

## Special operation in for review

Modernising police holds the answer

THE 'Operation Spider Web' launched in the southwestern region to curb persistent lawlessness may have to be suspended. For, it is generally seen, after a week, as having failed to attain the goals it had set itself.

The fanfare that marked its commencement was not quite been matched by the small number of criminals the members of the special force could arrest.

For some inexplicable reasons, the law enforcers started the operation on the same strident note that allowed many listed criminals to move out of their reach when similar anti-crime drives were launched in the past. The publicity coupled with political hype left little room for the caution and secrecy that had to be maintained to catch the criminals unawares. It was surely not the best way to chase the hardened criminals.

The advantage of intensifying the pressure on the outlaws by mobilising a huge team of law enforcers at a time that it had the potential extra strength to deal with criminals, particularly the organised political extremists. But there are also disadvantages, which cannot be overlooked. Such operations usually leave other major areas of criminal activities unattended, or not well attended, at least temporarily. Then the time, energy and money spent on such operations might be wasted if they are called off at the halfway stage. The special drives have to be successful for psychological reasons as well because any failure will be a certain morale booster for the criminals.

If the law enforcers had the list of godfathers and other criminals with them, it is not clear why they did not act on the basis of it beforehand. A highly dramatised special drive was not needed to arrest the criminals.

The lesson to be learned from the Spider Web loosening up before it could enmesh the criminals is that we will have to rely on the police round the year for reining them in, leaving the options of deploying special crack forces for very few occasions.

A big investment is needed for modernising the police so that they can attain the desired level of efficiency. We are in a race with time to build up such a police force. Let it be done in a time-bound fashion.

## Noose tightening around errant power sector?

A focused accountability exercise needed

LESS than a week back, state minister for power Iqbal Hassan Mahmood issued an ultimatum to DESA and DESCO requiring them to improve their performance by the end of this fiscal or wind up business. Now, the Public Undertaking Committee of the Jatiya Sangsad has decided to put them under the microscope. The noose seems to be tightening around the power sector service providers. Or is it? Whilst welcoming the accountability exercise, though belated having allowed maladies to snowball, we cannot help point out the diffused fashion in which the irregularities are sought to be removed. The second cause for concern is whether there is the donor-driven sense of seasonality about it to blow some 'hot air' that will cool off after the primetime.

The parliamentary oversight committee's decision to review power sector problems and prospects has already made the Power Division form a three-member surveillance body to check electricity pilferage, fake billing as well as to ensure better customer service in the capital and its adjoining areas. It is an internal monitoring contrivance that should have been in place as a matter of routine necessity. Awakened from a long stupor, the power division has a committee now with a blueprint for action, which again ought to have been a given thing: it will pay surprise visit to any residence or institution under the jurisdiction of DESA and DESCO to verify whether the bills matched the meter readings. It will also identify illegal connections. What's more, the body is empowered to take action against any official, meter reader and house owner found guilty of collusive malpractice. Why on earth were these not provided for earlier on?

Indeed, the corrective flair is so comprehensive that the Comptroller and Auditor General's office has been requested to report irregularities found in different organisations in the power sector to the JS committee. Thereupon the committee would recommend measures to the ministry concerned.

We have two specific suggestions to make: one, the power division's committee should have a public complaints cell; and two, which is vitally important, there has to be some public hearing before the Public Undertaking Committee of the Jatiya Sangsad.

## What next in Iraq?

KAZI ANWARUL MASUD

ODAY Hussein and Qusay Hussein, the two powerful sons of Saddam Hussein are said to be dead. Four people including the Hussein brothers died in the northern city of Mosul in a four-hour gun battle with the US special troops. Commander of the allied ground troops in Iraq Lt. General Ricardo Sanchez confirmed their deaths to the press.

