**DHAKA WEDNESDAY MARCH 6, 2002** 

### Adequate security for Opposition leader

We recall similar security lapse for Khaleda Zia earlier

HE assault on Sheikh Hasina's car in Naogaon, or shall we say, her motorcade -- as two tailing vehicles were also pounced on -- has basically pointed to a grave security lapse on the part of the government. For, the breach in the security arrangement thrown around her was gaping from the very word 'go'. Seeing the vehicle carrying her security staff fall behind, the chauffeur of the opposition leader's car stopped by to allow it to catch up. It was then that the hysterical attacker Dewan Khaled lunged out of a rickshaw approaching from the opposite direction, broke the flagstand of the opposition leader's car and as it swerved to a side went on a mini rampage to damage some other vehicles before being overpowered by the security staff.

Thank God, he was a lone attacker and that there was no firearm on him. We are relieved at Sheikh Hasina's coming out of it without any scratch. Given the ease with which he presented himself before Sheikh Hasina's motorcade one would have thought that even an armed man could have emerged on the scene without any let or hindrance. The faultline in surveillance and the deployment of a slowmoving vehicle (a tit for tat measure, we understand, as a similar 'slow' vehicle was assigned when Khaleda Zia was in the opposition) that could not keep pace with the opposition leader's car speak of the very nominal and skeletal security provided to an opposition leader.

One discerns a basic deficiency in the risk assessment on or security perception for an opposition leader who was prime minister of the country just the other day. The attacker Khaled has claimed himself to be Col (Retd) Faroog's cousin, who is one of the convicts in the Bangabandhu murder case. Subject to a verification of his purported kinship with Col (Retd) Faroog, his claim prima facie reflects the assumption that somewhere along the line of prime ministership a former incumbent might have antagonised some people through his or her action. Khaled Dewan has said that his cousin Sukur wanted to pay him Tk one lakh if he would attack the opposition leader's car. He has also yelled his offer to 'talk' if he was provided with adequate 'security'. Whether he was a plant or not, further investigations will hopefully reveal that. And whatever the finding it must be made public to give the matter the importance it deserves.

One recalls that when Begum Khaleda Zia after her prime ministerial tenure in 1996 wore the mantle of opposition leader, the security vehicle that was attached to her was almost a jalopy. In fact, there was a pure apology of a

The tit-for-tat business with the security of our national leaders is a dangerous game that the state under no circumstances should be even seen to play, far less play as such. Keeping our national leaders safe is in the self-interest of any government in power.

#### Mugabe's moment of truth

Conduct of polls to provide the acid-test

IMBABWE'S legendary leader President Robert Mugabe is swiftly turning himself and his politics into a dismal story. Not only has he turned the electoral process into a dreadful joke but seems bent on inventing new ways to humiliate his own people. As the events unfold his admirers can only gasp in disgust.

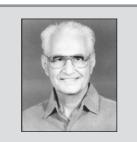
Mugabe's problems began in his sense of autocracy and inability to find the skills to lead his people out of the economic woods. He had little concern from the very start for democratic norms and ultimately succumbed to rule by threat. The weaker the economy grew, greater was his denial of democracy.

Part of the problem lay in his past success as a liberation war leader. He had led his people to freedom against the apartheid regime and was a world hero. This probably filled him with a sense of invincibility and the idea that he could do no wrong. From the very beginning, he and Zimbabwe became one to himself. While this may have allowed Mugabe to rule on and on, his people suffered from on and

His management of the electoral scene is proving to be a farce at the grand scale. It transpires from evidence that a million dead people had been "voting" regularly and there is no need to elaborate to whom these votes had been going. This in itself is a high act of betrayal. He has also brought about changes in the voting rules and regulations which has been universally criticized. Now to cap it all, he has had the main opposition leader face interrogation on suspected grounds of treason. One isn't sure what his next irresponsible act will be.

Still his last chance to prove his staying power in a civilised way lies in an acceptable conduct of the forthcoming elections in Zimbabwe. Having lost global confidence in his regime, nearly all international support, lacking strategic importance which would let him be the king in his own turf on his own terms, Mugabe's time may be over.

