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'The moment of double standard!'

No more 'peace'! We have had enough!

At this crucial moment of warfare, it has given a lie to all our ruminations on civilisation and culture as if the great writers who deal with issues like human rights and international laws have practised a well-planned hypocrisy or, if not, they have simply wasted their time. If what is happening in Iraq is the current world order, let us close all the departments in universities around the world that teach branches of learning like humanities, laws and international relations. If civilisation means what US and UK are doing in Iraq, please let us be uncivilised with the hope that we will not be hypocrite. If 'peace' means the atrocities President George W Bush and Prime Minister Tony Blair are perpetrating in Iraq using their troops, let us all go against this cruel 'peace'.

The entire world looks with bewilderment at the brutality and massacre being perpetrated by two economically and militarily powerful regimes on a poor and fragile country. Killing civilians in scores, destroying hospitals, marketplaces, government establishments, after all, bombing the hearts of the country - all are going on with impunity. No one is there to restrain the tentacle of oppressors; no one is there to come up with a ruling of justice to save the innocent people.



Death around the corner!

Regime of a country will have to be changed by force from outside; and that is by bombing the indigenous people and their cherished heritages? As things appear, we are living in the most uncivilised world in history, with the only exception that in past when

people were uncivilised there was little or no trace of hypocrisy; but our advanced learning, electronic media and quick communications system have made it possible for us to mix hypocrisy with brutality in our mindset. Mahmud, Portsmouth, UK

war because of the hype and glorification of the war by channels like the CNN, MSNBC or Fox News. I still cannot forget the over enthusiasm of Aaron Brown of CNN when he was covering the starting of US bombing in Baghdad. When the first missiles were shown fired from some navy ships in the Gulf, Aaron Brown was boasting of the "improvement in technology" that made possible such video clips to be sent through e-mail from the Gulf to the Pentagon. It seems like he was enjoying every moment of the starting of war. How can someone be so euphoric with war?

It is rather a relief for the audience in Bangladesh that more hard-liners like the Fox News or MSNBC are not broadcast in the country. Their lopsided presentation of news unnerves someone having a different view on war. However, there are some moderates too here in the US. Channels like ABC and CBS and its anchors like Peter Jennings or Dan Rather have the decency of criticising the current administration in US and report on the civilian victims of war. They deserve appreciation for what they are doing despite the harsh criticisms from the hard-liners.

Although the US newspapers like the Washington Post or New York Times provides somewhat a critical view of the war, I suppose not many Americans have the habit of reading newspapers. The average Americans are contented with the war videos that the "embedded" reporters of CNN, MSNBC or Fox News provide. KM Zubair Sadeque Pittsburgh, USA

You want to buy some democracy?

America is so passionate about democracy and freedom that it has just invaded a sovereign country, ignoring the entire world and promising to free the Iraqi people from a dictator. So it seems that we are going to have the "end" of dictatorship then!

Well, very good. Does that mean America will pull all its soldiers and dismantle all its military bases from around the world? After all, if you have brought democracy then why would you need to have your military on other people's soil and intimidate them? Does the end of Saddam means America will never again interfere in other countries' politics and change governments to put one of its puppets? No more behind-the-curtain weapon dealing to "allies", even if those allies are considered by everyone as tyrants and war criminals e.g. Sharon? No more sponsoring of state-terrorism e.g. Israel?

I think we all know the answer, don't we? So it seems that "democracy" is proving to be a lot more successful marketing product than even Bill Gates' software! Who do you think you are kidding with your democratic garbage, Mr Bush? After all, what sort of a democracy do you represent, when your democratic people say one thing and you do the complete opposite? People don't want your so-called democracy, which is filled with double standards, hypocrisies and spins. Azzad Miah Oldham, UK

Iraqi civilians as human shields

The virulent anti-Western sentiment in our national dailies is quite understandable. Especially when the Western aggression is directed at a Baath dictatorial regime and threatening the "Muslim Ummah". Their coverage of civilian casualties and human sufferings as a result of the allied campaign is quite commendable.

However, it puzzles me that our dailies which are so concerned about humanitarian issues fail to point out the use of the Iraqi civilians as human shields by the Iraqi forces. Are the Iraqi civilians volunteering their children to be used as human shields to protect their beloved dictator? Mishal Ali Mirpur, Dhaka

Just a happy thought....

The whole world laments while a headstrong Bush administration continues to pummel Iraq mercilessly. Even the Canadian Prime Minister Jean Chretien has opted to sit out a war that does not have UN backing. Many in Canada have applauded this decision, while there are others who "feel

ashamed to be Canadians". To make up for their non-cooperation, the Canadian government has promised, among other things, to beef up security at the Canada-US border.