Though the psychological impact of their death on the larger Iraqi people is yet impossible to predict despite western reports of singing crowds in Iraq and elsewhere over the news of their demise, it will most certainly deliver a death blow to the loyalists fighting a guerilla campaign against the occupation forces. Bernard Trainor, a military analyst described the disappearance of the Hussein brothers "a tremendous blow to the Bathist regime -- a real boon for those Iraqis seeking to pursue a Saddam-free future, cooperating with the US". Con Coughlin, an authority on Iraq, felt that it would reinforce the message to the Iraqi people that Americans and its coalition allies are very, very serious about getting rid of Saddam Hussein and that he cannot stage a comeback. It is possible that the death of Hussein brothers could set off an immediate set of retribution attacks; but their loss will be sorely felt by elements of deposed Bathist regime coordinating and financing the sophisticated guerilla attacks from the so-called Sunni Triangle north of Baghdad containing the birth place of Saddam Hussein.

New York Times in an editorial/op-ed (July 23rd) wrote that few Iraqis would mourn the deaths of Saddam Hussein's sons, mercenary, cruel killers who terrorised and plundered their country so they could live in imperial style. The editorial added that Hussein brothers were essential pillars of the Bathist dictatorship. "Though not as powerful as his father they were equals in brutality, well practiced in crime against their people".

A White House statement (22nd July) expressed pleasure over the "action against Uday and Qusay Hussein", blaming them for countless atrocities committed against the Iraqi people over the period of many years the statement expressed the assurances to the Iraqi people that the Hussein brothers would no longer cast shadow of hate on Iraq and that the Iraqi people would now be able to march towards progress and prosperity. A day later President Bush hailed the deaths of the Hussein brothers as the clearest sign yet that "the former regime is gone and will not be coming back". He called them "two of the regime's chief henchmen ... responsible for torture, maiming and murder of countless Iraqis". Secretary of State

Colin Powell also expressed his pleasure "that these two brutal members of their murderous regime are no longer a threat" and promised to "pursue other members of the murderous regime wherever they may be hiding". British Prime Minister Tony Blair bequeathed with allegation of "sexing up" intelligence report on Saddam Hussein's capability of attacking the west under one hour and the recent mysterious death of BBC "deep throat" Dr. David Kelly, in a doorstep interview at Hong Kong described the deaths as "great news" and "a great day for new Iraq". He added that Hussein brothers were at the head of a regime which "wasn't just a security threat because of its weapons programme but was responsible for the torture and killing of thousands and thousands of innocent

issues of principles aside, the invasion of a country that had not attacked the US and did not pose an imminent threat had seriously weakened American military position. Of the army's thirty-three combat brigades sixteen are in Iraq leaving the US ill prepared to cope with genuine threats. This perhaps explains Defence Secretary Donald Rumsfeld's yet embryonic idea of raising an international cadre of peace keepers, led and trained by the US, and sent to volatile areas to face bullets of adversaries. These state sponsored or private mercenaries are expected to owe allegiance to and paid by the USA avoiding the vexing interference of the wise men sitting around the table in the UNSC.

An incident similar to that of Dr. David Kelly happened in the US though mercifully not as fatal.

**Saddam regime or his sons do not deserve any support or sympathy but the post-war institutions do. If the foundation of these constructs were to become weak the humanity may in time have to face regimes like Nazi Germany, Fascist Italy or Stalinist Russia ...**

Iraqis. And the celebrations that are taking place are an indication of how evil they were."

While Anglo-US self-congratulatory reactions were predictable the silence on the large part of the international community, particularly of the Muslim world, is deafening. This silence is not reflective of any support for the long discredited regime of Saddam Hussein or his sons but of the discomfort over the issue of intervention in Iraq without UN consent. Practitioners of Realist Theory may urge by-gones to be by-gones and that the world must move on in the face of Anglo-US fait accompli in Iraq as many western allies of the US after initial refusal to accept American dictat have now reconciled themselves to work hand in glove with the people from Mars (to borrow Robert Kagan's description of the unparalleled American might). The developing world free from carrying the "white man's burden" of civilizing the uncivilized have quietly disagreed with the western culpability statement regarding Saddam Hussein's capability of waging a WMD war in less than one hour and his alleged links with Al-Qaida terrorists.

