LATE S. M. ALI

DHAKA TUESDAY FEBRUARY 10, 2004

Natore mayhem

A body-blow to rule of law

HE way some ruling party activists have responded to the killing of a relative of an influential figure is outrageous, to say the least. We condemn both the killing and the reactive wholesale arson committed by BNP elements as reported in the media.

In a rabid manifestation of political vendetta, no fewer than 16 houses of purportedly AL loyalists were set on fire. Curiously enough, whenever a political leader or activist is murdered, the killer is almost always spotted on the other side of the political divide. The attention of the aggrieved is often diverted to the rival political party instead of the real perpetrators of the crime. The logic behind such obsession with fixing targets well before getting any clues about a particular crime is as preposterous as it is unfair. For the purposes of law, a criminal is a criminal devoid of any political colour.

The dangers associated with unleashing such 'pogroms' against political adversaries are far too obvious. When the elements within the ruling party commit such palpable crimes, the rule of law takes a heavy pounding. There is a qualitative difference between an ordinary citizen committing a culpable offence and a ruling party activist doing it the sooner this is recognised the better.

We have seen politics of confrontation, killing and violence, but such hooliganism is perhaps a new phenomenon with all its attendant ills of possible replication. It is not clear how the government can face up to such free-for-all vandalism.

We urge the top leaders of the ruling party to condemn the attack, identify the criminals and punish them . They have to do these not only for the sake of justice but also to take the democracy out of the morass it unfortunately finds itself in.

FTA deal

Were we left out in the cold?

ANGLADESH'S failure to sign up to a framework agreement on free trade in the BIMST-EC region while other member-states did it, has taken us by surprise. The reasons why this has made us sit up and take note are: one, Bangladesh's demand for compensation for any revenue lost due to the elimination of tariffs should have been resolved by now; two, if other relatively less developed countries within the grouping were associated with it, how could they sign the accord to the exclusion of Bangladesh; and last but not least, was there enough deliberation and information sharing about Bangladesh's likely stance on the issue with the private sector business and trading bodies before it was eventually adopted? All these lend themselves to an interpretation that Bangladesh delegation worked itself into a corner and was left out in the cold on this particular score.

The issue before us is not so much the rationale of Bangladesh's demands but whether the situation was handled as diplomatically and professionally as one would have expected at that level -- to yield a favourable result.

The potential benefits of the BIMST-EC grouping extend beyond a freer trading regimen among member countries. Other benefits of enhanced cooperation would be improving transport links within the region, a joint coastal shipping agreement, and joint projects to develop the entire region.

Bangladesh as a founder-member of the BIMST-EC cannot but stand firmly committed to regional cooperation and the concept of free trade within the grouping. That is the signal we must steadfastly beam to our partners in the grouping.

the moral level of our nation,

so that the heart of the corrupt

souls in our country is

cleansed. As for example, the

kind words of the wise men of

the past can inspire the new

generation. We need to find

the root cause of so much

violence surrounding us. If

somehow we can realise the

value of life itself, then we

would surely make a good

family life, good social life and

how some terrorists changed

themselves into better human

beings after interacting with

wise men. Now the world lead-

ers may say that poverty is the

reason behind such terrorism,

but I disagree . Most of the poor

people are actually good-

There are many examples of

good world life.

Foreign policy in Bush's White House



ARSHAD-UZ ZAMAN

S President George W. Bush has entered the last year of his Presidency. Now it would be worthwhile to analyse the bold lines of the Bush foreign

To put it mildly it has been a tumultuous three years and no end in sight of its slowing down. Almost at the outset took place the now famous 9/11. These two figures have become so universally known that it has entered into everybody's mind as the high drama of attack on the Twin Towers of New York and Pentagon in Washington D.C. and a near miss on the White House on 11 September 2001.

This was the beginning of the nigh profile activities of President Bush. The spectacle of the Twin Towers melting like chocolate in a blazing sun and President Bush running for cover was played out in front of the whole world. The US lost her lone superpower status. The world was shaken to its foundation. President Bush had to strike back in order to recover even a semblance of her great power. Afghanistan was selected as the target. There lived the mastermind of the first ever attack on US soil -- Osama Bin Laden. He was the guest of Molla Omar,

the leader of the Taliban regime, reviled and shunned by the entire world for its obscurantist antics. The nearest neighbour of Afghanistan was Pakistan, whose military ruler Gen. Pervez Musharraf had been ostracised by the international community because he had ousted an elected governent. The champion of democracy worldwide, the US, rapidly mended fences with Pakistan in exchange of Pakistan's whole hearted

policeman on behalf of President Bush in the Middle East. The largest power in the Arab world, Egypt, had been effectively silenced through the Camp David Peace Accord of 1979. The only real obstacle for Israel was Iraq. Israel had bombed the nuclear installations near Baghdad in

President George Bush and British Prime Minister Tony Blair launched a world wide campaign

enter Iraq from the north and drive towards Baghdad

Inspite of these failures and frustrations, US and Britain launched a totally unprovoked war against Iraq and faced with this massive firepower, Iraqi forces could only disappear from the scene. On May 1 last President Bush declared the war as over. Yet it was far from over. If the Iragis were unable to meet a frontal attack they have proved

reports refuses to go away.

