

## Meandering war on terrorism

KAZI ANWARUL MASUD

**T**HE seemingly acquired solitude after Nine-Eleven was shattered anew by the midnight mayhem at Bali on last week end. Dead were mostly the Australians with British, French, Dutch, Germans and of course Indonesians. Australian Prime Minister John Howard told the Australian Parliament on 14<sup>th</sup> October that President Megawati agreed with him that it was clearly an act of terrorism. He further informed his parliamentary colleagues that the Australian government had been concerned for "some considerable time about the existence of some extremist groups in the region, especially in Indonesia, with links to Al-Qaida and the real possibility of terrorist attack against western interests". Though he promised "a proper response measured, sobered, effective response", he made it clear that "the war against terrorists must go on in an uncompromising and unconditional fashion. Any other course of action would be folly. Retreat from the war against terrorism will not purchase for the retreaters immunity against the attacks from the terrorists. That has been the experience of the last year; that has been the experience of mankind throughout history".



Mourning the victims of Bali explosions

John Howard clearly said that the war against terrorism was not war against Islam, as good Muslims would find the Bali massacre as despicable as good Christians, Jews, and people of other faith. He, however, revealed the "fortress mentality" as an inevitable consequence of the Bali incident because Australian thoughts cannot fail to take into account "the potential vulnerability of our own soil, our own mainland, to a possible terrorist attack ... In a sense this is sequential".

Would Australia go back to pre-1972 White Australia Migration Policy, which stressed "Anglo-conformity" or the philosophy of "total assimilation". Such reversal of Whitlam government's 1972 policy subsequently embracing multiculturalism by Hawke Labor government (1983-92) and Keating government (1993-95) would be conflictual because of demographic shift highlighting a marked decline in the dominance of British-born Australians from 1947 to the Nineties. Besides migrant contributions to economic growth and capital accumulation was of critical importance to the development of Australian capitalism (Immigration and Settlement in Australia - Laksiri Jayasuriya). Indeed not all countries want to absorb their migrants as citizens. Germany does not regard itself as a country of immigration denying citizenship to German-born children of immigrants; whereas

France regards nationality not as a matter of birth or blood but as a matter of acquired culture. Immigrants to the United States can become citizens; indeed have a right to citizenship. Australia's reluctance hitherto to join the Bush camp is now likely to disappear as is likely the congruence of the Permanent Five to agree on the Anglo-US campaign for a tougher UNSC resolution on Iraq. President Putin in his message to John Howard said "International terrorism again and again presents to the civilized community with frightening lessons". To President Megawati he wrote "These tragic events confirm that the global community needs to coordinate much more closely to fight against international terrorism the scourge of the 21st century". Jacques Chirac has also been scathing in his condemnation. Australian Foreign Minister Alexander Downer has been categorical in the existence of a link between the Al-Qaida and Bali car bombers. Indonesia's Defense Minister confirmed the linkage and added that Al-Qaida operatives have been active in Indonesia. Indonesian Security Minister urged that henceforth no one should repeat that there are no terrorists in Indonesia.

While these horrific events are frightening, perhaps more frightening would be the short term and long term actions are taken by the "Victim States" and chain reactions to such actions likely to find resonance among the "excluded people". It is a catch-22 scenario. Invariant reaction by force to counter terrorism may be

effective momentarily but to find a forcible solution of this hydra-headed malady would amount to enigmatic delusion of an amnesiac with deleterious effects in the long run. Instead of the gung-ho policy the West would be well advised to be cognizant of the incessant Israeli violation of the UNSC resolutions on

leader of the MMA very recently described the Talebans and Al-Qaida members as brothers and stated that MMA would not hand over Osama bin Laden and Mollah Omar without convincing proof. Former Prime Minister Benazir Bhutto's (herself banned from taking part at the polls) party emerged as

