

## Incidence of robbery worrying

Plug the holes in police vigil

A frightful dimension has been added to the law and order situation by a spate in burglaries lately. Within a span of 24 hours, gangs of dacoits swooped on three apartments and several business houses in the capital city spiriting away money and other valuables from them day before yesterday. In another incident, gangsters burgled into the main post office in Comilla. In terms of dare-devilry and methods of operation they are going to new extremes.

Such crimes tend to strike fear in city dwellers' hearts and reduce confidence in the law enforcement people. Morning walkers were trapped by a group of robbers as they came out of their flats in Siddheswari area and were forced back up to guide them to where the money and valuables lay. Some burglars also broke into the offices of commercial concerns at Kakrail and neatly carried off their plan of stealing money and other things.

These incidents could not have happened without the robbers doing a bit of information gathering before committing the crimes. The law enforcers need to mount surveillance on such activities in order to freeze the criminals on their tracks.

The residential areas usually remain vulnerable at night, and during office hours when the male members of households are away. Although the apartment buildings or residential areas may have their own guards, police should step up vigil in view of the breaches taking place in their respective security outfits keeping in view the *modus operandi* of criminals.

The price that we are paying for an unusual rise in criminality is too big to be ignored. People are suffering from a sense of insecurity as they watch criminals regularly outwitting their victims and the law enforcers. The lack of security affects their lives in a number of ways. But the greatest damage is done to trade and commerce as the business community is bound to be shaken when apparently well-protected offices become the target of burglary.

The government should take stock of the situation and go for corrective steps to curb such crimes.

## Strategy for SMEs

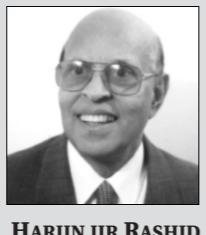
Dispersal key to overall uplift

A regional consultation meeting of the National Policy Review Forum-2003 in Narayanganj some excellent ideas were thrown up as inputs for an industrial policy review. The authenticity of the recommendations lies in the fact that these have emanated not just from policy-planners, researchers and media practitioners but also from stakeholders.

One of the splendid views aired at the moot takes us to the basics: "a local government-based strategy should be adopted to boost the industrialisation process, especially for small and medium enterprises." This is in line with the vision of tertiary growth centres, or development epicentres abandoned a long time back. The idea was to trigger reverse migration from urban areas to the countryside or hold the people of rural areas to their habitats or thereabouts by offering them gainful employment at the doorstep. Development of growth epicentres is key to redistribution of wealth envisioned to benefit the largest number of people in the country. A local government-based industrialisation programme also fixes in well with the still unaddressed agenda for devolution of powers on to the grassroots. The central government should be involved with the setting up of strategic industries, something like a silicon valley, for one, leaving it out for the divisional and district headquarters or their suburbs to develop backward linkages to major industrial enterprises at the top.

There is a huge potential for agro-based industries to string out with excellent networks of highways girdling the whole country, which are of world class really. The poor quality Dhaka streets stand in stark contrast to the silken highways built by adherence to international building codes under multilateral or bilateral loan agreements. The point is such wonderful road linkages mean there are potential marketing networks waiting to be harnessed.

The Narayanganj consultations helped forge a consensus on one point: there is need to explore domestic market to ensure sustainability of the industries, small and medium units in particular. This is not to say though, they will not have export potential. In fact, these will have a plenty of it. Basically, a local-based industrialisation strategy besides being environment-friendly, can ensure utilisation of indigenous resources, including the manpower.



HARUN UR RASHID

**O**N 22nd May, the UN Security Council provided a stamp of approval to the occupation of US-British forces in Iraq by adopting a resolution (number 1487) lifting immediately the sweeping economic sanctions on the country imposed in 1991. Many will interpret the resolution giving indirectly legitimacy to the unprovoked invasion of Iraq when US-Britain erred in their prewar assessment of Iraq's weapons of mass destruction (WMD). In addition it provides validation to the concept that "might is right" in the 21<sup>st</sup> century. The principled stand that Russia, France and Germany took against the war collapsed due to the pressure of the US for strategic and economic reasons.

Syria, the only Arab member in the Council, remained absent and the resolution had the concurrence of other 14 members including Russia, France and Germany. It is intriguing to note that it has been a sheer coincidence that at a time when the UN resolution was adopted, it was revealed in the media that Pentagon had been investigating how CIA went so wrong in their reports as to the presence of WMD in Iraq. A team of US analysts will review reports from secret agencies to compare with what has actually been discovered in Iraq since the war has ended. A question has been asked whether the Bush administration tried to pressure the intelligence agencies to produce reports that supported the administration's positions on Iraq.

Russia, France and Germany were opposed to war on Iraq and it was considered that any resolution of the UN Security Council to lift sanctions would meet opposition from them because under the resolution of 687 of 1991 the economic sanctions could only be lifted after the UN certified

destruction of WMD in Iraq and at one stage the three countries (Russia and France carry their veto-powers) insisted on sending UN inspectors to Iraq to verify the position. It seems however that they have agreed to have this resolution adopted -- what they call "a compromise resolution".

The question is why did Russia, France and Germany agree to this resolution?

