

## Leaders of the civilised world

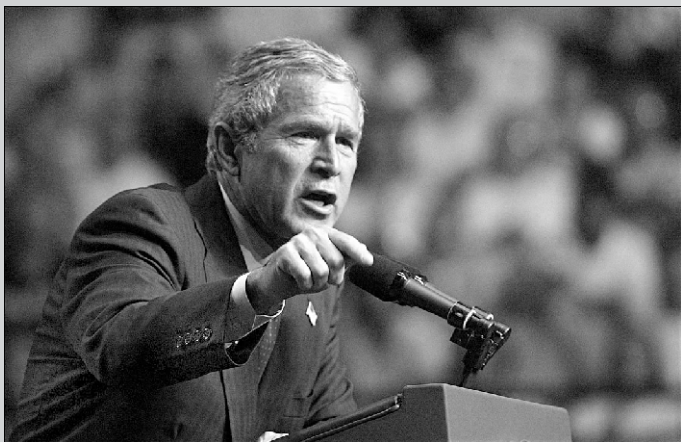
It has been around 1 year and a fortnight since the appalling attack on the World Trade Centre (WTC) took place. Do I condemn such an attack made by someone - who is a disgrace to the religion of Islam? Yes! However, do I feel sympathetic towards the innocent victims of the attack? No! It may sound a bit too harsh, but I don't think that the lives of around 5,000 innocent civilians cost any more than the lives of 400,000 victims, who died by nuclear attack in Hiroshima and Nagasaki.

The three major so-called 'leaders of the civilised world' had different things to say about the WTC attack. The US President Bush comforted the devastated American citizens by mentioning that 'revenge is on its way.' He also jumped on to the conclusion that the 9/11 attack's prime suspects were Muslim terrorists and declared a war on terrorism (forgetting to include the IRA terrorists).

The leader of the sidekick nation (i.e. Britain), Prime minister Tony Blair mentioned that 'Islam was a religion of peace and the war was not on Islam, but on to destroy terrorism (again forgetting to include the IRA terrorists).'

Finally, the former US President Bill Clinton mentioned something about 'the number of lives taken shouldn't be judged, the fact that an innocent life has been taken matters.'

The readers may be wondering why I included the IRA. Well, the US President could've suspected the IRA - due to previous enmity. Since this is a war to completely wipe out terrorism by both



We are the world!

PHOTO: AFP

America and Britain, why not wipe out the IRA - as it is also a renowned terrorist group in Ireland. Why just wipe out the Muslim militants all of a sudden?

Finally, I do grieve the number of innocent lives lost due to this bloody war on terrorism.

**Samia A. Rahman**  
UK

## "American way of life"

Mr Immigrant, you have all the rights to be patriotic by ending your letter with "God bless America" and I salute you because I might have done the same if I was in your cushioned position but somehow I get the feeling that there are scores of other countries which are on the list of America's "war against terrorism" who are saying "God bless America. But God, Please bless the rest of us also".

Just because I am trying to be objective about this war on Iraq does not make me an Anti-American, in fact, my letter, including hundreds of others from Dhaka were the first ones to be printed the day after 9/11 and all of us expressed our horror, anger and sympathies towards the US for the tragic incident. However, after a year of following the "War on Terrorism" and the affects it has had globally, people have the right to ask questions and express their views on whether the US and UK are taking the right steps to combat terrorism? The question of invading Iraq is as good an example as one can get.

My view on Iraq was based on objective observations regardless of religious or idealistic issues. How can a country like Iraq, devoid of any support from the world with so many embargoes against it, with its economy in ruins, be branded as the

the Israelis would realise that they have to comply with the UN resolutions to end this vicious circle of violence.

I really appreciate the constructive criticism of Mr. Waheed Nabi. It is very difficult to formulate a foreign policy to make every country happy without compromising national interest and security. You cannot form a foreign policy without trial and error, without making mistakes.

