thought of moving against it; and, in my opinion, that shows that there are some countries in the world that actually have an aversion to human suffering as opposed to aversion for the suffering of one group of people only.

to be, take Mr. Giuliani to task for this?

Also, on this key, I would like to respond to Mr. Nasrul Hye Nizami's article, which appeared on October 29th. A pretty reasonable article on the whole, it contains one assertion that follows almost the same line of reasoning as Mr. Matt. I say almost, for Mr. Nizami's reasoning is a bit ridiculous. He says that it is "immoral for the rest of the world and third

Stop killing innocents



In the name of eradicating terrorism the American's are killing innocent Afghan civilians. All over the world the Muslims are being victims of their wrath. The people who are dying in Afghanistan are not terrorists; they are civilians whose only fault is they have taken birth in a Muslim family in a Muslim country.

We don't know who is Osama Bin Laden. We only know that the Americans are massacring innocent life in a country whose condition is miserable.

The US have repeatedly claimed that they are not again the Muslims but against terrorism. But the miserable condition of that country proves otherwise.

It is time we united against terrorism, destruction and massacre and said 'NO' to war.

Arif Hasan London, on e-mail

world countries in particular" not to stand by America at this time of crisis especially in view of the facts that people of these countries "watch the movies, listen to the music" produced by America. I would like to correct him here.

Every country has stood by America in the hour of its crisis, even its old enemy Iran. It was only when the USA started a crisis for

trade in, which makes his argument thoroughly ridiculous.

A.N.Yusuf Dhaka, on e-mail

US's humanitarian activities

An anonymous American (October 30) gave his reaction to the anti-

formidable armada along with the UK and launched a devastating attack on Afghanistan for its reluctance and failure to hand over Osama bin Laden. When Afghanistan called for specific proof of Bin Laden's complicity in the said criminal act, they were bluntly refused, as if they had no right to question the Super Power's demand!

In a cynical gesture, America is sending food supplies to the drought-hit Afghanistan and when these are stacked up in the Red Cross godowns for distribution to the needy people, American bombers attack these and destroy the stock! Washington only says they are pilot errors. How could these sophisticated planes make errors in selecting targets not once but twice in a short span of time?

For decades, cheap oil from the Arab countries allowed America and other western countries to run their industries and prosper but yet they gave blind supports to Israel at the expense of its neighbouring Arab countries.

Nobody is asking that America should help liquidate Israel. If America only dealt with Israeli occupation as firmly as it did with Iraqi occupation of Kuwait, the situation would have become normal in the Middle East long ago. But unfortunately, this was not to be.

When people have their backs against the wall and their existence is threatened, they are entitled to retaliate in whichever way they can to give vent to their anger and frustration. Every freedom loving people is expected to do that. Whether a person is a terrorist or a freedom fighter depends on which side of the fence you are in.

There is no denying that America denotes food grains when there is severe flood or cyclone somewhere out of its huge surplus. If America did not dispose of its surplus stock of grains, it will have to dump these into the sea to maintain the price at an acceptable level. But in return of its donation, America gets the recipient government as a docile partner in its global policy. So even the otherwise disposable grains come as a foreign policy tool for the Americans. It gives nothing without something in return. Sometimes it demands what amounts to compromising a country's sovereignty.

Abul Mohsin, on e-mail

USA-- a misled nation

I have been reading the American opinions and just wondering how misled they are. A few months in the US have made me realise what sort of lies and misleading information they are fed each day.

The US citizens must ask themselves "why do they hate us?" Most of the time the media has given the impression that because the attackers envied America's wealth, freedom, and prosperity. If that were true they would've attacked the Scandinavian countries first. These countries are extremely wealthy too but whoever heard of them being attacked? If the attackers were against the western culture they would've also attacked Norway or Sweden or Switzerland for that matter. But do they ever bother to find out why it is the USA that always is the target?

While I am not trying to justify the terrorist actions, I am also of the opinion that these so-called terrorists are definitely not cowards as they have been called by the US President. People who are ready to blow themselves up must have a damn good reason.

Sharmin Zaman California, USA

Ridiculous opinion

This is in response to the letter "An American Opinion" (30 October) Firstly, let us refer to the statement, "Has no one noticed that terrorists are mostly from Saudi Arabia and Middle Eastern Descent". Well, have you noticed that the Palestinian lands have been taken over by Israelis who are actively supported by the US? What about Golan Heights in Syria which have been occupied by the Israelis, and the new settlements that continuously being expanded, by Israeli settlers, despite innumerable United Nations resolutions,

American expressions by various writers in the letters section.

