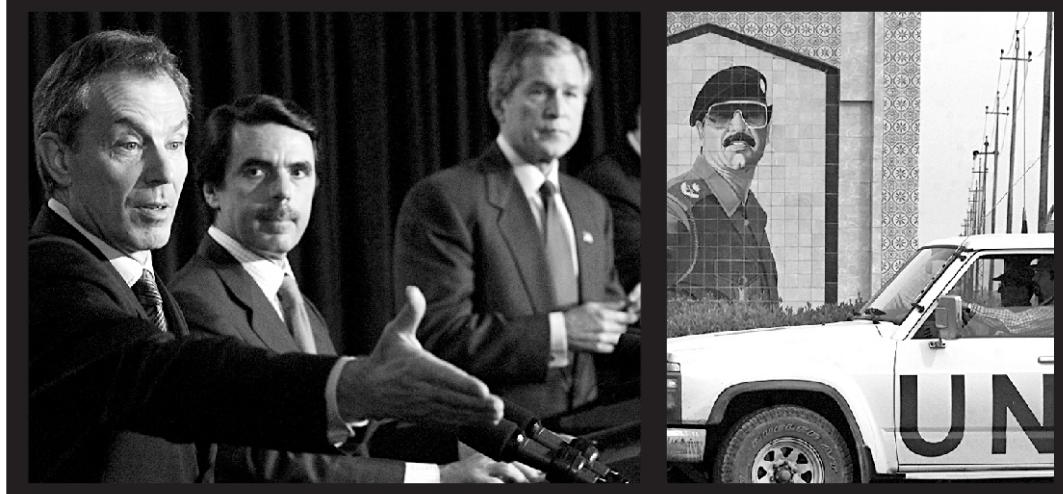


Letters will only be considered if they carry the writer's full name, address and telephone number (if any). The identity of the writers will be protected. Letters must be limited to 300 words. All letters will be subject to editing.



## Iraq: Colours of death



### "The pre-emptive age"

After entering the 'space age', way back in 1961, the mankind has entered the new age on the 20th March, 2003 called 'the pre-emptive age'. The political trend of this new world may take on a dramatic turn from now onwards as the nations have already got the unofficial license following the path of USA, the unchallenged superpower in history.

**Hafeejul Alam, Dhaka**

I would like to comment on Masood Rahman's letter (March 21).

Mr. Masood implied that we should send students to Europe, Australia for higher studies instead of US to retaliate against Bush's attack on Iraq. But Australia and Great Britain - a European country, are allies of US. So shouldn't we quarantine them as well? Perhaps Mr. Masood meant that we should shun US only, because it was US and not Australia or UK that initiated this unjust war. Please clarify yourself Mr. Masood.

In the case of Iraq, I think, very

them very effectively in a non-violent way, simply by boycotting the British and American goods and services all over the world. This will convey the right message to the right places. I would therefore urge all the peace loving people of the world, irrespective of national boundaries, religions, races etc, to come forward and reject everything that is American or British.

**Hafeejul Alam, Dhaka**

Muslim charities.

Let your good readers think that this is a fanciful idea, I would like to tell them about exactly such a product that is available here in the UK. The Derby-based Qibla Cola Company produces regular and diet versions under the catch line "Liberate your taste".

In case any budding Bangladeshi entrepreneur still harbours doubts about the viability of such a product, I take pleasure in pointing out the similarly successful examples of France's Mecca Cola and Iran's Zamzam Cola.

So go on! Make a million, make a cola and make a stand.

**Joseph Jabbar, Birmingham, UK**

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I agree with Mr. Arild's suggestion of boycotting American products, particularly those that are imported from USA.

But here's another thing that can be done: we should begin using the Weapons of Mass Protestation (WMP). As a first step I urge all of us to "Boycott CNN" completely and ask your cable operator to remove CNN from the program list. Their coverage is so biased and all of their reporters seems so gleeful when they are portraying the mass bombing of a nation to submission. I sincerely hope Al Jazeera starts their English News channel soon. And we should specially show our back to CNN.

