Response to the US envoy



At last, it is nice to hear some response form the US ambassador. I have been wondering why the ambassador did not explain the US position more clearly before. Even in this letter she has forgotten to give us a proper description of the terrorist activities of the Al-Qaida network around the world. Also Ms. Peters has forgotten to provide us with all the evidence (declassified) regarding the involvement of the Al-Qaida network in the September 11 event.

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,

Being a Muslim is tough in the US

especially after the September 11 incident. My campus is extremely small, in a college town, tucked away in the heart of the Midwest, but the reactions and outrage after the bombings were no less raw here than it might have been in New

All of a sudden I was afraid to choked with American flags in an 'Osama Bin Laden Wanted Dead or

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

The microcosmic world of my campus seems chaotic right now. However, there are still others who believe that "when you make an omelette, you gotta scramble a few eggs". In other words, that America

Response to the

"Another American opinion" (November1). 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 naï ve, simplistic idea as to where that threat is located.

eradicating the source of the world to its own level of prosperity. simplistic again to say so.

I 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? And, more importantly, does it compel them not to criticise your actions regarding Afghanistan?

The Mayor of New York, Mr. Guliani 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". By Mr. Guliani's definition, is it not "moral equivalence" on Mr. Matt's part to give us his dollars and criticise our views on a foreign country? Should we return his aid, which is not really helping too much as he might have learnt if he had read the other two letters that were printed alongside his? If his answer to both my queries are "No", will he then, as the conscientious American he sounds

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. It is true that the struggle between emotion and logic is very tough, but please do not underestimate the power of truth, if indeed you are for the truth.

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 sol-

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 knows for sure that only military sites are being targeted and not civilian areas? All news reports say that there are and never were any military sites as such in Afghanistan. Even at the press briefing in Washington of the US Defence Secretary on the day following the start of the air campaign, the audience reportedly burst into laughter at the mention of "targets" in Afghanistan. We hear from press reports that America is doling out millions of dollars to secure their socalled coalition against the Afghan actions. Do the American citizens know where their hard-earned money is being spent?

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?

Ahuman being, on e-mail

which were all vetoed by the Amer-

icans? So what are the people of "Middle Eastern Descent" sup-

posed 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

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

Furthermore, what gives you the

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

Bush, Laden and terrorism

to the American economy.

which are all supplied by the US?

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 viding the platform. I hope it continues and extends to other

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 misun-derstanding and lack of information about the anxieties and bitterness in the Muslim world towards the USA. And the media

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 the Bangladeshi population on this core issue and remove all kinds of hostility between these two nations.

Shameem

Vancouver, Canada, on e-mail



better understanding can be achieved between the two countries. The Daily Star deserves appreciation from all of us for pro-Muslim countries so that mutual respect and understanding

blackout is very much responsible for this misunderstanding.

little to the world except producing mean by that you might turn selfish, ruthless and terrible, you were always like that? Yes, you are helping other nations risking your own economy but does the help means bombing the large food stocks of Red Cross or killing hundreds of innocent Afghans or does it mean Luther King? helping the Israelis with arms and

Well, that is a humanitarian act! But still who are we to be concerned about them, it should not be our headache that hundreds of people are dying, we need to keep the Americans happy because they feed us, right?

weapons to kill the Palestinians.

Before the question of the loss of the lives of 5000 people arises try to look back and see how many people the Americans have killed in the name of helping other nations. You yourself have created Osama bin Laden, we did not.

Then if he is the head of terrorists then you must be bigger than that. Strength and power surely leads to evil and evil leads to destruction.

Anyway it would be futile to gain our sympathy or give us an opinion because that doesn't make any difference as long as the matter doesn't concern us and there is no need of warning us because we don't make a single move without the orders of America even though

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 Rus-

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 for-

midable 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

This war of injustice will not give America anything but to satisfy a group of western chauvin-

Let us hope America develops a sense of well being, stop meaningless air raid, and choose

ist 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.

the air strikes in Afghanistan has crossed the people's threshold level of tolerance?

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

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

nation that is as tolerant as USA or It is time for soul searching and

Please show me one Muslim

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

ing carnage of innocent Afghans. Maybe, if in the future, the US were to target their military aggression on Mumbai, Delhi, Kolkata etc on any conceivable pretext (however inconceivable a notion it might seem), some of the callousness that Indians now display would not be

Only then, would the hatred that American policies ignite in many places begin to have some real, local resonance for Indians.

India's self-righteous protestations of enduring "terrorism" in Kashmir are no more dignified or acceptable than Israel's in occupied Palestinian territories or America's (given its myriad atrocities everywhere), anywhere in the

Sajjad Husain

Dhaka, on e-mail

War is inhuman

The U.S.A Government's treatment of Afghanistan makes us think that it can run the world as it as long as it has the bomb. Otherwise what pretext should

justify their killings of innumerable men, women, and children and destroying habitats indiscriminately to combat so-called terror-

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 1.1.2001 is "Whither Global Village?" We are in the whirrs 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 at least to mourn deaths of their neighbours in the hush! This is a Global village/where Israelis kill Palestinians and vice versa/Indian kills Kashmiris and vice versa/That is one party kills another to earn patriotic pillage! /But one fails to see that human beings are slaughtered by this name or that. /So we are in the whirrs of what? /What's that consensus we feel in our mourning melody? How can you single put the suicidal guilt in the melee? /Does any one look in that a tit-fortat? 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 and 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 above everything to

light up the human fate. M. Mizanur Rahman

Khilgaon Chowdhury Para, Dhaka,

It is difficult being a Muslim college going student in the United States,

walk out in town alone. When I did go out (the streets, homes, cars, almost fervent display of "patriotism"; on a store window hangs an Alive' T-shirt), accompanied with friends, I would be stared at. The weekend after September 1, a man found loitering near the campus apartments was arrested. Students called the police when he declared that his name was 'Evil', and that he was carrying a handgun.

does NOT support terrorism.