I find it hard to believe that some writers reacted so bitterly! "A Man in Uniform" did not even hesitate to use the word "proselytise." Anti-American oratory will only serve to alienate world peace.

**An Immigrant**  
Portland, Oregon, USA

Ms Selina Sultana has clearly confused between two unrelated issues. First of all, the drive for migration exists due to poor economic conditions in our own countries but that has no relevance to the right to voice opinion against the grotesque US foreign policy. Why should anyone be denied the right to voice against injustice?

Secondly one can also argue, that the impetus for migration has been partly induced by the policies and actions of the US government. The financial institutions like the IMF/WB coupled with the large multinationals are constantly exploiting the vast wealth and

intended to smear the US.

The US has done more to oppose aggression and to promote human rights than any other country. The most recent example is the progressive change in Afghanistan. We even transformed our former enemies (Germany and Japan) into democratic nations after World War II. We didn't try to dominate or exploit them.

Self-righteous America-bashers are enraged that the US is standing up against terrorists and tyrants, such as Saddam Hussein. That's why Mr. Trotter attacks the US.

**Frank Coffman**  
Boulder, USA

## Muslims and America

As far as I am concerned American foreign policy is dictated, formulated and executed by the Zionists and there is nothing President Bush say or do will change the minds of the Muslims and the Arabs around the world. Let us face the facts also that no President in the US can be elected without the consent and support of the Zionists and needless to say no US President can even dare to remain in power without towing the Zionist line.

Having said that, it is rather silly of us Muslims and Arabs to criticise President Bush or American foreign policy day after day. Unfortunately truth is that we have no other option but to continue to do so, hoping

## "Unsolicited advice"

I am writing in reference to the letter: "Unsolicited advice, by ES (September 25).

ES has rightly pointed out the deluge of unsolicited advice by ex-civil servants to the US President about what should be done in Iraq. He is right when he says: "Frankly speaking, most of the articles in question are simply voluble regurgitation of the same line: US is a super power out of control, Saddam is not that bad guy, the UN ought to be listened to, etc. The sheer condescending tone of such articles makes them no different from the hundreds posted all over the Third World everyday."

Such condescending tone is also discernible in writings by left-wing intellectuals even in a First World country like Canada. Most of these critics would like to show their left-wing credentials by putting the blame on the US for the dastardly terrorist attacks on America. Now they are criticising President Bush for trying to remove a brutal dictator who has caused so much harm to his own people.

**Mahmoud Elahi**  
Ottawa, Ontario, Canada

For the first time I have found myself in agreement with ES. He is quite right, the almost daily anti-American output of our learned columnists and writers is nothing but a rehash of the same left wing, knee jerk criticism of US power.

Although I must say that it is important that we discuss the pros and cons of taking the war to Iraq even if no one in the US will pay attention.

What I find amazing is that there has not been a single write-up criticising the UN Security Council, especially France, China and Russia, for their prevarication over the last decade. No one is pointing out the fact that Saddam is bringing this upon himself. He still has the opportunity to give in the UN demands and surrender all his weapons of mass destruction.

There are also a lot of rumblings about destabilisation in the Arab region. In the first place, most Arab governments have brought this threat of instability upon themselves. Secondly people seem to exaggerate the domino effect. If Indo-China would fall to communism all of South East Asia would follow—did not happen.

What we should realise is that unlike the Jews, we are Bangladeshi first Muslim second. I think this sentiment probably holds true for most of the other countries with large Muslim populations.

**MA**  
Dhaka

ES from Missouri has made some valid points in his letter. It is really disturbing given the current situation on the domestic front in Bangladesh, how our educated countrymen have so much time to criticise the US policies on Iraq.

There is a lively debate here in the US on the Bush Administration's Iraq policies. We would be better served if likewise we, Bangladeshis, focussed on our own domestic matters. With an economy in continuous downturn, a horrendous law and order situation and the reputation of being the most corrupt country in the world—surely we are better served by focussing on our vast number of immediate domestic concerns. A lot of readers seem more concerned with the potential removal of Saddam Hussein than improving the present untenable situation in our own country.