As it is, the post 9/11 era has seen significant tightening of Canadian policies related to immigration and security. It is now tougher to apply for immigration to Canada. My fellow student visa applicants can testify to many of the difficulties faced at different embassies! To add to that, Bangladesh has been added to the US black list of countries whose citizens have to be fingerprinted like potential criminals at American ports of entry. Even the UK is in the process of bringing out a law that would let them revoke immigrants' citizenship for "acting against the country's vital interests".

In this time of distress, chaos and paranoia, I feel that the best place for me right now would be the comfort and safety of my home in Dhanmondi. Which brings me to my thought.... what if each and every student studying abroad felt that the indignity of fingerprinting and partial treatment to us minority groups is just not worth all the creature comforts the western world can afford to give? What if the present world crisis sparked a mass exodus of Bangladeshi students and professionals INTO Bangladesh FROM abroad?

I relish the thought of having a Bangladesh free from corruption, oppression, poverty and violence; and full of prosperity, literacy, diligence and harmony.... almost all of which could be brought about by the same group of dedicated people who had left Bangladesh in sheer frustration, thinking that it just was not possible for such a change to occur. Samir Mainuddin Canada

Breach of law

Iraq is a sovereign, independent country like the US; not the 51st state of America!

What I don't understand is who gave the US the power to hand out contracts of oil and reconstruction of post war Iraq! It is Iraq's assets, and only they have the sole power and right to control their possession NOT the US nor the UK or any other foreign country!

First, they (US) attacked Afghanistan - on what basis or ground? Till this very day, they could not prove any link between September 11 attacks and Afghanistan. Then, they took 'suspected' terrorists and kept them in Guantanamo Bay, without any trial. America possesses WMD themselves, I don't hear the UN sending inspectors to disarm them! Now, they have invaded another country by breaching international law, nobody is saying anything!

It seems, that it is okay to do whatever they want - whether it's WMD, invasion of other countries, withdrawing from all treaties (Kyoto and Geneva are two of many), disregarding world opinion and also its own people (FACT: the citizens of the US are against the war), slapping sanctions on those who express their independent view.... I guess only the US is above the law and are excused from any restrictions or law imposed on the world community? Shaker On e-mail

Saddam, a Muslim?

I am a foreigner from the Middle East who has been living in Bangladesh for several years. Since the war between the coalition and Iraq has started, I have been confronted to several

people. Those people asked me if I support Saddam.

To their great surprise and shock I answered with "NO". When in return I asked them if they supported Saddam, with a lot of zeal and boldness they answered "YES". And when I asked them why, every single time the answer was: "because he is a Muslim and therefore he is our brother". Saddam Hussein, a Muslim?

What a funny and irrelevant answer when we know the history of this man. Wasn't he responsible whether directly or indirectly for the death of over one million Muslim people in his own country, in Iran and Kuwait? Isn't

from the infield British Army. The concerned Commanding Officer vehemently opposed his own PM's remark and declared that those two soldiers died in combat. Finally, Blair regretted publicly for making such sweeping comment. Subsequently, he sent a junior minister of foreign office to the families of those deceased soldiers and sought apology.

The Opposition Conservative Party leader Mr. Duncan Smith said that the PM had better taken care before delivering the observation. He holds the premier public post and there is no scope to say something in such an amateurish manner.

the veto of 3 permanent members of the Security Council - China, France, Russia as well as other peace-loving countries. Anti-war activists from all corners of the world including USA, protested and are still protesting against the naked aggression against Iraq. Former Secretary General of the United Nations Boutros-Ghali said US led invasion of Iraq without specific UN authorisation is illegal and he is also worried about the future role of UN.

Kuldip Nayar, a veteran and eminent columnist of India, opines that Bush wants the US to be synonymous with the UN. He is also concerned

Contain this aggression

Baghdad is being burnt to ashes and so are the hearts of the millions all over the world. The conscientious people of the world could never accept this unjust and unequal war, nay, brazen invasion unleashed by the neo-imperialists against the innocent people of Iraq.

The sagacious members of the Security Council, viz, Russia, China, and France, responding to the conscience of their respective peoples and also the people of the world, took a historic position not to support such cowardly intrigues against Iraq. Obviously, their far-sighted stand has been acclaimed by all the sensible people around the globe, irrespective of national boundaries. People are coming out on the streets of the major cities of the world, including those of the US and UK to protest against the literal genocide in Iraq. But at this critical juncture of Iraq and its bleeding people, mere condemnations, protest marches, and the vetoes at the Security Council are not enough to save millions of lives in Iraq.