13.10.02). State Department spokesman Richard Boucher said "US was not involved in the elections. Let us not assume that everything that happens in the world is a failure of the US... We think the Pakistani people and government have already demonstrated their strong opposition to terrorism and extremism and their desire to move their society in a more moderate and stable direction". He however conceded that President Musharraf's protagonistic role in the US intervention in Afghanistan could probably had been one of the factors leading to the victory of the religious parties in the elections. Meanwhile Chief of Jamaat ul Islami, a component of MMA, described American presence as "a brazen abridgement of the country's sovereignty and ego" and that his party would ask the soldiers to leave and that the Americans cease using the bases in Pakistan. Bali mayhem is not easily explicable. Car bomb was not directed at US installation/nationals. The place was frequented mostly by the Australians whose Prime Minister had already given notice that this time he would not follow blindly the US led attack on Iraq without UN sanction. Why the blast then? Could it be due to Australian activism in East Timor? Or has the Al-Qaida widened its definition and scope of US interests now including all developed countries? Or is it

such acts ,barbaric though these are, be regarded as wake-up call to the backers of Israel to make cost-benefit analysis of their blind support of an incongruous, delinquent and implanted state whose existence all the Arabs are willing to recognize on eminently reasonable terms? Would a vanquished Iraq (defacto divided into three parts); an assassinated or exiled Saddam necessarily put an end to Al-Qaida menace? Already arrangements are afoot for the US to buy Central Asian oil in order to reduce dependence on Arab oil though OPEC has always been accommodative to maintain stability in oil price. If it reflects abandonment or reduced confidence in trusted friends and allies because majority of Twin Towers/Pentagon bombers carried Saudi passports then Al-Qaida would surely have won.

If the seeds of discontent are partly economic then G-7 would be well advised to listen to World Bank President Wolfenson's advice that 50 billion dollars global aid would not produce the desired results when the donors are doling out to their own farmers 350 billion dollars as farm subsidy. UNDP reports that long term trends in interpersonal inequality in the world has become much more unequal now than in the past. World's 1 percent richest receive as much income as the poorest 57 per cent. Kofi Annan has always emphasized good governance as seminal to poverty eradication and promoting development. Unilateral withdrawal from Kyoto protocol and non-ratification of Rio Bio-diversity pact by the largest polluter in the world provides more arsenal to the Al-Qaida. Haste does not produce optimum result. Churchill in his "locust years" speech chided Stanley Baldwin of being undecided, irresolute, adrift and impotent. Stung by Churchill's jibe Baldwin spoke of his trust in the instinct of the people, which may come a little late, but "they come with a certainty when they do come, they come with a unity not imposed from the top, not imposed by force, but a unity that nothing can break". Let not the invincible be deceived by incipient and creeping theocratic urge despite their pronouncement to the contrary. Let the Christians, Muslims, and people of all faiths gather to search for the root causes of Al-Qaida appeal and respond collectively and responsibly so that death does not visit the young and the innocent.

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Palestine (described by the British ambassador to Israel as the largest detention camp in the world) and Israel's genocidal atrocities on an unarmed people.

Excessive reliance on force to combat terrorism may boomerang in some form or the other as has been demonstrated by the recent parliamentary and provincial elections in Pakistan. Though reportedly the party favoured by President Musharraf has emerged as the largest in Parliament which is a hung Parliament necessitating a coalition government at the centre. Islamists-MMA- a combine of religious parties is likely to form governments in NWFP and Beluchistan both bordering Afghanistan and could be a coalition partner at the centre along with the so-called King's Party. A prominent

the second largest in the Parliament. She described MMA as a "frightening genie" created by the military to win US support, the argument being that without army in power the US would have to contend with pro-Taliban elements now represented in the parliament. European Union observers described the polls as "seriously flawed" and criticized state interference in the voting process. Commonwealth observers, however, called the polls "for the most part transparent" but expressed concern over allegations of "widespread use of government influence and resources to favour certain parties and conversely to disadvantage the others". The US however has shrugged off the gains made by the anti-American religious parties(The Indian Express-

because unlike Singapore and Malaysia where Al-Qaida cells were detected before mischief could be done; Indonesia having passed through the trauma of regime change from Suharto to Megawati in which the religious parties took prominent role their hidden agenda remained undetected to the intelligence agencies coupled with the reported indolence of governance.