In the decade between the end

issues, including economy and terrorism. Iraq's war has damaged the credibility of the UN, unity of NATO and the European Union. The big powers have realised the value of the UN and the unity of Atlantic Alliance for their strategic and other reasons. The quicker is the rapprochement between the US and the major European powers, the better it is for the strength of the Atlantic Alliance.

The truth is that winners take it all and in international relations

Besides the above strategic reasons, all the members of the Council including the three countries are genuinely concerned with humanitarian conditions of Iraqi people. Not only the people were deprived of basic goods and medicines because of harsh economic sanctions but also had to face worsening conditions after the devastating war. Until this day Baghdad had no electricity and water in most areas and law and order situation has been most

make the following concessions:

- The Security Council shall review the implementation of the resolution within a year.
- A continued, though limited, role of the UN in humanitarian, reconstruction and administration in Iraq until an Iraqi authority is installed.
- The possible return of UN weapons inspectors to Iraq.
- Up to six months given to phase out the UN oil-for-food

to leave Iraq and this will allow the US and Britain to govern Iraq for an unspecified period of time until an indigenous Iraqi authority is installed. Third, money generated by sale of Iraqi oil will provide what they call "Development Funds" for reconstruction of Iraq and the US and Britain do not have to spend their tax-payers' money. Fourth, US-British companies will get most lucrative contracts.

The resolution however did not satisfy some of the Iraqis who could be a part of the interim administration in Iraq. In Baghdad, a spokesman of the US-backed Iraqi National Congress said that his group was concerned about the resolution's description of a proposed interim administration for Iraq as a "provisional authority" rather than a "provisional government". The Iraqi National Congress fears that the use of the phrase "authority" demonstrated that the US and Britain might take years to hand over 'real' power to Iraqi people.

### Conclusion

Foreign policy must be judged not only on grounds of national interests but also on grounds of prudence. If unilateralism becomes strategy of the US, it may become self-defeating as it increases global instability and insecurity. After Iraq's war, it is quite natural for the US to fear further threat of terrorist attack and the stress of living in fear can only be reduced by multilateral approach and adherence to the rule of international law. The Bush administration has learnt the hard way that it cannot easily act alone in postwar Iraq.

With this UN resolution, the US will have a legal road to Baghdad. Collective ways of doing business in Iraq will provide the US to have the moral high ground. The Truman administration after the Second World War understood that the success of containment of the Soviet Union required cooperation of Europe and the Bush administration appears to have made the connection between its war on global terrorism and re-engagement with "old" Europe and the UN.

What do the US and Britain get? On balance, the compromise resolution appears to indicate diplomatic victory for the US and Britain. First, for the US and Britain, the resolution accorded them the status of occupying forces under the Geneva Conventions. This provides legitimacy of the presence of the US and British forces in the country. From now on, the US and Britain are responsible for arms inspections and may keep the UN informed of their activities in the field. Second, there is no time limit stipulated in the resolution for the occupying forces

## BOTTOM LINE

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of the Cold War and the start of the war on terrorism, the military balance between the US and Europe widened. European powers failed to meet the challenges of the post-Cold War era, allowing the US to reign supreme. While the US has stressed on "hard" power, the Europeans concentrated on "soft" power. The US offered protection from Jerusalem to Seoul and stationed more than one million men and women under arms on four continents. Its military spending reportedly equals the combined defence budget of the next 14 highest-spending countries. Europe has been a silent spectator to the American power at unassailable heights from space to the seas.

It is noted that the US, Britain, Germany, France and Russia are after all in the same boat because they had supplied chemical, biological and other weapons and technology to the former Saddam Hussein's regime. The five G-8 members -- US, Britain, Russia, France and Germany -- sell two-thirds of all global arms to other countries and on 19 May Amnesty International in its report titled "A Catalogue of Failures: G-8 Arms Exports and Human Rights Violations" accused them of arming some of the worst abusers of human rights. Furthermore the G-8 countries (US, Britain, France, Germany, Canada, Italy, Japan and Russia) are expected to meet next month in Evian (France) to coordinate their actions on urgent global

victory has its own momentum and often provides veneer of legitimacy to the end-product. American predominance is the central feature of the current geopolitical environment and there is no competition for primacy of American power, although Russia, France and Germany prefer a multipolar world. Russia, France and Germany realised that victors have come to stay in Iraq, whether they like it or not. If they refuse to cooperate with the victors, they are likely to lose both politically and economically.

There were intensive discussions among the members of the Council to make it palatable to all members. Both sides claimed to give concessions to arrive at a compromise draft. It was reported that the three countries were able to force the US to make 90 changes to its original draft resolution which was presented a week ago.

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programme, allowing the Secretary General to honour billions in contracts.

Russia, France and Germany not to be excluded from contracts in reconstruction of Iraq.

The key area of debate was the role of the UN in postwar Iraq. Under the terms of the resolution the UN Secretary General will be allowed to appoint a "Special representative with independent powers" to oversee the UN's relief and reconstruction efforts and to participate in the transition to an Iraqi authority. It is expected that NATO forces including those from Germany may soon be stationed in Iraq. The French Foreign Minister Dominique de Villepin said at a press conference on 21 May that "the UN is back in the game" although he stated that the resolution did not go as far as France had hoped.

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