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. iatory war against Afghanistan.

Rubaiyat Khan Knox College, USA, on e-mail

"American opinion" world countries in particular" not I would like to respond to the letter to stand by America at this time of crisis especially in view of the facts that people of these countries

I would suggest him that he himself could do something about 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. Who blindly believe in the picture of America being 'compelled" to do this and that, instead of the truth: America has been itching to do it for a long, long time out of self-interest. If these sources were not present, Osama Bin Laden would not even have the support the Western media claims he has among the more conservative Muslims, and there would be some truth to the claim that the USA is trying to bring the rest of the But till these sources disappear, it is

to be, take Mr. Guliani to task for

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 Mus-

lims 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

We don't know who is Osama Bin Laden. We only know

The US have repeatedly claimed that they are not again the

It is time we united against terrorism, destruction and

trade in, which makes his argu-

ment thoroughly ridiculous.

US's humanitarian

A.N.Yusuf

Dhaka, on e-mail

activities

Muslims but against terrorism. But the miserable condition

that the Americans are massacring innocent life in a country

"moral".

Also, I would like to stress once again that the movies and song I have to pay for do not make me obligated to refrain from criticism of the seller or producer. If I were alive during the second World War, would reading the works of Goethe obligate me to support Hitler? At least Mr. Matt was talking of aid which comes free (or so we believed before his letter), but Mr. Nizami talks of thing we actually

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

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

Arab countries allowed America 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

When people have their backs against the wall and their existence

to dump these into the sea to main America gets the recipientdemands what amounts to compromising a country's sovereignty.

Abul Mohsin, on e-mail

USA-- a misled nation

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 is it 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,

California, USA

Ridiculous opinion

Firstly, let us refer to the statement, "Has no one noticed that ble United Nations resolutions,

Furthermore, If you had any we are a Muslim nation! idea of history you would know that many civilisations rose and bit the dust; e.g. Greeks, Romans,

the path of humanity in resolving crisis.

Dhanmondi, Dhaka, on e-mail

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

Ottoman, Mughals etc. At this

times people from all over the

world came to these places in

search of knowledge, wealth and a

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

Mir Badiul Alam

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

The Daily Star One of them seems to believe

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.

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.

people has in fact, contributed very

in the hands of religious extremists. Here's why: First, India is itself responsible for initiating the current tensions of a future nuclear exchange between the neighbours, by going decidedly nuclear in May 1998, which unsurprisingly prompted Pakistan to respond in kind.

To talk of Pakistan's nuclear arsenal falling in the hands of bellicose extremists is, at the moment, a cute hypothesis, just pure fiction.

Indeed, I reckon an ordinary Pakistani would be clearly more justified to worry about India-- a country whose bombs, have indeed been in the hands of unrepentant bigots (an increasingly unchallenged BJP and allies in power) for the last three and a half

A Pakistani could logically worry if these Hindu religious extremists ruling India can be trusted to behave responsibly in the future-now that they have been emboldened to make irresponsibly aggressive statements lately about their putative "war on cross-border terrorism".

Also, I find it morally repugnant, how so many Indians condone the relentlessly savage US bombing

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.

An anonymous American (October even its old enemy Iran. It was only 30) gave his reaction to the antiwhen the USA started a crisis for

whose condition is miserable.

massacre and said 'NO' to war.

watch the movies, listen to the

Every country has stood by

America in the hour of its crisis,

music" produced by America. I

rould like to correct him here.

Arif Hasan

London, on e-mail



How can the US expect to win the "War on Terrorism" when it hasn't even identified the correct battleground or objective? The Bush Administration does not realise that the battleground for this so-called "War on Terrorism" is not in the desolate mountains of Afghanistan; the real battleground is in the hearts and minds of 6 billion people. This war cannot be fought with bombs. The weapons of this war are hope, The US may be able to intimidate and bully all the worlds'

governments to support the International Coalition against terrorism, but the citizens of the world do not support any ruthless or merciless slaughter of innocent men, women and children, be it in Afghanistan, New York or Palestine. As we enter the fourth week of what seem like a prolonged bombing campaign of Afghanistan, I can only wonder-- how

many dead Afghans will it take for the citizens of the world to

Omar Chowdhury

stop using American products?

Banani, Dhaka, on e-mail

Afghanistan that these countries American expressions by various 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. Something which is highly

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

the Red Indians. They had welcomed the Europeans. However for their generosity they had to pay twice in a short span of time? with their life and land and finally For decades, cheap oil from the had to satisfy themselves with the Indian Reserves. and other western countries to run their industries and prosper but yet idea that Americans are helping the world totally selflessly? Does not oil

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 Amer-

ica donates 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 tain the price at an acceptable level. But in return of its donation, 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

I have been reading the American

Sharmin Zaman

This is in response to the letter "An American Opinion" (30 October)

terrorists are mostly from Saudi Arabia and Middle Eastern Descend". 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 innumeraAsif Kashem, on e-mail Time for soul search-

ing I am writing this in response to my fellow Bangladeshis who were keen on criticising the USA in letters to

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.

Just check the facts and find out the amount of money they have

The entire Muslim world which comprise of about two billion

raids on Afghanistan and the ensu-