Australia but for its white-only policy till early seventies was never known to be the local bully. What then did Al-Qaida achieve unless it was to proclaim its reincarnation after being presumed dead and also to signal the acceptivists of its twisted policy to resume their acts of death and destruction. While John Howard's claim that no cause can justify winter in spring should not

## Rehabilitating the blind

### Role of ophthalmologists

DR. RASHID HYDER

*"Who am blind can give one hint to those who see: Use your eyes as if tomorrow you would be stricken blind."----- Helen Keller*

Problems of managing visually handicapped people have been with us since time immemorial. Due to therapeutic, technological and other scientific advancements in preventive measures affluent societies are giving more attention to these types of chronic problems which previously were given lower priority or neglected altogether. But in developing countries how much priority can be given by our government is a question because proper education and training for a better life for this growing population of blind people is expensive. So, the rehabilitation of blind people in poor countries is mainly concerned with the social workers and charitable agencies. And how much responsibility the Ophthalmologists should have about this complex problem of rehabilitation is debatable. However, there is no question that the eye specialists can play a major role in the initial stages of this unique problem to make the process smooth and acceptable for this unfortunate group of people.

Before we come to that, let us consider the word "Rehabilitation". The literary meaning of the word is "restoration to previous conditions of normal health or capacity." But in the context of blind people we can achieve none of these -- they neither can get their vision back, nor regain the capacity of doing things like persons with normal vision. Unlike the rehabilitation of the flood or earthquake victims these people need a completely different mode of rehabilitation apart from the monetary side because a blind always remains a blind.

In the absence of a better word we will stick to the term "Rehabilitation" but we must remember that rehabilitation of blind people who are psychologically disturbed and visually handicapped needs a very specialised and sympathetic attitude. So the preliminary point in rehabilitating the blind is acceptance of the basic truth that "they are blind." Yet, how much responsibility as eye specialists we should have, and whether we should help or not in some professional way, our conscience can answer that.

In most of the cases, specially in the initial stage, eye specialists are intimately related with the eye problem of the patient. Whether the cause of blindness is an incurable eye disease, result of an unsuccessful operation or the end result of a road traffic accident most often the eye specialist is the first person to break the unpleasant news to the patient or the relatives. Every ophthalmologist, albeit every doctor, should learn to acquire the art of effective communication with his/her patients which is so much important specially in these days of fragile doctor-patient relationship in our country.

**Open communication**  
In the process of accepting this harsh truth that a blind will always remain a blind for the rest of his/her life, specialists can play a major role and that starts in their own chambers and simply through sympathetic verbal communication. Family members should be included in the discussion.

An ophthalmologist must understand his blind patient and to do that he must know the reaction of different types of blind people like congenital blind, sudden blindness in a young man, gradual blindness in an old man. The time needed and the reaction in accepting the truth are astonishingly different for these different groups of people.

The congenital blind is not really a problem as they do not know the differences between day and night, black and white or the beautiful and the ugly. Not to have sight is a normal thing to them. On the other hand an acquired blindness specially for a young man with sudden blindness is initially very violent with an emotional shock followed by a period of depression then a stage of mental numbness.

Specialists must know these phases of blindness and during their subsequent visits they should talk to these patients accordingly, step by step, till they accept the truth that they are blind. Only then a specialist should start advising his patient and direct him about his future plan. Ophthalmologists should have good knowledge about rehabilitation facilities in the patient's area.

To patients, with gradual blindness treatable or untreatable, the truth should be told from the beginning so that they are mentally prepared for the future days about

their limitations of activities but at the same time one should also be encouraged to learn how to live a normal life with the present day modern facilities provided for the blind people, if he so wished.