**Mik, Ramna, Dhaka**

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If people wish to protest the United States war with Iraq by boycotting American goods and services, it is their right to do so. But in this era of increasing globalisation, boycotts, as a tool of protest, is increasingly becoming nothing more than a fool's errand. It will end up hurting innocent people than punishing a supposedly arrogant superpower.

Most American products, for the most part, are either completely or partially made overseas. Brand-name clothes, shoes, and other textile products are made in Asia. A Ford automobile is more likely to be made in Canada, Mexico, or Europe; and whose components come from a half-dozen other countries. The same goes for airplanes, computers, and other manufactured goods.

Boycotting U.S. products is like throwing a rock into the ocean, the ripples will affect everybody.

**Niraj Agarwalla, Boston, USA**

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### "Why this hartal?"

I have just read the letter "Why this hartal?" that has been written by an unidentified DU teacher where the author claimed that the Left party's attitude seemed to be "suspicious" in her/his point of view which was actually a protest against the suspicious strategy of government towards the newly begun bloodshed.

While going through the letter I was getting a bit confused whether that we should not buy CDs of American singers. But American group Dixie Chicks released a song condemning the war. So would it still be wrong to spend money on a Dixie Chicks CD?

American commodities have effectively gained a permanent place in our lives. I am sending this letter to *The Daily Star* through my yahoo email account. Yahoo is an American company. Granted there are non-American email service providers. But where can we find a non-American substitute to Microsoft? Unfortunately we cannot ban all things that are American.

I wholeheartedly support this boycott. For me, the biggest personal challenge is giving up Heinz Tomato Ketchup, which I take with all sorts of food. Here I have a suggestion. Instead of rushing to French, German, Russian, Chinese brands after ostracising the American ones, let's see if we can find an indigenous alternative. Instead of Heinz, I will now try out PRAN, a product of Bangladesh. Consuming locally produced items will help our economy to develop.

**Munawir Kamal, Dhanmondi, Dhaka**

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I would like to add my voice to all those who support Arild Klokkehaug and his letter "How will fight Bush" (March 19). Furthermore, I wish to make a free donation of a winning business idea that will allow some enterprising Bangladeshi to become a millionaire. At the same time, this guaranteed business idea could deal a 'shock and awe' blow to Coca Cola!

The idea - an Islamic alternative to the US drink that also donates to

cities around Europe.

**Rumana Hashem, Munich, Germany**

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I am amazed by the silly hartal called by the 11-party alliance. They must have been emboldened by their last successful hartal and thought they might as well call another one.

It is even sillier to call a hartal protesting the US actions in Iraq. I personally think this is a splendid war but my government doesn't. It's not as if we have our soldiers next to the allies although that would have done wonders for our standing with the Americans.

**Shonku, Dhaka**

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I agree with Mr. Arild's suggestion of boycotting American products, particularly those that are imported from USA.

But here's another thing that can be done: we should begin using the Weapons of Mass Protestation (WMP). As a first step I urge all of us to "Boycott CNN" completely and ask your cable operator to remove CNN from the program list. Their coverage is so biased and all of their reporters seems so gleeful when they are portraying the mass bombing of a nation to submission. I sincerely hope Al Jazeera starts their English News channel soon. And we should specially show our back to CNN.

**Waseem Khan, Los Angeles, California, USA**

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It's very amusing to read that the left leaning 11-Party alliance called a half-day countrywide hartal in protest against the US invasion of Iraq. Can someone explain how ruining the already poor economy of Bangladesh, by calling hartals, will help protest the war in Iraq? What are these "party leaders" thinking? What purpose are they going to serve?

**Waseem Khan, Los Angeles, California, USA**

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It's our political parties' old habit, if anything you disagree express it by calling hartal. Those who called hartal in protest of the US-led attack on the innocent people of Iraq, forgot that Bangladesh is trying hard to overcome the recent economical recession. Everyone knows what impact a hartal can make on our economy.