While the brave people of Iraq are fighting the last drop of their blood against an unequal enemy of tremendous technological superiority, they cannot be expected to continue for an indefinite period. I would therefore urge all the nations of the world including Russia, China, and France (three permanent members of the UN) to take an united and effective stand against the Bush-Blair coalition, even if it involves the use of force. As a first step, the people of Iraq should be given immediate assistance in terms of food and arms, so that they can withstand the history's most brutish blitz. If it is not done, the evil coalition will engulf the countries like Iran, Syria, and North Korea in the second round and eventually, having further consolidating its position as a "super terror", swallow up the whole world in the third round. So, in order to prevent global destabilisation, it is imperative to contain this monster without further loss of time. Hafejul Alam, Dhaka

A reader thanks

You deserve thanks for three counts. Thank you for publishing articles on the Iraq invasion by people like Noam Chomsky, Robert Fisk, John Pilger and Paul Krugman. Thank you for using 'Anglo-American' instead of 'coalition' to describe the invader army in Iraq. Thank you for printing large pictures that vividly describe the state of Iraqi civilians in the war. Daiyana Murshed Chowdhury Dhaka

"How I will fight Bush"

I support the call to boycott many best-selling cigarettes. I have been smoking Benson allmost from the day I started eating. But in my heartfelt opposition to the war I will stop smoking Benson; I will also boycott 555, Gold Leaf, and all the other brands sold by British American Tobacco. Azad Dhaka

America and human rights

Well, we understand the reason when the US State Department has said Bangladesh government's human rights record remained poor with numerous serious HR abuses continuing ("US snubs 'poor HR record' in Bangladesh", UNB, Dhaka). They only tell the truth when someone refuses to act as they dictate. Great value system indeed!

Anyway, I would like to draw the attention of the readers to another news item "US sees human rights black spot in Asia" (AFP, Washington) wherein it was reported that "the (US) State Department's annual survey of global human rights is always controversial, promoting denunciations by targeted governments and allegations of US hypocrisy. But it is likely to be even more contentious this year, with United States accused of aggression and causing civilian casualties in the war in Iraq, and still hundreds of prisoners and terror suspects from the Afghan war in Gutanamo Bay, Cuba."

It is almost evident that the Americans (a few, perhaps 18!) have started redefining many things in the present-day world the way they like to. To name a few are: 'civilisation', 'liberation', 'diplomacy', 'international trade practices', 'war', 'PoWs', 'journalism', 'human rights' etc. The list can be more lengthy. Sirajul Islam Shiyamoli, Dhaka

aware, even more aware and conscious than the USA and its citizen (70% of whom voted for war on Iraq) about human rights. No doubt our human rights record is bad. BUT we don't need to hear about our human rights record from a children and woman killer, oil robber country like USA. Shawkat Dhaka

Invaders, not 'Coalition Forces'

Thank you for taking up a more or less neutral position regarding reporting on the Iraq War. However, it pains me to read in your reports the word "Coalition Forces". This is a sweetened version for "invading forces" or "attacking forces" or just simply, "the invaders". It is the invaders and their supporters who take pleasure in twisting their language by calling themselves the "Coalition Forces" even though the whole of the world is against them.

I earnestly request you not to use the words "Coalition Forces" while referring to the invading forces of USA and UK in this unjust Iraq War. Dr. S.N. Ahmed Baridhara, Dhaka

The Arab elite's war on Islam

This is not a war on Islam! Arab Kings and dictators would have you thinking that it is a war against Islam, so other Muslims around the world fight for their causes. The only reason these Kings complain about Palestine is not because they care for the Palestinians but because the refugees have been a strain on their own economies. If they felt what the Western nations have done is wrong, they can stop oil delivery. They can use oil as a weapon, but they choose to continue to build their empires and buy planes, gold palaces, luxury cars and things that normal people cannot even imagine.

If they really cared for the Muslims, why do they not allow their own people to open private businesses (NGOs)? They fully control the media and satellite television in their nations, they support the West behind closed doors because they know that is their ticket to wealth, and they use their media and monetary strength to show they are with Islam. This is a sad falsehood that is spreading within 1.3 Billion Muslims around the world.