There hasn't been a debate as to whether American humanitarian activities around the world far outweigh the harm caused by its biased policies in certain areas. In the aftermath of the September 11 attack, the US swiftly mobilised its

Now we hear that America is "demanding" of its coalition partners' active and physical co-operation. One would wonder to what end all these misplaced sympathy for the world is leading to by showing off of military might against a defenceless country and an impoverished, starved and shelterless nomads in the name of world order. Does the US and its envoy realise that Afghanistan will never have peace and any reasonable means of life-sustenance for another 50 years after this madness is over and done with?

A human being, on e-mail

I would like to thank the US Ambassador Mary Ann Peters for communicating to us directly and explaining the USA position on the war against Afghanistan. It obviously shows her respect for people of Bangladesh. I think it is also an opportunity for Bangladeshi people to communicate with a US official, so that a better understanding can be achieved between the two countries. The Daily Star deserves appreciation from all of us for providing the platform. I hope it continues and extends to other Muslim countries so that mutual respect and understanding may develop.

I have been in North America for some time now and I had the opportunity to know the ordinary North American people. Though they are compassionate people, there exists a misunderstanding and lack of information about the anxieties and bitterness in the Muslim world towards the USA. And the media blackout is very much responsible for this misunderstanding.

I have met people who are completely unaware of the root issue of Israeli oppression in the Middle East. Discussing these

issues is obviously a taboo in North American media.

I believe the honourable Ambassador will help create a culture of healthy discussion here and try to reach out to the Bangladeshi population on this core issue and remove all kinds of hostility between these two nations.

Shameem Vancouver, Canada, on e-mail



which were all vetoed by the Americans? So what are the people of "Middle Eastern Descent" supposed to do? Sit and watch while their lands are being taken away; while their children pelting the opponents with stones, are killed by sophisticated weapons many of which are all supplied by the US?

Secondly, you have mentioned that you are a proud American. Well, so are many Bengalis, just because you are presumably white, 3rd or 4th generation citizen does not give you the right to look down on the first generation Americans. By the way, if you think that the first generation should not line up to go to the states in the USA then think again. The original Americans are the Red Indians. They had welcomed the Europeans. However for their generosity they had to pay with their life and land and finally had to satisfy themselves with the Indian Reserves.

Furthermore, what gives you the idea that Americans are helping the world totally selflessly? Does not oil interest come into it in many cases? Would the multinationals operate in poor countries if they were running at a loss? Moreover one of the reasons that the American Economy is so robust is because of the brainy Asians who contribute to the American economy.

little to the world except producing violence, war and disgusting expenditure of wealth for the last 80 years. Just look back 100 years, can we find a single Muslim leader who can stand with the same rank as Gandhi, Mandela or Martin Luther King?

I am opposed to the US foreign policy on Middle East but some of its misfortune came from those nations themselves.

Iraqi children are dying but at the same time Saddam Hussein and his cronies are piling up wealth. Why cannot Iraq comply with UN and get the sanctions relieved?

Please show me one Muslim nation that is as tolerant as USA or even as UK.

It is time for soul searching and identifying our inadequacy as a nation or as a follower of Islam. Only then we can criticise others.

M.Hassan Dallas, USA, on e-mail

Feedback

I find it truly ludicrous that the Indian public and politicians alike find it so fashionable (perhaps taking a cue from western commentators), to raise the spectre of Pakistan's nuclear weapons falling

No person can support terrorism whether by the U.S.A or by Laden or anyone else.

I daresay also that no sane person can support the war that is being perpetrated by the U.S.A on Afghanistan along with its yes men of the so-called coalitions. No matter what crime it does will have repercussions naturally.