## Facts about Indo-Pak Impasse



M B NAQVI

T is important to keep the facts of the present situation in focus and to interpret them in perspective. It is a war in which live bullets are not being fired and actual casualties are not being incurred. Following the December 13 terrorist attack on Indian Parliament, India massed its troops on the borders threatening an invasion either across the LOC in Kashmir or across the international borders. It took other measures suggesting an imminent war, complete with an ultimatum for handing over certain persons to India forthwith, sharply reducing diplomatic representation in each other's country and totally cutting off road, rail and air links. Meantime the media war has become ever more But this situation has lasted too long. The threat of war has dangled in the air for over two months. That India did not go to war for so long means there must have been good reasons not to. These add up to an inability to go to war with Pakistan. On the Pakistan side, there has been no readiness to handover the 20 persons India has demanded. And yet it has no obvious reason to desire a war. Actually it too is unable to go to war for much the same reasons that have restrained India. Despite neither government's utter inability to countenance war in the current situation, actual threat of war is still there through escalation of an accident or logic of the situation. The reason why peace cannot be maintained is obvious: the insur-

gency in Kashmir is a cause that has refused to go away. Pakistan claims that it supports the Kashmiris only morally and politically while India suspects that Pakistan's support is far more than that; New Delhi is convinced that much of the Kashmir insurgency is due to Pakistan providing logistic and other material support. India seems to have decided to force the issue with Pakistan even if it takes a war.

question now is: how do we interpret these facts and what is to be done next.

As noted, the real cause of this deadlock --- India wanting to force the issue with the threat of war without being able to do it --- is the Bomb. The rationale of the insurgency in Kashmir was Pakistan's nuclear capability, still putative in 1990. The theory was advanced that the putative capability Pakistan session of nuclear weapons made the Indians far too arrogant and they came to the conclusion that it is about time that they confronted Pakistan over Kashmir to make it desist. Since Pakistan gave a tit for tat reply with test explosions of its own, the initial enthusiasm in New Delhi subsided and they adopted the peace option. Prime Minister AB Vaipavee traveled to Lahore on a Bus and ceremonially visited Minar-

But no two neighbours can remain at war or in a near war situation for ever. They have to sit down and talk peace sometime or other. No doubt both have to be realistic, recognising their mutual impotence in waging war while the issues between them have to be seen in perspective, with a view to resolving them peaceably --- because they can no longer go to war. But then it has also to be recognised by both

has threatened war, with readiness to wage it. The threat persists. Its deterrence power has proved to be inadequate, if not wholly illusory. This inadequacy of deterrence is on full display in the shape of the Indian army on our borders at the time of this writing. True, Pakistan can inflict horrible damage on India. But so what? Two points became clear during this crisis. There is no likelihood of Pakistan's first strike, supposing it is first, will totally incapacitate India from replying in kind. Secondly, should India make the expected riposte, all major industrial urban centres in Pakistan would be destroyed. What is the whole point of such a nuclear deterrence?

In the case of India too, the

panoply of India's nuclear forces

nave not frightened Pakistan from giving a tit for tat reply. Pakistan's actions have brought it on a par with ndia; its much-sought regional preeminence has gone for a burton. In fact Pakistan's nuclear capability has brought the Indian doctrine of limited war under a cloud of uncertainty. At any rate, since India did not, perhaps could not, implement the threat of war, the whole point of possessing such a large and diver-sified nuclear forces are lost. It is of course for the Indians to ask their government about the wisdom of spending so much treasure on a deterrent that has in fact not worked and which itself stood deterred at the critical time. One is not bringing in the American advice because it has been, more or less, common to both: keep peace. Finally, the suggestion requires consideration by all aware citizens that the place of nuclear weapons in national security requires serious rethinking While their awesome destructive power is in no doubt, their capacity to confer anything of value to the possessor, at lease in South Asia has now been proved. Would the

when they encounter it?

powers that be recognise a fact

to Ramallah. Palestinians are meet

ing Israeli onslaughts of helicopter

## PLAIN WORDS

It is true that we do not know the precise Indian intentions. For all anyone knows, the entire exercise, costing billions of rupees might be an exercise in coercive diplomacy that does not include actual war, though it necessarily implies the highest stage of brinkmanship of being ready to fight the actual war, the Bomb or no Bomb. The point is that nuclear weapons, by their mere presence, have actually proved to be a deeply de-<u>estabilising factor.</u>

Hence the threatening moves and the talk of the war. But if there has not been a war for so long, it means there should be none in coming days. The reason is a certain mutual impotence: the nuclear weapons. despite their fearsome potential for utter destruction, have prevented each other from starting the war. No other reason would have prevented the war, including foreign powers preference for peace and stability in