**Ophthalmologist must advise patients to prepare for future rehabilitation:** There is a common saying that ophthalmologists "produce" blind people and then they forget about them. It may sound harsh and untrue but often there may be a tendency of negligence in an eye specialist regarding these so called "hopelessly prognostic patients" in other words it seems we loose hope from the beginning of this problem. This feeling of hopelessness discourages the patients which is so very antagonistic to the future course of rehabilitation.

**Nothing more can be done -- a fable of our times:** Even though it may be true that nothing can be done for the eye, it is almost never true that nothing can be done for the patient. Help in providing rehabilitation services for the visually impaired should be moral and ethical responsibility of all ophthalmologists. It is no more acceptable for an ophthalmologist to drop a patient once the medical treatment is completed. Blind rehabilitation services should start early, as soon as the patient's disease is disabling and long before it becomes a handicap. Whatever the level of doctor's involvement he needs to learn the resources in the community where his patients can be referred for proper rehabilitation. We should not view blindness as a dead end of the tragedy. With such negative attitude we may fail to fulfill our potential role as a prime-mover in the initiation of rehabilitation.

These early measures, often modest in scope and relatively easy to provide, should be available as part of the routine care every ophthalmologist offers. Sympathy and charity for the blind people are universal but understanding them is quite a different matter. Helen Keller once said "Not blindness but the attitude of the seeing to the blind is the hardest burden to bear." It is an individual quality of a doctor how he advises his blind patients in preparation for the future. We should learn something about lives of some famous blind people and present them as examples to our patients in a sympathetic but encouraging way.

**Don't pity blind people:** Though blind individuals have special needs which make them different from sighted persons in many ways, still pity is one that any handicapped people loathes. We should try to make one feel that he is not neglected or invalid; he can do most of the normal things in life and he is part of the society. But again another point to remember is not to give undue reassurances or false hopes. Let them accept the truth gradually whether it is the blind person himself or the blind child's parents and family.

**Visit to rehabilitation centers for the blind:** It is fascinating and amazing to see and know how these people live. Rehabilitation process usually rests with the social workers but specialists must work in coordination with them. Blind people should be examined time to time to review necessary treatments, if any, and examine at least the newly registered individuals. It has been my shocking personal experience to find some blind children in a rehabilitation center who could be helped to regain some vision either by cataract operation or by simple use of magnifiers.

At the end it could be emphasized that not only eye specialists but all of us should have some knowledge about the amenities available for the blind people in this modern age so that they can be suggested to acquire the appropriate ones.

Apart from knowing that blind people can learn to walk freely with white stick do we know that they can thread a needle, can pour hot tea without spilling, can cut bread with uniform thickness, can tell the time, can type, can knit, can measure lengths, volumes? They can play chess, cards and can do innumerable other things including taking part in most of the sports.