Paul Krugman wrote in *New York Times* Who is unpatriotic now -- July 22nd) that in October last year some US intelligence officials charged the Bush administration with squelching "dissenting views and that intelligence analysts are under intense pressure to produce reports supporting the White House's argument that Saddam poses such an immediate threat that preemptive military action is necessary". One official accused the administration of "cooking the intelligence books". Paul Krugman argued that

Joseph Wilson, a former ambassador to Niger, was sent by the CIA to investigate reports of attempted Iraqi uranium purchase which ultimately proved to be false. Apparently unhappy over Ambassador Wilson's negative report it was divulged that he was chosen because of his wife's connection who was a CIA operative. Paul Krugman alleged that exposing Mrs. Wilson's identity as a covert operative was a criminal offence and was reflective of Bush administration's obsessive desire to continue pressurising intelligence analysts to submit to it.

Lt. Gen Ricardo Sanchez defended the decision to kill

control structure during the war and therefore fair game to be taken out by the American forces. But after the war their status as lawful combatants ended. Under the Third Geneva Convention if status was in doubt of a detainee (which they were not) then the detainee is to be regarded as POW with all facilities to be accorded till such time a "competent tribunal" determines otherwise. (It may be noted that there was an international uproar over inhuman treatment by the US authorities to detainees in Guantanamo base). If the attack on the Hussein brothers was an act of revenge or retaliation then it may be pointed out that "retaliation

and "revenge" have no legitimacy in international law. "Lawful reprisal" is condoned in international law when reprisal is taken as a last resort in self defence and is executed with the objective of ensuring future compliance with legal norms.

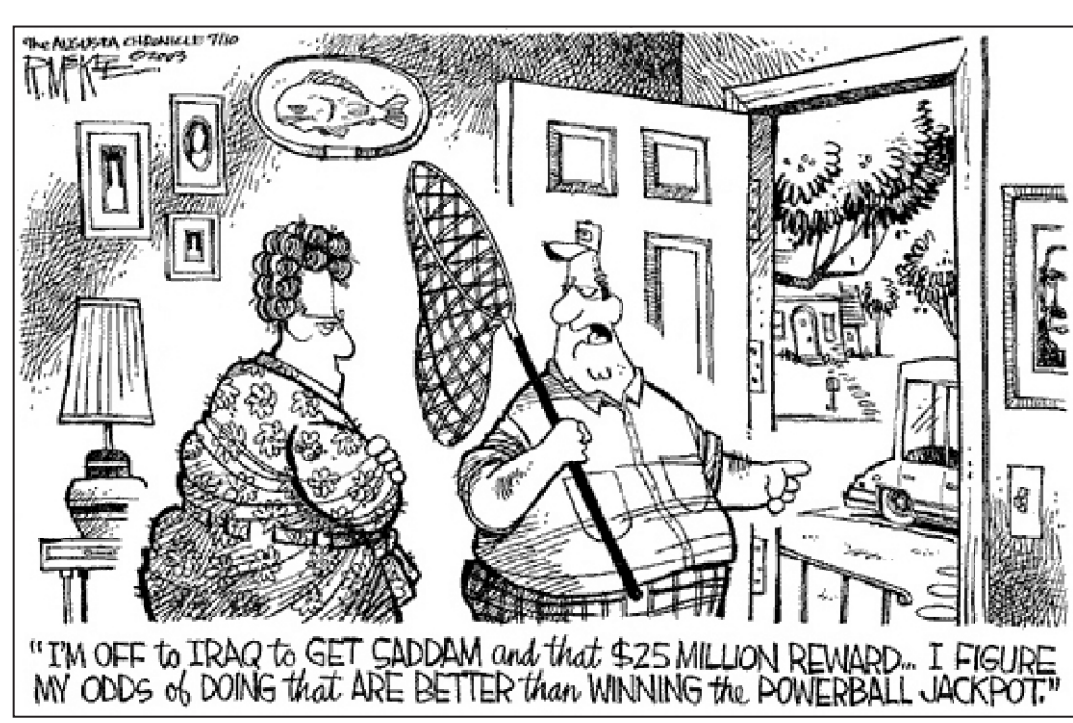
Australian jurist Steven Ratner stresses "The violation of international humanitarian law by one side in an armed conflict does not justify its violation by the other". According to US officials the owner of the house informed the US authorities about the location where the Hussein brothers were hiding which was stormed resulting in their death. The fundamental rule in the laws of war provides immunity to civilians and civilian buildings from military attacks so that proportionality is maintained to minimise "collateral damage".