The recent speech of Indian President K.R. Narayanan to the ioint session of Parliament has shown that India is not willing to accept co-existence on Pakistan's terms; he said that there will be no de-escalation of military tensions and no withdrawal of troops from the borders without Pakistan accepting India's demand. Having gone so far, India finds it difficult to retreat. On the Pakistan side too President Musharraf has virtually said that 'let the Indian troops remain on the borders, it's OK by us'; 'we too shall remain on the borders, ready for the war India might unleash'. In other words, Pakistan has refused to comply with Indian demands. The has acquired is itself an invincible shield; no one can ignore its deterring capability, especially with given doctrine of its first use by Pakistan that had already been advanced. Ergo, Pakistan and its friends can do anything in Kashmir they please and India will be able to do nothing except increasing the repression of Kashmiris.

But the insurgency has lasted over a decade and India was unable to do anything despite its latest doctrine (2000) of a limited war being still possible between South Asian nuclear powers. In the event despite all the threatening moves. Pakistan's nuclear weapons have in point of fact deterred India. Which is why there has been no war. India's limited war idea has proved to be an unreliable category --- because Pakistan refused compliance and the continuing uncertainty regarding Pakistan's use of its nuclear weapons in the conventional war. Thus both sides are back to square one.

While it is good that no war has broken out. there has been no peace or stability in India-Pakistan relations at all since May '98. Pose-Pakistan. But then Kargil misadventure forced them back to the war option. Growing American support made them even more arrogant. Hence the overreaction to December 13 incident. It is true that we do not know the

precise Indian intentions. For all anyone knows, the entire exercise. costing billions of rupees might be an exercise in coercive diplomacy that does not include actual war. though it necessarily implies the highest stage of brinkmanship of being ready to fight the actual war, the Bomb or no Bomb. The point is that nuclear weapons, by their mere presence have actually proved to be a deeply de-estabilising factor. Ever since May '98, except for the Lahore interlude, there has been either actual exchanges of fire or an imminent threat of war between India and Pakistan. The conclusion seems to be that nuclear weapons. in populous South Asia peace and nuclear weapons do not mesh --contrary to the earlier rosy expectations of the hawks in India and Pakistan who are known as Neemrana Group under expert American tutelage.

would imply that both will have to find theoretical bases, as unexceptionable as possible, on which the problems can be resolved. Can so much wisdom be found in the two governments that are sustained by mutually inimical forces in each country and are legatees of so much ill will and conflicting purposes? But then what of the Bomb and the sense of power it confers? There is a whole mythology around these weapons: they are currency of power, they confer great power

that neither can force its view of any

particular solution or approach on

the other. These two recognitions

have to be the starting point. Which

status; they entitle the owner too much influence over the neighbours. What is the point of having them if we cannot bully the neighbour we hate? There are no real answers to these questions. These weapons are in fact evil and no good can come out of them. At any rate, in the case of India and Pakistan, they have proved to be useless just when they should have given victory to their owners. It is true that despite Pakistan's nuclear deterrent, India

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# Arafat's vision of Palestine: A message for survival

M. SHAFIULLAH

ORLD'S most frequentflying leader grounded since early December 2001 sent out an SOS to The New York Times which published his "Palestinian vision of peace" on 4 February 2002 for the Bush Administration to read in conjecture with 'American vision for the Middle East" announced on 19 November Beleaguered Messiah of the

seven million Palestinian refugees from confinement in Ramallah headquarters met squarely US preconditions "for a peaceful, prosperous Middle East where two states --Israel and Palestine -- live side by side within secure and recognized borders". Outlining the US vision for Middle East, Secretary of State Colin Powell demanded the "Palestinian leadership must make a 100 per cent effort to end violence and to end terror. There must be real results, not iust words and declarations. Terrorists must be stopped before they act. Palestinian leadership must arrest, prosecute and punish the perpetrators of terrorist acts. The Palestinians must live up to the agreements they have made to do so. They must be held to account when they do not." Next. "Palestinians must eliminate any doubt, once and for all, that they accept the legitimacy of Israel as a Jewish state. They must make clear that their objective is a Palestinian state alongside Israel, not in place of Israel, and which takes full account of Israel's security needs." The vision also envisages "the Palestinian leadership must end violence, stop incitement and prepare their people for the hard compromises ahead.'