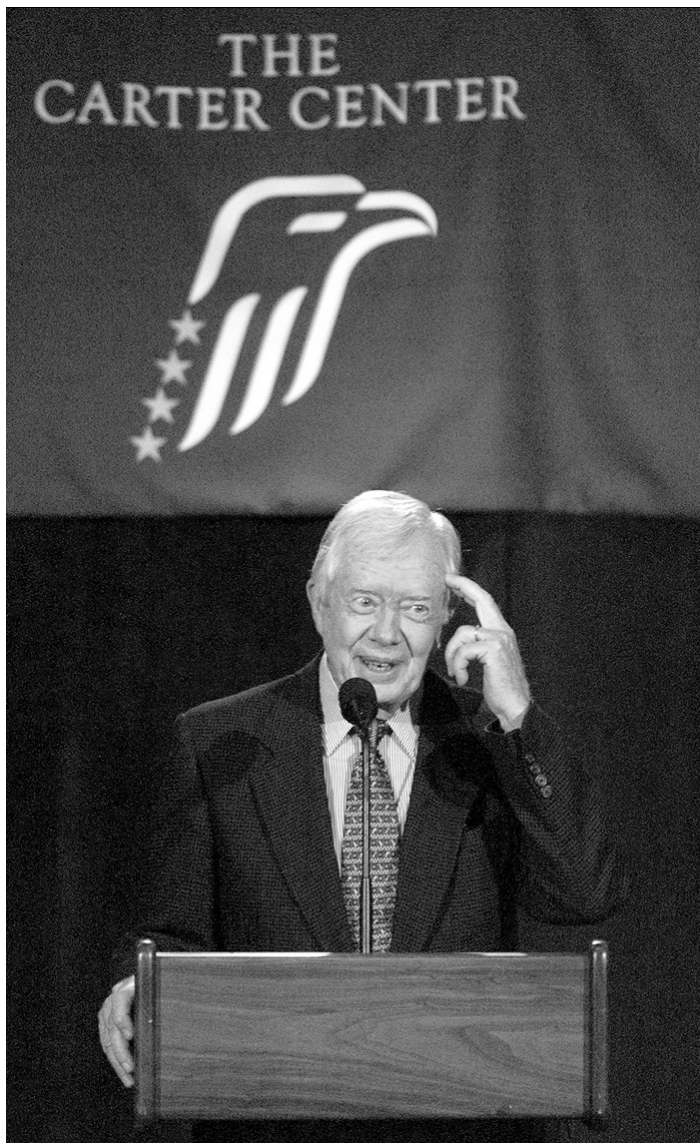
The eye doctor must be an early and main participant in this cooperative enterprise which constitutes rehabilitation. Only by becoming familiar with the psychological challenges to the blind and sympathetic to them we can adequately understand and help the visually handicapped.

## The Nobel Prize

M. SHAFIULLAH

**M**EDIA across the world from 8--13 October published photographs of 13 Scientists and Humanists in the fields of Medicine, Physics, Chemistry, Economic Sciences, Literature and Peace "who during the preceding year conferred the greatest benefit on mankind." They are the Nobel Laureates for 2002. According to the Nobel Prizes' century-old tradition, the annual announcement is made by mid-October. The Nobel Prizes which confer perfection on ultimate achievement of a human being are awarded in five fields in Stockholm and for Peace in Oslo on 10 December every year.

On 27 November 1895 Alfred Nobel signed his famous will in Paris setting in motion the institution of Nobel Prizes to stimulate progress in the fields of Physics, Chemistry, Physiology or Medicine, Literature and Fraternity among nations or Peace. Stating that the most worthy should be rewarded "whether he be a Scandinavian or not," the will entrusted the awarding of the prizes to three Swedish institutions in five fields and to a special committee to be appointed by the Norwegian Storting or parliament for peace award. Swedish-Norwegian Union then was under Swedish monarchy. Nobel's decision to set aside money also for peace prize was well founded in his own character and philosophy of life which was much influenced in his youth by Shelley's pacifist views. This was reinforced and further stimulated by his life-long friendship with Austrian Baroness Bertha von Suttner, a pioneer in the peace movement who was to become a winner of Nobel's peace prize in 1905. The inventor of Dynamite and smokeless gunpowder, Alfred Nobel abhorred wars between nations as much as quarrels between individuals. He often



Former US president Jimmy Carter, who won the Nobel Peace Prize this year

called war "the horror of horrors and the greatest of all crimes." On another occasion he advanced an idea, considered then as "utopian" but decades after his death, adopted in practice as one of the fundamental principles of the League of Nations and later of the United Nations Organization: "...the only real solution would be

an agreement by which all governments would bind themselves to defend collectively whatever country is attacked. Such a treaty would gradually lead to partial disarmament." Alfred Nobel, therefore, put a reward to "the best work for fraternity between nations or peace.

The will was opened in January

1897. After long and at times difficult deliberations, the statutes for the Newly created legatee, the Nobel Foundation and the special regulations for the prize awarding institutions promulgated by the King in Council on 29 June 1900. The Norwegian regulations were adopted on 10 April 1905 for Peace award. The political union between Sweden and Norway came to a peaceful end in 1905, but the union survived in the name of Alfred Nobel, with the Nobel Foundation as the common link.