gent in one's own country trying to oust an invader whose presence is forced in the first instance and the forcible entry not sanctioned by the UNSC?

As Gregory Trevorton of the RAND organisation and a former official of the Clinton administration puts it, Bush doctrine focused on terrorism and WMD is anticipatory, preemptive and unilateral, bedeviled at its core by 'legitimacy and critical capability' of US intelligence. Doctrine of preemption was clearly defined in the 2002 National Security Strategy. The intent to use unilateral force was repeatedly declared by President Bush and officials of his administration. What remained unclear was the specific set of deployments or threats that would constitute grounds for "anticipatory self-defence" under international law. Besides, in the case of Iraq President Bush argued that possession of WMD would constitute a threat to international peace while its possession by France, for example, would not. Basically, therefore, the argument hinged on the nature of the Iraqi regime and its internal and external behaviour. President Bush's repeated claim that (a) Iraq is a big country, (b) Saddam Hussein had plenty of time to hide WMD, and, (c) these will eventually turn up, is sounding hollow with the passage of time. However, recent polls suggest that Americans remain unconcerned about the need to justify the war through the discovery of WMD.

In conclusion, the international community had, perhaps, anticipated that Saddam Hussein, his sons and others would be tried as Milosevic is being tried at The Hague Tribunal. And, it would have been trappy if the detainees at Guantanamo base were not branded as "unlawful combatants" which is not covered by the Geneva Convention (the term unlawful combatants was described by French jurist Oliver Audeoud as an illegal terminology); if the US were to meticulously observe its obligations as an occupying power in Iraq; if the US were to desist from trying to establish a linkage between Saudi Arabia and the Al-Qaida which would hurt the sentiments of millions of Muslims the world over; if the US were not to repeatedly threaten Iran and Syria for their infraction of the western dictated code of conduct etc. Saddam regime or his sons who did not do so proud does not deserve any support or sympathy but the post-war institutions do. If the foundation of these constructs were to become weak the humanity may in time have to face regimes like Nazi Germany, Fascist Italy or Stalinist Russia heralding the end of civilization as we know it.

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## Bush-Blair's 'Iraqgate': The crisis and the conundrum

TAJ HASHMI

WHILE signs are evident that both George Bush and Tony Blair are nervously aware

of the mess they have made by invading Iraq on the basis of "flawed intelligence" (or lack of intelligence, one is not sure), their irresponsible comments on the not-so-inevitable killing of Saddam Hussein's sons by US troops smack of their desperation to salvage their political future. Bush has defended the killing as a step towards crushing the "Baathist resistance" (as if no other Iraqis are unhappy with the occupation army), and Blair sounds amateurish in surmising: "This is a great day for the new Iraq". What "new Iraq" he is talking about, we do not know. What can be seen is the beginning of the end of Iraq as one political entity. Unless the UN peacekeepers replace the Anglo-American troops and restore confidence amongst war ravaged Iraqis by establishing the rule of law through an acceptable regime (democratic or otherwise), Iraq is going to disintegrate at least into three parts -- Kurdish, Sunni and Shiite. And the Anglo-American occupation, ironically in the long run, will be responsible for the rise of Islamic militancy in the country. Ever since people started pointing out the flaws in the Bush-Blair doctrine of the war on Iraq, especially in the wake of the invasion,

which has failed to unearth the much-hyped Weapons of Mass Destruction (WMD), the duumvirate is fast losing its credibility at home and abroad.