All in the Arab world must make unmistakably clear, through own actions, their acceptance of Israel and their commitment to a negotiated settlement. The Secretary reminded that "the Palestinians need to understand that, however legitimate their claim, they cannot be

bureaucracy, police and other

departments of the government

have been carried out certainly with

the good intention of paving the way

for bringing about civil order, disci-

pline, establishing a good gover-

nance which are said to have been

lost during the regime of the immedi-

But we would like to judge the

efficacy of the steps taken from what

is happening on the ground and not

from what is being planned and

talked about. Let us see the impact

of the steps conceived of and stop

ate past government.

heard, let alone be addressed through violence. Palestinians must realize that violence has had a terrible impact on Israel. Whatever the sources of Palestinian frustration and anger under occupation Intifada is now mired in the quicksand of selfdefeating violence and terror directed against Israel." In that context the Secretary of State recalled "President Bush has made clear that, no national aspiration, no remembered wrong can ever iustify the deliberate murder of the innocent. Terror and violence must stop and stop now." Powell advised that the "Palestinians must accept that

stop." Colin Powell conceded to the long held international observation that "Israeli settlement activity has severely undermined Palestinian trust and hope. It pre-empts and prejudges the outcome of negotiations and in doing so, cripples chances for real peace and security.' He made it known that "the United States has long opposed settlement activity" and reiterated that "consistent with the report of the committee headed by Senator George Mitchell, settlement activity must stop. Though smack of proverbial Whitman's burden, the Secretary of State

Yasser Arafat was elected chairman of Palestine Liberation Organization (PLO) in 1968. Then PLO was an umbrella organization of thirty odd splinter groups for restoration of Territory. From then on the leadership of the PLO came in the gripe of those who had been actively involved in fighting for the cause and were prepared to take the fight into Israel itself. The 12th meeting of the Palestinian National Council in June 1974 marked the next decisive turning point. Chairman Yasser Arafat began to move away from

only option remaining to regain homeland was resort to diplomacy. At a meeting in Algiers the Palestinian National Council proclaimed a Declaration of Independence thereby setting up the 'State of Palestine' in the occupied territories of West Bank and Gaza in Novem-

Thus the foundation of two states was laid.

The Gulf war was followed up with Madrid Conference in 1991, a prelude to sign The Declaration of Principles at the White House in presence of Bill Clinton, Yasser

gunship, F-16. bulldozers, tanks through suicide bombs, a reminiscent of Buddhist monks torching themselves in protest to US indiscriminate bombing in Vietnam. From confinement Arafat reiterated, "Let me be very clear. I condemn the attacks carried out by terrorist groups against Israeli civilians. hese groups do not represent the Palestinian people or their legitimate aspirations for freedom. They are terrorist organizations, and I am determined to put an end to their activities." The 72 years old Fedaeen recognized Ísrael's right to exist on 78 percent of historic Palestine with the understanding that "we would be allowed to live in freedom on the remaining 22 percent which has been under Israeli occupation since 1967." PLO Chairman reconfirmed "commitment to twostate solution remains unchanged. The Palestinian vision of peace is an independent and viable Palestinian state on the territories occupied by Israel in 1967, living as an equa neighbour alongside Israel with peace and security for both the İsraeli and Palestinian peoples. In addition we seek a fair and just solution to the plight of Palestinian refugees who for 54 years have not peen permitted to return to their homes." The world's oldest freedom fighter summed up, "In short, we seek only what the free world now enjoys and only what Israel insists on for itself: the right to control our own destiny and to take our place among free nations." A leader survives when he delivers what his people aspire for or meets his Waterloo. Pharaohs exiled Moses to Sinai desert to perish but he returned to lead his followers to safety from the iron-clad security of Pharaohs. Will Arafat end up in the trail of Ho Chi Minh to see his success from the other world?

Palestine 1995-2000

"...commitment to twostate solution remains unchanged. The Palestinian vision of peace is an independent and viable Palestinian state on the territories occupied by Israel in 1967, living as an equal neighbour alongside Israel with peace and security for both the Israeli and Palestinian peoples. In addition we seek a fair and just solution to the plight of Palestinian refugees who for 54 years have not been permitted to return to their homes."

through negotiations. That was the essence of the agreements made between Israelis and Palestinians in Madrid and again in Oslo in 1993. There is no other way but direct negotiation in an atmosphere of stability and non-violence." American vision contained a few poignant moments of truth as it said 'Palestinians must also be secure and in control of their individual lives and collective security. In the absence of peace, Israel's occupation of West Bank and Gaza has been the defining reality of Palestinians' lives there for over three decades, longer than most of the Palestinians living there have beer alive. The overwhelming majority of the Palestinians in the West Bank and Gaza have grown up with checkpoints and raids and indignities. Too often they have seen their schools shuttered and their parents humili-