At the end of the day with regard to Saddam, the US Government will do what is in the long-term interest of the American people—regardless of world opinion. I fervently hope that there will come a day when the government in Bangladesh act in the same way, rather than acting in the best interest of their party cadres and relatives as is the case now.

**SA**  
New York, US

## Iraq attack: A march of freedom in the Muslim world!

I was quite astonished when I read that Condoleezza Rice, the US National Security Advisor, termed the US possible attack against Iraq as a bid for democratisation or the

march of freedom in the Muslim world.

Why shouldn't I think that this statement is a fabricated one when I see that most of the Muslim countries in the Middle East do not exercise democracy? Then according to this statement, the US should wage war against those nations as well!

Iraq is a democratic country with the exception that its supreme man does not prostrate on his knee to the US interests like many other Middle Eastern countries. In recent times, the US has shown more interest in geo-mercantile politics as a result of its President's incarnation into presidency only after regional politics within its territory rather than head to head count in presidential election. America started it by creating a version of small and violent America in the guise of Israel in the late 60's right in the heart of Middle East to snatch the rest of its neighbouring countries.

The world leaders' view on different religions is a kind of universal racism and Muslims are the worst victims. I feel for the oppressed Muslims and urge upon the Muslims worldwide to practice a conglomeration of patience and perseverance to get the eventual result from the omnipotent Allah like that of our great prophet got (Makka Bijoy) after setting a truce (Hudalbidar Shandhi) with anti-Muslim elements.

**Shoaib Ahmed**  
Green Road, Dhaka

## USA and world politics

What is the utility of writing on US and world politics? If we unanimously condemn the way USA is dealing world politics, would it have any impact on the US? I have seen some people criticising the "American way of life" forgetting that the 'might is right' policy always overshadows everything.

Just consider the 'Bangladeshi way of life', I mean Bangladeshi way of administration. After shedding so much blood during our War of Liberation, we haven't achieved our goal even after 30 years.

Why is it going on this way? Because it is the power rather than justice and equality that governs our politicians' mind and as our ruling class has no 'power' to show it to the outside world, they apply it on their own people. America has the power and authority and they are displaying it to the rest of the world. What is so critical about it?

As a Muslim, we are taught some basic principle i.e. all men are equal, the ruler is nothing but a servant of the people and for his every action he's liable to the people and Almighty Allah. But is there any Muslim state that is following these principle?

Let us build our society on the basis of these principles and I'm sure America will not oppose it. But first we must abandon this habit of criticising others.

**JKobir**  
Mirpur, Dhaka

## "US and Iraq"

I am amused by the letter of Mr. MA (September 22). I wonder under which frame of mind he sees the "UN decision" compelling Iraq to dismantle its 'weapons of mass destruction' "not unreasonable".

It seems to me from Mr. MA's letter that this UN decision for demolition of 'weapons of mass destruction' has been made mandatory for all the member states with regular inspections carried out by the UN inspectors and it is only Iraq which is refusing to comply with. I accept that there had been factors for which Iraq is under this unique scrutiny

hiding our conscience and pretending that we don't know who is behind this. Who vetoes all justified resolutions only condemning the state-terrorism perpetrated by a certain state?

Mr. MA followed the American line and wrote about Russia and China oppressing Muslims. Well, are the other members much better than those two? For peace, you need a balance of power. Why is a single nation tormenting a whole region after getting statehood, fourth largest army in the world and more than a hundred nuclear war-heads? Why a democratic country like France spoil its time banning scarf for Muslim women? Who was and is behind the military taking power in Algeria after the victory of the Islamists in fresh elections? The dividing line for the Muslims is quite clear.