George Bush's ambivalence, his usual not-so-convincing style of placing an argument, on top of his specious defence of the State of the Union Speech made last February, as being innocuous and based on "flawed intelligence", do not sell well. It is ominous for George Bush as his intelligence people and

can troops are doing in Iraq well after the overthrow of Saddam Hussein. He is also not very comfortable with his government's failure to produce the WMD, the main raison d'etre for the war.

Things are worse for Tony Blair as the bulk of the British citizenry not only vehemently opposed the invasion of Iraq with or without UN sanction, but are also much more aware of the state of affairs both within and outside their country than their American counterparts.

and Blair, along with the lack of signs of normalcy returning to Iraq in the foreseeable future, are all indicative of the crisis the Coalition is in -- it is fast sinking further into the quagmire of "Iraqgate". Hence the frequent use of the red herring by the not-so-smart masters of distraction, justifying the war as the harbinger of peace and democracy in Iraq.

Undoubtedly, people everywhere were surprised, shocked, happy and some even angry or sad,

their fast receding popularity. Contrary to the claims of the Coalition, democracy and the principles of freedom, justice and human rights have been the main victims of this illegitimate war both within and outside the US, UK, Australia and other countries that supported the Coalition. It is hard to understand how this invasion, leading to the deaths of more than 8,000 Iraqis, and the cumulative effect of the UN sanctions and frequent bombing of the country's "no-fly-

Bush administration has been flouting all norms of decency and civility in the name of protecting US interests. This administration has also violated the well-established US policy of banning political assassination, spelled out in an executive order by President Gerald Ford in 1976. While George Bush is the second US president after Ronald Reagan to invade another country without UN approval, Tony Blair is the second post-war British prime minister after Anthony Eden (who invaded Egypt in 1956) to sanction unprovoked invasion of a country with the wrong excuses and a hidden agenda.

The upshot is, unfortunately both for Bush and Blair, the brewing and nerve-wrecking "Iraqgate" crisis. By now not only are Iraqis and others in the Third World considering the unnecessary killing of Saddam's sons and others by US troops as being out of their legal bounds, but American Rep Charlie Rangel has also classified the killing of Uday and Qusay "illegal". If former ambassador Edward Walker is correct in saying: "The deaths are likely to signal to Iraqis that there is no going back", then the Bush-Blair lobby has every reason to worry about how to come out of this quagmire.

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security advisers have gradually started telling the truth, albeit under the pretense of helping the President, stating that he was not responsible for those sixteen damaging words he used in the speech, wrongly implicating Saddam Hussein in buying uranium from Africa. Although it seems the average American may be befuddled for a longer period than his British counterpart as he is programmed to glorify Rambos and Terminators, the constant home-bound flow of US flag wrapped body bags will eventually prompt him to raise the question as to what the Ameri-

One wonders how Blair justifies his going to war while millions of British citizens came out on the street condemning his bellicosity. Has Blair any defence against why Dr David Kelly had to die? And if he thinks the killing of Saddam's sons and eventually the death of Saddam himself at the hands of the Coalition troops will turn him into a war hero a la Winston Churchill, he is not far from daydreaming in these long summer days.