Palestinians need security as well. Too many innocent Palestinians, including children, have been killed and wounded. This, too, must nonetheless observed that "the occupation hurts Palestinians, but it also affects Israelis. For the sake of Palestinians and Israelis alike, the occupation must end." He urged "Israel must be willing to end its occupation, consistent with the principles embodied in Security Council Resolutions 242 and 338 and accept a viable Palestine state in which the Palestinians can determine their own future on their own land and live in dignity and security. Colin Powell termed "the future of Jerusalem is a challenge which the two parties can only resolve together through negotiations, taking into account the religious and political concerns that both will bring to the table. Any solution will also have to protect the religious interests of Jews, Christians and Muslims the world over." On another core issue of Palestinian refugees, he suggested that "the two parties must strive for a just solution that is fair and realistic.' For the sake of Palestinian per-

spective a quick look at their checkered history reveals that the Fedaconcepts of 'armed struggle' and Arafat, Yitzhak Rabin, Simon Perez 'total liberation' in favour of a diplomatic settlement. The year 1974 was significant for Palestinians in more than one way. PLO was recognized as 'the sole legitimate representative of the Palestinian people at the Rabat Summit Conference of the Arab League. In November the UN General Assembly recognized the PLO as the representative of Palestine and accorded the Observer status. It was at that historic session Yasser Arafat declared, "I have come bearing an olive branch and a freedom fighter's gun. Do not let the olive branch fall from my hand." In 1975 US adopted policy to refuse recognition to PLO. On 6 June 1982 Israel launched full scale invasion of Lebanon and sent PLO and Yasser Arafat into exile in Tunis. The massacre of Palestinian refugees in Sabra and Chatila camps in West Beirut under supervision of Ariel Sharon then Defense Minister was a sad reminder of holocaust in Europe during Second World War.

Far away from Israel, for PLO

on 13 September 1993. The Declaration laid down a five-year time table to settle five core issues and the Palestinian statehood was in sight by May 1999. Yasser Arafat set foot in Gaza in 1994 and became a co-recipient of Nobel Peace Prize with Yitzhak Rabin and Shimon Perez in 1994. In the seven years torturous negotiation Yasser Arafat could not clinch anything basic from the close fisted Israeli hand. The basics were: (1) an end to Israel's 34 years occupation of the West Bank and Gaza Strip, (2) Sovereign Palestinian state with control of its own border and (3) East Jerusalem as its capital, (4) right to return of the Palestinian refugees who fled their land or driven out in 1948 and (5) and Israeli settlements which dots occupied land and inhabits 400,000 settlers.

Israeli Prime Minister Areil Sharon burnt midnight oil to prove Arafat a failed leader and regrets that he could not dispose him of in 1982. declares Yasser as 'irrelevant and confines the Palestinian leader

M. Shafiullah was Ambassador to the State of

### **OPINION**

### **Stop inhumanity**

**MOHAMMED IDRIS** 

NE and all would unequivocally say that the present situation prevailing in the country does not bode well for the people and the present state of affairs cannot be taken in a lackadaisical and perfunctory manner because the overall situation in the country is very rapidly going from bad to worse. If thy name is crime then murders, rapes, abductions extortion, terrorism, communal disharmony and violence and muscle-flexing of the political activists have assumed such a proportion which may be termed as the

order of the day. The horrifying tales of savagery as regularly reported by the press and the media raise one's hair on end. It makes everyone thinking if we were living in a primitive or civilised society, let alone a democratic society.

What is most amazing for all of us is that despite the pages of the newspapers being galore with with the news of inhuman acts, those in the helm of affairs seem not to be much anxious, possibly themselves having a good feeling of security for

themselves while the people are gripped with fear of life which has become cheaper both outside and even at home. It reminds me of an English saying that an Englishman's home is his castle. But in the present context of the situation obtaining in Bangladesh we may, like the English, coin a saying for ourselves which may be called 'a Bangladeshi's grave is his fort', because of the horrifying situation prevailing all over the country. Another interesting culture has

developed with every new govern-

our leaders are fully awake to the

fact that no one would dare claim

having connections with the higher-

A massive reshuffling

ups in the western world.