**Ahmed Mohiuddin**  
On e-mail

## Double standard only makes new enemy

While America is eloquently vocal against Iraq, it is remarkably silent against Israel's brutality towards Palestine. Moreover, America is providing moral support for Israel!

While America is very active in Afghanistan and Pakistan it is passive about Gujarat and Kashmir problem.

In spite of Blair's unconditional support for America, in Europe, Schroeder stands against American Middle-East policy. And people of his country took it positively and essentially he won the poll. Chancellor Gerhard played the role, which was supposed to be played by Russia, France, China or any other major power. Though they failed, fortune favoured the brave.

Moreover, a member of Schroeder's cabinet compared Bush with Hitler. There is no exaggeration in it and Bush's policy is frequently proving that this suits him perfectly well.

**Oil Md. Abdullah Chowdhury**  
Khasdobir, Sylhet

## Tony Blair's dossier

BBC gave its viewers brief glimpse of Tony Blair's case against Iraq. We have not got the full dossier, yet from what we gather from BBC correspondents and the media, the dossier is largely speculative of alleged intentions but it conspicuously lacks hard evidence.

While Mr. Blair is so eloquent and tries to be so convincing, he has never been concerned about the known stockpile of lethal weapons including nuclear weapons in the neighbourhood of Iraq. Israel uses its military to ruthlessly and routinely terrorise the Palestine population and keep the entire neighbourhood paralysed. Yet no word on that.

The only well-known and largest stockpile of weapons of mass destruction (biological, chemical and nuclear included) is elsewhere, and the world is aware of that. The USA is the only country that used nuclear bombs in Japan, used napalm and orange agent in Vietnam, smart bombs and more recently Depleted Uranium in Iraq. With that record, the fear of the US is understandable; it comes from its own culpable actions of the past.

If mere "ifs" and "coulds" could be admitted as evidence, then Blair has a case. If mere speculation that some of the Iraqi missiles could possibly reach Israel, Greece, and Turkey is established fact, there is a case. While we understand Israeli anxiety, we have not heard Greece or Turkey panic over Iraqi missiles. Yet Mr. Blair is more worried than the potential victims.

Indeed American military might is

## War on Iraq



PHOTO: AFP

Victims forever?

When will we ever see the US and UK taking against Israel? But US will go to war with Iraq no matter what. What gives them the right to attack Iraq and overpower Saddam, when it was the people of Iraq who put Saddam to power?

They use the excuse of Saddam having weapons of mass destruction, but who is going to police the weapons of mass destruction that the US has? For example, India and Pakistan have nuclear weapons that they are willing to use against each other. They are a big threat too, thousands of innocent lives will be lost if a nuclear war breaks out. But the Bush administration is only interested in Iraq.

History clearly shows the hypocrisy of the US and Israel in the last 50 years. The pain and sufferings caused to the innocent people in the Middle Eastern countries in the past 50 years makes even Hitler look amateur.

And often the media provides one-sided news and views which may and does mislead the general viewers.

**FS, Dhaka**

over its neighbours?

If the world community chooses to be silent or be brow beaten to accept arbitrary rewriting of international conventions and law, that will be a prescription for destruction of human civilisation, not by "terrorists" but by those who claim to be custodians of international law and order. Will the rest of the world let that happen without demur?

**Husain**  
Dhaka

## "Bush, Bangladesh and 9/11"

This is in reference to the letter by Mr Shuja (September 22).

Yes, there are problems in virtually every country in this world. But the plight of the Afghans, Iraqis and Palestinians cause myself and many other people greater concern because the problems being faced by these people are graver. Why doesn't Mr Shuja ask President Bush the reason(s) behind his greater-than-normal interest in the Middle Eastern region when there are problems in so many other countries? The Bush administration, by virtue of the economic and military power of the country assumes that it holds the solution to all "global" problems. Sorry to say, but the magic potion did not work in the case of Afghanistan.