The right to submit prize proposals is based on the principle of competence and universality as defined in the statutes of the Nobel Foundation. Each year the Nobel committee send individual invitations to hundreds of scientists, members of academics and university scholars around the world asking for nominations for Nobel prize for the next year. Such proposals must reach the respective Nobel committees before first February. It should be noted that the Swedish or Norwegian authorities have no influence on the prize decisions, therefore, any official representation or support whether diplomatic or otherwise in favour of a candidate is of no avail. The Nobel committees on first February begin their painstaking work of adjudicating the prize proposals and in early autumn submit secret accounts and recommendations to the respective prize awarding bodies, which have the sole right to decide. Final decisions is made by mid-October. The deliberations as well as the votes are secret and the decisions are final and without appeal.

According to the statutes a prize may be equally divided between two works, each of which may be considered to merit a prize. If a work, which is to be awarded, has been produced by two or three persons the prize shall be awarded to them jointly. In no case a prize be divided between more than three

persons. Nobel's intention appears to have been that the income from sizeable prize amount would enable the recipient to pursue his or her work free from economic worries. Work produced by a person since deceased shall not be considered for an award. In his words, "I'd rather take care of the stomachs of the living rather than the glory of the departed in the form of monuments." If, however, a prize-winner dies before he has received the prize, then the prize may be presented.

Alfred Nobel clearly stated in his will that nationality, race, ideology or religion were to be of no consequence for the decisions only achievement counts. Only individuals are eligible for a Nobel Prize, except for the Peace Prize which also may be awarded to institutions or association or jointly to organization and individuals. The latest instance of a joint award between individual and institution was that of Secretary-General Kofi Annan and the UN who shared the Nobel Peace Prize for 2000 in averting war on Iraq through diplomatic means.

The Bank of Sweden at its tercentenary in 1968 instituted a Prize in Economic Sciences in memory of Alfred Nobel putting an annual amount equaling to a Nobel Prize of the same year at the disposal of the Nobel Foundation. The Royal Swedish Academy awards the Prize according to the Nobel Prize rules. Bengalee economist Amartya Sen born in Dhaka (Waree Street), educated in Kolkata and in the west was the recipient of this Prize in 1998.

December 10 is the red-letter day in the calendar of the Nobel Prizes. For on that day the death anniversary of Alfred Nobel, simultaneously in Stockholm and in Oslo, the prize money, the Nobel gold medals and the diplomas are ceremoniously presented to the recipients. In Stockholm the presentations are made by the King

and in Oslo by the chairman of the of the Norwegian Nobel Committee and in both places, in presence of the royal families. The Nobel laureates' only obligation are to deliver Nobel lectures which are done on days just before or after the prize presentation ceremonies.

Uniqueness of the Nobel Prizes for this year is that after twenty years of leaving White House Jimmy Carter was awarded Peace Prize for his on going campaign in conflict resolution by peaceful means and promotion of human rights. He was the first US president to bring peace between Egypt and Israel through diplomatic means in the historic Camp David Accords of 1979. Herein, Carter left a solid message for the incumbent president at the White House that the 'sink and swim' US policy towards Israel would only blind the US judgment committed to offering "liberty and justice for all." A blind superman with demonic power at command can destroy the world. A democracy does not spearhead war but promotes and advances cause of peace through dialogue, diplomacy, justice and fair play.

It was not surprising that Nobel Peace Prize Committee had decreed Simon Peres, a joint recipient of Peace Prize with Yitzhak Rabin and Yasser Arafat in 1994, for his continued violation of basic norm of peace prize by being a coalition partner of Ariel Sharon that let loose state terrorism on innocent Palestinian men, women and children. The Nobel committee regretted, for the first time in 100 years, of it's decision to having awarded such a person who consciously uphold wide spread violation of human rights but is unable to revoke the prize for lack of precedence.

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