I am not supporting Bush, but if you honestly want to stay beside the innocent people of Iraq, raise fund for the refugee who will be the victim of war, give it to the Red Crescent or the organisations who are helping those people. We can be positive, can save also the innocents, but please don't call hartal, don't destroy our economy further.

**Tanvir, Benazir, Dhaka**

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Most American products, for the most part, are either completely or partially made overseas. Brand-name clothes, shoes, and other textile products are made in Asia. A Ford automobile is more likely to be made in Canada, Mexico, or Europe; and whose components come from a half-dozen other countries. The same goes for airplanes, computers, and other manufactured goods.

Boycotting U.S. products is like throwing a rock into the ocean, the ripples will affect everybody.

**Niraj Agarwalla, Boston, USA**

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### "Prayer for the Iraqi children"

This is in reply to the "proud American" ("America vs Iraq", March 23).

There is no doubt that Iraq had WMD in the early '90s, as there are a lot of supporting documents for it. But whether Saddam Hussein still have them is yet to be verified.

UN inspection team led by Hans Blix, up till 7 March 2003, has not found any indication that Iraq currently possesses any WMD. I would like to refer to his progress report to the UN Security Council on disarming Iraq (refer to [http://www.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/middle\\_east/2830505.stm](http://www.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/middle_east/2830505.stm), and [http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/middle\\_east/2867913.stm](http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/middle_east/2867913.stm)).

However Bush certainly has contrary beliefs. Being a non-American I am more inclined to believe Blix's account. Additionally, if America has undisputed evidence, why doesn't the US government show it to the world?

The report by the Bush administration that Iraq harbours terrorists is unsubstantiated. If there is any neutral source proving the claim please refer it to us. Ironically, there is widespread evidence, however, that America was an Iraqi ally in the Iran-Iraq war (1980-88) at which time Saddam used chemical weapons in a number of occasions the most infamous being the gassing of the Kurds. There is also evidence that America has had a hand in helping Saddam make Chemical weapons in the early 80's (refer to <http://www.iraqwatch.org/suppliers/index.html> and <http://www.wisconsinproject.org>).

Lastly, America had shook hands with oppressive regimes many times in the last 50 years. The innocent people of East Timor, El Salvador, Vietnam paid the price. Most importantly, as a Bangladeshi, the role of America during our Liberation War was not that of a nation that fights for justice. I seriously doubt whether the average American knows these facts. Either way it is not surprising that when US wages war in the name of the freedom of Iraqi people

our minds are filled with scepticism and fear.

**Sami Afzal, USA**

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I read the letter from "A Proud American Citizen" (March 23) with amazement. After reading that letter I asked myself, "is he or her for real?"

**Jamil Ahmed, Houston, Texas**

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### "Has Bush gone insane?"

The ongoing war in Iraq that we are watching on TV is no doubt barbaric, uncivilised and ruthless. Panic has pervaded every door to door in Baghdad and people are panic-stricken. While living in a civilised era and watching this type of barbarism is an insult to humanism.

The rain of missile in the sky of Baghdad waves the tremor in our hearts, but we can, in no way, guess what mental tribulation the Iraqi people are going through.

Whenever Bush appeared on TV screen, he boasted of being an American and threatened to ignore the UN and at the end, he did. A same person can never stand by this

cruelty and deny the world opinion. Bush has proved himself to be a man devoid of any common sense and as a war monger.

**Sulav Chowdhury, London**

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### "Who'll pay for rebuilding Iraq?"

Those who on their calculated mischief of self-interest arbitrarily have waged war resulting in misery and physical destruction of Iraq have banked on the premise that the neighbouring countries will be involuntarily bound to accept thousands of refugees at the cost of political, social and financial sufferings to themselves.

The invaders have already started talking at the EU of billions of dollars required for the reconstruction of Iraq for whose destruction only they are responsible. Contractors in the so-called 45 coalition countries are eagerly watching like hawks for the green signal in order to move in.

It is time the world told these violators of international democratic norm: a) to take all the refugees to their 45 countries, b) to provide all the funds to reconstruct Iraq under UN umbrella and c) to disallow contractors of the coalition countries to start rebuilding Iraq.