Mr Shuja tells "this" countrymen that it's not okay to side with anything under the label of Islam. Well, now Mr Shuja should tell the Zionists taking shelter in the US not to side with anything under the label of Judaism.

As a resident Bangladeshi, I am not very proud of my expatriate counterpart, Shuja. But, I do hope that he gets out of his "tunnel vision" and realises that attacking Iraq might only worsen the plight of the Iraqi people rather than help to get rid of Saddam's regime. And, who is President Bush to decide who should govern Iraq? This right belongs solely to the Iraqis. And, can President Bush, Shuja, ES or Mr. Elahi guarantee the Iraqis and the rest of the world that the next Iraqi government will do a better job than Saddam? And, where is the evidence of Saddam's possession of weapon of mass destruction?

**HNC**  
Dhaka

## Of the powerful and the humble!

The US wants to force Saddam out, Israel wants to force Arafat out—I wonder whether we are living in the peak of civilisation or at the bottom of it. The rhetoric seems to have shamed our claim to be civilised and narrowed down the distance between barbarism and civilisation. The leaders of weaker nations must fall in line or bow out!

While Israel continues to flout the UN resolutions and the world continues to watch the destruction of Palestinian camps, I wonder who will be next on the US/Israeli firing line. The course of recent history dictates that no nation that is rich in natural resources is safe until it bows to US demands. The first

group will obviously be the nations having oil/gas reserve e.g. Iraq (I have a feeling that it will be Iran after the fall of Saddam) and the countries that fall into the logistics support chain (e.g. Afghanistan that has already fallen for the mere logistical importance for transporting oil/gas from the Caspian Sea) and then perhaps the countries having non oil/gas resources.

Bangladesh being the poorest country has not been immune either to this inequilibrium if the statements of the US mission in relation to our gas reserve and SSA terminal are taken as an indication of the pressure mounting on our government.

Isn't it time for these nations to come out of their shells and rise to save the civilisation from falling off the cliff?

**Khandaker R Zaman**  
Dhaka, Bangladesh

## Why attack US?

I have been to America twice and had the opportunity to know the Americans quite closely. The general people are isolated psychologically as they are isolated physically by two oceans from the rest of the world. The general people are different than we the Bangladeshis. For example saving the life of a stranded whale will generate more enthusiasm than the news of Indian soldiers landing on Maldives. The electronic media also broadcasts those programmes, which would create more sensation and attract the American viewers, and as such important world events or news may not receive due coverage on American TV.

The Americans are least interested in world politics. The only time you hear the Americans discussing politics is during the President election. But that too is not as hot a debate as that we have in Bangladesh. Most of the Americans feel and believe that they are helping the poor and the distressed of the world and their foreign policies are nothing but pro-people. That's why after the 9/11 incident most of the Americans were taken aback as to why they have been attacked so terribly.

Every country will try to uphold its own national interest so what's wrong if America does the same. Before criticising the Americans, we should remember their support during our Liberation War though their government policy was pro-Pakistan. We should not blame American people or hurt their sentiments for the policy followed by the American Government.

**Cdre AMA Alam (Retd.)**  
New Dhaka, Dhaka

## Notice

The readers are requested to send their comments on 'Bangladesh cricket' (the cricket team, their performance in the ICC tournament and other international tournaments-how to improve their performance, what future they have, the government's role in improving the cricket standard etc).  
-Editor

## Supporting Saddam but why?

There are many who are arguing that because Iraq has thrown out the bone on UN weapons inspections, the US should be restrained.

Iraq has 168,000 square miles to hide its weapons. How do you expect a few UN inspectors constantly harried by Iraqis to be able to find anything? The UN does not have the intelligence gathering capabilities to locate the weapons depots either. According to a report by the Rand institution, "nations may be reluctant to provide intelligence information for fear of compromising their sources and methods. Before 1998, critical information on the activity of the weapons inspectors was leaked to the Iraqi government by UN personnel who were undercover Iraqi agents and by inspectors from governments friendly toward Iraq."