I may illustrate here a poem which I wrote on 11.2001 is "Whither Global Village? We are in the whirls of what? American World Trade Centers are smashed/suicides scored deaths, oil fire splashed. /Does any one look in that a tit-for-tat? Are we beating about the bush? /Wanting the man for killing one's own beast? How the human beings come closer to least to mourn deaths of their neighbours in the hush! This is a Global village/where Israelis kill Palestinians and vice versa/India kills Kashmiris and vice versa/That is one party kills another to earn patriotic pliage! /But one fails to see that human beings are slaughtered by this name or that. /So we are in the whirls of what? /What's that consensus we feel in our mourning melody? How can you single put the suicidal guilt in the meleze? /Does any one look in that a tit-for-tat? Why suicide? What's the interest? /You see your own interest only but blind for the rest? /The fall of Berlin overwhelmed Herr Hitler; the deaths of Hiroshima and Nagasaki overwhelmed the Pearl Harbour. How could the deaths of your American World Trade Centers be punished, Sir? /Your vast armada, warring air flights with lethal weapons are ready, /your powers of coalitions ate volatile/Posing menace to many and your created terrorist against one. /Causing terrorist strike on any one in this global village. /See, you, carefully/Otherwise your human rights will come to an end in this devastating war/When you will find only the exclusive feature of mass massacre. /To be human then what is wanted is not war but the moral rearmament/Boosting consensus about everything to light up the human fate."

M. Mizanur Rahman Khilgaon Chowdhury Para, Dhaka, on e-mail

Announcement

The number of Letters to Editor on various issues covered by this paper has increased tremendously. To provide appropriate space to our readers, the following two adjustments have been made.

1. Photorial is suspended and the space will now be devoted to Letters to the Editor.

2. Letters to the Editor on Monday, Wednesday and Friday will cover full page.

Bush, Laden and terrorism



No humanized nation is in favour of terrorism, be it state sponsored or perpetrated by a link. Razing of Twin Towers on September 11 has been criticized worldwide and this dastardly act has brought the world community closed to the USA. Many countries have extended their cooperation to America in eradicating terrorism. America held Osama Bin Laden responsible and a prime suspect who masterminded this cowardly act leaving the death toll more than five thousand. When the Russians invaded Afghanistan, the US provided support to create today's Laden -- a Saudi born billionaire, who along with other Afghans eventually defeated the Russians.

Until today, America could hardly do anything to Bin Laden or Taliban leader Mollah Mohammad Omar. The US State department for the first time admits that they are facing formidable resistance from the Taliban forces, and added they may not be able to capture Laden either dead or alive. Does the Taliban's refusal to comply with an order of handing over Laden without concrete proof mean America deserves the right to commit a dreadful outrage on innocent Afghan people? Is not the war planned earlier against terrorism that has now become a war against the Afghan people? Many people in different countries of the world including America have come out making processions and are giving anti-war slogans. Does it not mean the air strikes in Afghanistan has crossed the people's threshold level of tolerance?

This war of injustice will not give America anything but to satisfy a group of western chauvinist and their allies. Since 1948, Israel with American support has been committing atrocities on innocent unarmed Palestinians. Every one knows what the genocide America committed in Vietnam in 1960's and early days of 1970's, and thereafter their embittered way of departure.

Let us hope America develops a sense of well being, stop meaningless air raid, and choose the path of humanity in resolving crisis.

Mir Badiul Alam Dhanmondi, Dhaka, on e-mail

Furthermore, If you had any idea of history you would know that many civilisations rose and bit the dust; e.g. Greeks, Romans, Ottoman, Mughals etc. At this time people from all over the world came to these places in search of knowledge, wealth and a brighter future.

This is just a process of history. Nothing unique to the US!

In fact a whole pack of Europeans made a beeline to the subcontinent during the Mughal rule, and liberally helped themselves to our wealth. Too bad we did not think of making them stand in lines, and pay for this privilege before they entered our country.

Bilqis Nazli, on e-mail

To the concerned American

"How many Bangladeshis have we fed?" Is that how you gain our sympathy. America might be the largest humanitarian organisation, but they are also the largest destructive nation. A few days ago, the UN radio in Afghanistan announced "we are dropping the food far away from the area where we are dropping the bombs." A true mockery indeed! What do you

we are a Muslim nation! Asif Kashem, on e-mail

Time for soul searching

I am writing this in response to my fellow Bangladeshis who were keen on criticising the USA in letters to The Daily Star.

One of them seems to believe USAID is a profitable company working to make more money than they give as AID.

Our country lives on foreign aid to feed its hungry people, build infrastructure etc on these aids. Nobody is saying USA is perfect.

It has its flaws but their willingness to help others, contributions to the poorest nations in the world as well as contributions to the human civilisation far outweighs its drawbacks.

Just check the facts and find out the amount of money they have provided to Bangladesh as aid as well as to the whole world.

It is time to stop criticising USA and look at ourselves to find out how much we have contributed to the world.

The entire Muslim world which comprise of about two billion people has in fact, contributed very