This false rhetoric is causing the Muslims to act against the West. Such as terror like bombings and suicide attack. In turn, obviously the West

including the US will not tolerate it against their own people, which also includes Muslims of all types. After all is done, The Arab elite and kings will still be filthy rich, the West will continue to defend their interests rightfully and millions of misguided Muslims will defend these good for nothing leaders, and die. Sam New York City, USA

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US media and war

TV media has the strongest influence in shaping the opinions of people here in the US and there is no doubt that the majority of the Americans support the



Depleted uranium bomb and a neo-Hitler

One of the 'holy' objectives of attacking Iraq was to get rid of its vast stock of WMD. Casualties of the Anglo-US axis were mainly Iraqi civilians, a fact confirmed by the scarcity of Iraqi military personnel in the list.

It was learnt from news media that the 'liberators' of Iraq has used bombs containing depleted uranium to the unarmed civilians of an Iraqi village. Immediate effects of this radioactive element were not elaborated by the Western media presumably because these are felt by the victims only. Later effects include cancers and child birth with congenital malformed organs.

President Bush the main culprit of this civilisation-cleansing aggression was immediately shouting about breach of Geneva Convention when some of the captured aggressors were televised. I am eager to hear from 'the advocate of democracy and vendor of liberty' about this bombing. What kind of humane treatment does it constitute? Which convention is obeyed by this? That's why some-one finds similarity between Bush and Hitler. M. U. Chowdhury, On e-mail



Frustrated?

he a tyrant, a murderer, an oppressor, and a liar? Do those attribute fit a Muslim?

You can support Iraq and dislike George Bush and Americans, you can go to the streets to protest against the war but please don't tell me that you support Saddam and his regime because they are Muslims for in reality him and his entourage are nothing but enemies of Islam. G.E.M. Dhaka

Privileged lie

Last week Al Jazeera TV showed that two British soldiers were lying dead beside the Basra highway. British PM Blair angrily responded that those two soldiers were being executed by the Iraqi authority. Iraq categorically denied it. But the sharp reaction came

All over the world the peace loving people were shocked by Mr. Blair's irresponsible comment except for some insane warmongers supporting the invasion. Winston Churchill once said in the British House of Commons "the honourable member shouldn't indulge in more indignation than he can contain". This is absolutely true for Mr. Blair. He carries more but contains less.

In World War II Germany lost the war but Britain lost its empire. Similarly, Iraq will eventually lose the war but Britain has already lost its morale. Shaheen Mahmood College Road, Chandana, Gazipur

The role of UN and disobedient USA

The UN Organisations came into being to safeguard the liberty and right of the nations. One of the primary purposes for establishing the UN is to maintain international peace and security. The preamble to the Charter expresses the ideals and common aims of all the people whose governments joined together to form the UN: "We the people of the United Nations determined to save succeeding generations from the scourge of war, which twice in our lifetime has brought untold sorrow to mankind...."

But in spite of the sane efforts of this organisation world peace is still in jeopardy. The ongoing USA-UK led war against Iraq is simply a blatant violation of the UN Charter. What lies underneath attacking Iraq by USA is to dethrone Saddam Hussein and consequently to grasp oil energy of economically fragile Iraq. The UN's weapons inspectors led by Hans Blix forming 1411 resolution went to ransack weapons of mass destruction but found nothing. The report submitted by Blix's team could not make USA happy and without delay and discussion with the Security Council it started invading Iraq simply on 'guess' not paying heed

about the credibility and durability of UN. Actually one does not have to go back to the example of the League of Nations, which collapsed after Japan's aggression After the Iraq invasion UN may also receive the same fate.

No doubt, over the decades, the United Nations has successfully helped to end numerous conflicts, often through actions of the Security Council. It is high time Mr Kofi A. Annan convened a meeting of Security Council to refrain disobedient USA from war. This time if the United Nations fails to resolve the Iraq problem there may flare out conflagration that will endanger the peace of the world. Md Iqbal Faruk Chandgaon, Chittagong

Anational day of prayer and fasting

We've only had two war in our history, both at serious times - Revolutionary War and Civil War. And now we're at the end of time. The Muslims are rising. The world is against America. The Pope is also against us.

America is against itself. There is a civil war going on in America. Liberals against Conservatives. Mainstream religion, education, Blacks, Hispanics, other democrats, against the war, the President, the United States.

And God is against us. You don't know that yet. If ever a national day of prayer and fasting was needed it is now. But would we be embarrassed at the low turnout?

Pick the day, Mr. President. May I suggest April 12th, a sabbath, the 7th day, God's day (Friday sunset to Saturday sunset). Let's humble ourselves before God and repent of our many national sins. Harold Reimann Lucerne Valley, CA, USA