Under these conditions a renewed UN inspection system is bound to fail. Can anyone honestly claim that Saddam Hussein will just hand over his weapons for



Inspection or war-- take your pick

which he allowed his own countrymen to suffer for the last decade under UN sanctions?

I am not necessarily arguing for war, an extended or bloody one would make the price of oil skyrocket and send the world economy to hell. What I am arguing for is recognising that Saddam Hussein cannot be contained. He is a dictator possessing WMD's and intent on using them. The only question is how to remove him?

Incidentally, Pakistan's special role in the 'War on Terror' has led to booming exports thanks to preferential trade agreements with the US. My suggestion, offer our Army to fight alongside the British and Americans. It would give Bangladesh a special role and put our otherwise idle army to good use.

**Kireti**  
Dhaka

biggest threat to the US? If by pointing out that invading Iraq is not an option makes me "Anti-American" then I guess the Governments of Germany, France, Italy and other European countries too should be isolated for not siding up with the US.

Mr. Immigrant, your naive interpretations of current events just goes to show that the media giants I was talking about has had an effect on your judgement. If you are so hell bent on preaching about peace and harmony, then look around and see which countries are screaming for war?

**Farhan Qudus**  
Dhaka

First of all let me thank Ms. Selina Sultana (September 24) not because she is backing me up but showing the courage to unwrap the hypocrite makeup of our society.

Mr/Ms Yamin Zakaria is in denial. Iraq signed the agreement after Gulf War to dismantle all its weapon of mass destruction but did not keep the promise rather playing cat and mouse game with the entire world for the last 11 years. However I hope that all the diplomatic and political avenues will be explored before any military action takes place against Iraq but threat of military action is essential to ensure proper weapon inspections.

I agree with Mr. Mohiuddin about the UN resolution on Iraq and Israel. I hope the day comes soon when

resources of our countries crippling the economic infrastructure, creating poverty and unemployment.

As for the issue of hunting down terrorists, this is used as a pretext by the US government to further its interest, rather than a legitimate moral crusade for the benevolence of humanity. Just simply ask, why has the US government failed to define this term till date? Simply because any definition it adopts will implicate itself in much greater magnitude.

**Yamin Zakaria**  
UK, London

## The USA was not silent!

In your September 23 issue, Tom Trotter of Canada rattles off several false statements, such as the oft-repeated myth that "the U.S. was silent" when Saddam Hussein gassed his own people in 1988. That isn't true.

On September 8, 1988, the U.S. State Department "condemned" Iraq's use of poison gas. Secretary of State George Schultz warned the Iraqi government against "the use of chemical weapons and other human rights abuses." (New York Times, Sept. 9, 1988) Iraq did pay heed to our warning and didn't use gas again.

Mr. Trotter also falsely claimed that the US teaches "torture" to other countries and treats POWs "like dogs." These are more lies

against all odds, that one day the Americans will come to their senses and prevail against the Zionist for the best interest of America.

It is standard Zionist/American policy to condemn any act of bravery from the Muslims, to die for a just cause, as terrorism that has no place in civilised society according to them. They know very well why every Muslim in Palestine is choosing the ultimate act of bravery, to die for their rights and freedom against the occupation of Israel, but they remain silent.

Instead, America under orders from the Zionists continues to arm Israel to their teeth and fund their budget to keep them afloat and strong at the cost of American wellbeing.

Latest words of Zionist/American foreign policy wisdom come from none other than the wonder woman of the Bush warmongering team, Condoleezza Rice. In reaction to a German minister's comparison of Bush policy on Iraq to Adolf Hitler's tactics, she said President Bush was very hurt by such comparisons and she had actually taken this whole thing very personally. Could someone please explain to me what she means?

As I write this piece, CNN is reporting the latest UN Resolution condemning Israeli siege of the Arafat compound. Guess what? US Abstained. I rest my case!

**A Thinker**  
Dhaka