ment coming to power and the us from fancying that the whole victims of this culture are the poor thing is like re-arranging pieces of and the helpless citizens. During the furniture in a room. immediate past government a group Symposiums, seminars, and high level meetings are held where of people surfaced and used to claim themselves having the best of high rhetorics are made and good connections with the higher-ups in hopes given to the countrymen that the government wielding as much as the world has not come to its end authority as those in the governso the people may wait for the day ment and used to exact anything when they would be able to breathe they wished from the humble citi a breath of fresh air. zens. The same culture is again The common run of people are prevailing. I would, therefore, urge totally nonplussed to understand the government to take note of it as

in civil

that how come the government with all the police and paramilitary forces at its command cannot bridle a handful of troublemakers by whatever name we may call them among 120 million of people. Then

comes in the mind a big question how we would save the sovereignty and the territorial integrity of our hard-earned nation in the face of any aggression, be it from within or without. What is happening, we guess, is sort of internal aggression which the government should come to grip with

Now the only hope left to the helpless and hapless people of the country is to make an earnest appeal to our Prime Minister Begum Khaleda Zia to come for ward boldly to save the rocking boat.

Madam Prime Minister, may take leave to say that you were voted to power with all the hopes in our mind that during your tenure we would all sleep peacefully and I pray you would live up to our expectations and would not allow our expectations to be dashed.

Last but not least, I as an apolitical person and a man of ordinary prudence may say that if our nation does not exist we shall cease to exist. Therefore please instill in the people through your address to the nation that we are but Bangladeshis irrespective of any faith we may belong to.

# **Faces of our intellectuals**

SHAMSHER CHOWDHURY

N today's Bangladesh you cannot be an intellectual unless you are a member or an ardent follower of any of the two major political partiesAwami League or BNP. Although there is yet a very small number who have still retained their independent character. They are however small in number and hence of little consequence. Like the two political parties the BNP intellectuals find everything wrong with the Awami League and the Awami intellectuals find everything wrong with BNP. These partisan intellectuals also have succeeded in totally confusing the general members of the public in all possible ways

When Awami League was in the seat of the government the Awami intellectuals thought everything was proceeding in the right direction including the Jyonal Hazari's group of terrorists. These intellectuals encouraged and even eulogised spending billions of the government exchequers through building of memorials and prestigious infrastructures of little or no relevance to

the country's development programmes by a long shot.

One of these intellectuals driven by his extreme and extraordinary enthusiasm even went to the extent of comparing the literary genius of Tagore with that of the Father of the Nation Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibar Rahman. Considering the fact that they even endorsed the euphoria of terming Sheikh Mujibur Rahman The Father of the Nation as the most distinguished political leader and a visionary in Asia. Some of these intellectuals even went as far as describing the war of liberation as the most heroic armed struggle in the history of South Asia. Going from one extreme to the other is the characteristic of all these so-called ntellectuals.

The scenario with the BNP intellectuals is no different. There is however one very distinctive difference, they are smaller in number. Besides most of them have grown old and have become rather stagnant in their ideas. Allah be praised for the fact that unlike Awami League the BNP intellectuals till date has not embarked on organising mammoth civic receptions to their sponsor and mentor, in this case, the Leader of the Ruling Party. I presume there is still time and I apprehend this will also come up sooner than later. There is yet another problem with the BNP intellectuals unlike their counterpart in the Awami League camp the BNP intellectuals have a lesser calling and acceptability with the civil society. Conversely the Awami intellectuals occupy a formidable presence in the national print media far more than the BNP intellectuals and hence placed at a more comfortable position.

There is however a great meeting point amongst both the categories. Both of them are experts in holding workshops and seminars often participated by members of both the groups. The more the merrier and hence more confusions. These seminars to the best of my knowledge have served only one purpose i.e. confuse the already confused members of the public and the civil society at large. Take any seminar or a workshop has it ever come up with a distinct guideline or the real truth on any issue of national concern, a classic example in case is the issue of our gas reserve and subsequent export of the same to neighbouring India. I for one after all that have gone into it must admit that I stand confused and unable to decide whether or not to endorse gas export. Although my intuition tells me we should not. If anything in the process these intellectuals have merely succeeded in is totally confusing us and clouding our vision..

While dwelling on the subject it reminds me of a popular joke relating to one of the better known Presidents of the United States who while looking for an Economic Advisor for his government reportedly said to his aides to look for "an Economist with one hand" since most economists too frequently refer to the other - as they say, on one hand - and then on the other hand ". The President felt this was too complicated and hence an Economist with one hand should be preferred.

It is indeed sad and heart rendering to see this pitiable state of our socalled intellectual community, a reversal of the prevailing state of affairs is overdue.