The rising cost of the war, both in men and material, the growing uncertainties about the political future of Iraq as well as that of Bush

at the slaying of Uday and Qusay Hussein. However, it is too early and oversimplified to suggest that the killing signals the end of military resistance to the Coalition forces and that this will lead to the capture of Saddam Hussein, dead or alive. As we know, Iraqi resistance has not died out even after the killing of Hussein's sons. In view of the nature of his crushing defeat on April 9th this year, Saddam Hussein, dead or alive, poses no threat to the Coalition. However, both Bush and Blair tell us otherwise, as they need him and his sons, preferably dead, to regain

zones", dating back to the early 1990s, have "saved democracy and freedom" in Iraq or elsewhere.

It is highly unlikely that Bush and his Party will eventually be able to answer such questions in a convincing manner. There is no point worrying about the nemeses of Bush, Blair and their associates -- Bushes and Blairs will come and go. What is worrisome in the long run is the grave danger confronting international law and order, and the inviolable sovereignty of nation states and human rights. It is shocking to witness the way the

## OPINION

## The choice rests with the West

GEOF WOOD

I am not a pacifist. Conflict can be functional in improving the quality of civilisation for the oppressed. This is why I can understand the motives of insecure young people to fight as terrorists. Recent events in the Middle East tell us that the colonial structure of the world is being reinforced in the 21<sup>st</sup> century thus reproducing a fundamental alienation for those who cannot realise their principles and their cultural heritage. The only honourable and dignified option for an alienated people,

denied the basis for a secure welfare, is to confront oppression with opposition: the violence of the former matched by that of the latter. Alas, the West has set up the dialectical logic in previous centuries and has found neither the analysis nor the will to engineer a paradigm shift. The dialectic has thus become a clash of barbarisms not of civilisations, brought about by an incremental compounding of earlier colonial stances. Until this linear incrementalism is broken, the global path dependency revealed starkly during the latest war will continue to breed a further round of insecurity for us all. All

that is needed, in the famous aphorism, is for good men and women to stand by and do nothing.

The fear for us all is that by standing up instead for a continuation of colonial behaviour masquerading as universal principles we are limiting the right to define international development to a sub-set of peoples who command the superior technologies of violence. This law of the jungle reproduces a condition in which no-one is secure and no-one is happy, characterised by uncertain consequences. We cannot presume the success of a western modernisation project, brought about by the military-industrial complex of Texas. The choice of instrument forecloses that outcome. The transcending issues is the relation between choice and alienation. Absence of the former produces the latter, and the latter is only honourably resolved by seizing the conditions for choice rather than receiving the choices of others. That choice might indeed resemble western modernisation summarised as democratic capitalism, but the point is that the choice must freely exist. Of course if western modernisation is summarised as colonial oppression by the

mighty over the weak, then process has to be dealt with before substance. This is where we are now in the Middle East and many other places in the world. The behaviour of the West has effectively shifted a debate about substance to one about process and rights to choose substance. The struggle globally is, ironically, more about the latter than the former. In other words, the principle of freedom has displaced the propositions about what to do with that freedom. Do we think, for example, that the suicide bombers and the

settlers in the territory we call Palestine and Israel have fundamentally opposed views about the good life? The family-based adults from both communities espouse the same substance, as they do across the divide in Northern Ireland. The difference is the extent of choice available to each community. But if the powerful community cuts off the choice, and removes the range of options for the other community then a colonial relationship has been re-established. In the west, we would not like that for ourselves. That is why many who opposed the last

war, would have supported the second world war as a just one: the defence of choice. So back to my young men and women in the alienated world. What lies ahead for them, excluded as they are from citizenship and access to global opportunities? With what hope can they fall in love and build families? How can they meet their kinship obligations to their parents and grandparents? With the loss of face from colonial humiliation comes shame. How is shame to be overcome and dignity restored? A failure to confront shame is shame

itself. Without a paradigm shift in the West towards a more long term and sustainable foreign policy, based upon a more inclusive process by which international development is defined and pursued, we can expect a globalisation of the infitada starting, ironically, in the cradle of civilisation itself. The choice, it seems, is with us in the West -- have we already made the wrong one for the 21<sup>st</sup> century?

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