And they should vacate Iraq immediately.

**Atiq R Afzal, Motijheel, Dhaka**

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### "Security"

There are barbed wire barricades on the road in front of the US embassy. Perfectly understandable give the opposition to the war in Bangladesh. I did notice a curious thing though. While going towards the US embassy from Progoti Sharani, the police stop and check the boots of taxis and the cheaper model cars i.e. my jeep is never stopped. But that's not the funny part.

The joke is that the cars are stopped and searched just in front of the car bomb barriers in front of the embassy itself. Now if you are going to check for bombs etc wouldn't it make more sense to do it a bit further away from the gate? Point to ponder.

**Sabyasachi, Dhaka**

### "Ousting a dictator"

There is a curious aspect to the war in Iraq that seems to be escaping much of our country. As Fareed Zakaria of *Newsweek* puts it, "For more than 25 years, he (Saddam) has sought to acquire chemical and nuclear weapons, and has in several documented cases, succeeded. He gassed 60,000 of his own people in 1986 in Halabja. He has launched two catastrophic wars, sacrificing nearly a million

Iraqis and killing or wounding more than a million Iranians. He has flouted 16 UN resolutions over 12 years that have warned him to disarm or else, including one four months ago, giving him a final opportunity to do so 'fully and immediately' or face 'serious consequences'."

Yet amazingly enough the Americans and British are alone in this gallant endeavour. I honestly can't fathom this opposition. Of course there will be civilian casualties but it'll be better than Saddam continuing his depredations. So far from what we have seen on the TV, ordinary Iraqis are welcoming the Allies with open arms. It will be quite interesting to see how *The Daily Star*, for instance, explains away the joyous celebrations of ordinary Iraqis.

**Satyajit, Dhaka**

### "The suffering civilians"

Finally, the war on Iraq has started and it is only a matter of time, the US and the British soldiers take control of Baghdad. As far as I am concerned, this war could have easily been avoided. But the UN failed miserably in this task. What is the need of this organisation then?

In the war of ousting a dictator, it is the innocent civilians who will have to face the misery and destruction.

**Minhaj Ahmed, Uttara, Dhaka**

### "Undiplomatic overture!"

I have observed with anger as well as dismay that another stance of arrogance in US diplomacy has surfaced with the impertinent request of the State Department reportedly been circulated among the 62 host governments where Iraqis embassies are in operation.

How dare the US try to intimidate and dictate the whole world - the independent, sovereign states, even when the UN have not fallen prey fully to their dictations! However, I do pity Kofi Annan who failed miserably in his job and at the same time pity the disgraceful indifference of the Muslim world who could not unite to give a befitting reply at this unprecedented attack on Iraq. They even failed to take any stance similar to that of Russia, China, France and Germany!

**AF Rahman, Dhaka**

### "War on Iraq"

Now that the USA has waged a war on Iraq, would America be successful in achieving all goals as narrated by their government? Would America be able to convert Iraq into a modern democratic state? Is it possible or have they got the patience to build up a Muslim country? If they fail, in that case, its chain reaction would undoubtedly generate ample heat in favour of the "The Clash of Civilisation" theory as told by Prof Huntington.

But personally, I am content that this time at least the tyrant and dictator Saddam will be ousted, who fought three unjust war - one against Iran, one against Kuwait and another against the Kurds. But personal content and satisfaction should not over-ride the historical eventualities that I foresee in case of bad management on the part of the US in Iraq, which would just strengthen the hands of Taliban marked dark politics in the Muslim world, thus bringing more tyrant and dictatorial rule.

**Sahanbir, Dhaka**

### "War in Iraq"

Mr. Azad accused *The Daily Star* of showing tilt towards anti-war sentiments by publishing letters mostly opposing war on Iraq (March 22). In support of his argument he has given example of Britain, Australia, Spain, Italy, and Denmark giving active support to war on Iraq.

In reality, with the exception of Britain and Australia, all other three countries have only verbally supported the war. In all these five countries polls have showed majority of people