If the Iraq crisis has totally entangled President Bush, he has paid scant attention to the most mportant question of the Middle East -- Palestine-Israel conflict. It is admitted by all that in the light of the fact that US is the only protector of Israel, it is she alone who can make Israel see reason in her dispute with her Arab neighbours beginning with Palestine. The only way the US can play a mean-

failures of the Bush Foreign policy. One of the most glaring is dividing the Atlantic Alliance by cooling relations with such longtime allies as France and Germany. They refused to give President Bush the authorisation by the Security Council to use force against Iraq. Hard on the heels of these misfortunes is the revelation that Pakistani scientist Abdul Qadeer Khan had been passing nuclear secrets to Iran. Libva and North Korea. The scientist has admitted his guilt as the lone operator. In the tightly controlled regime like Pakistan it is hard to imagine how the scientist could have so much power! He has asked for forgivenenss in a TV seession with President Musharraf and has been promptly pardoned. More to the point President Bush has shown remarkable understanding for his friend Musharraf! It would be interesting to see how President Bush handles his crusade regarding proliferation of nuclear weapons. The elections are knocking at

the door of the White House. At present showing the challenger to Bush appears to be the Vietnam war hero, John Kerry. He has thrown himself in the campaign with great gusto. He is talking even of putting the foreign policy back on the rails.

Father George Bush after his victory in Iraq faced Bill Clinton and lost the Presidency. Son Bush emerges from Iraq badly hurt. What fate the electors of the great democracy reserve for him. Let us wait and watch

Arshad-uz-Zaman is a former Ambassa-

THE HORIZON THIS WEEK

The elections are knocking at the door of the White House. At present showing the challenger to Bush appears to be the Vietnam war hero, John Kerry. He has thrown himself in the campaign with great gusto. He is talking even of putting the foreign policy back on the rails... Father George Bush after his victory in Iraq faced Bill Clinton and lost the Presidency. Son Bush emerges from Iraq badly hurt. What fate the electors of the great democracy reserve for him. Let us wait and watch.

support in the destruction of the Taliban in Afghanistan. Afghanistan was mercilessly bombed and bombs rained on the Taliban many of whom were Pakistanis trained by the shadowy outfit ISI! In Afghanistan Hamid Karzai, who lived in the US was installed as the new ruler. Meanwhile the raison d'etre of the bombing campaign, which was targeted against Bin Laden, has been forgotten for Bin Laden was nowhere to be found in the rocky mountains.

Afghanistan was a small fish There was a great deal of hobnobbing between President Bush and his recent mentor, Ariel Sharon, Prime Minister of Israel. Bush was nearly surrounded in the White House by friends of Israel. Israel wanted to play the that President Saddam Hussein of Iraq was hiding weapons of mass destruction. Ten years ago the father of present President, President Bush Sr had built a coalition against Saddam Hussein of Iraq in order to oust him from his occupation of Kuwait. Since it was a clear case of vacation of Iraqi aggression the coalition was easily built. In that coalition Saudi Arabia and Turkey, two neighbours of Iraq played the leading role by cutting Iragi pipelines, which carried Iraqi oil to the world market. This time around the two close allies of the US refused to play the ball inspite of the threats and cajoling of Paul Wolfowitz, the Deputy Defence Secretary of the US. In the case of Turkey the idea was that US and her allies including Turkey would

themselves highly adept at guerilla warfare. More than 500 US soldiers have died, a number higher than in the battlefield. The casualties mount daily.

The news from the battle field has been replaced by dramatic developments in Washington D.C. and London. The spectacle is that of an embattled President Bush and Prime Minister Blair. They are both accused of doctoring intelligence reports, whose authors strenuously claim that they never wrote in their reports of an imminent threat from Saddam Hussein. In the meantime Tony Blair got involved in an unseemly wrangle with the BBC and thanks to the report of Lord Hutton Blair has been cleared. Yet this matter of mounting an all out attack on Iraq on the basis of intelligence

complete impartial referee between the two sides and had brought them very close to a settlement. It was the failure of the two leaders -- Yaser Arafat of Palestine and Ehud Barak of Israel that the chances of peace slipped away. On the prodding of Sharon President Bush refused to deal with the elected leader of the Palestinians, Yasser Arafat, thus destroying any possibility of a negotiated settlement.

ingful role in the Palestine-Israel

dispute is by a total even handed-

ness. The predecessor of Presi-

dent Bush, President Bill Clinton

had established himself as a

As Bush White House hurtles from crisis to crisis, he has to face his voters come November. The opposition camp, the Democrats have started targeting on the

The nuclear blackmarket: The bomb is a burden

The rational Indian response to the new developments would be to tighten controls on our nuclear facilities and

exports to reduce the nuclear danger in the region and world... India's true interest lies in global nuclear



PRAFUL BIDWAI writes from New Delhi

HE "Father of the Pakistani Bomb", Abdul Qadeer Khan, has confessed to his culpability in clandestine nuclear transfers to North Korea. Iran and Libva. This follows a deal with President Pervez Musharraf, under which Dr Khan would get clemency, but remain under surveillance for life.

Clearly, the government did not want to put Dr Khan on trial. It feared embarrassing disclosures about the army's involvement in selling the country's nuclear secrets. Dr Khan threatened to name names. Mutual blackmailing produced a "compromise".

The information that's been revealed is stunning. Khan Research Laboratories scientists ran a global network peddling mass-destruction technology. This was the world's most complex, elaborate and purposive effort ever at beating nonproliferation controls.

The network's ramifications cut across continents: a Malaysia-based factory making centrifuge components, run by a Sri Lankan, middlemen from Germany and Holland, and hardware shipments routed through

Lubricating this network was monumental corruption. Dr Khan bought numerous properties at home and abroad, including a "fabulous" hotel in Timbuktu in Mali.

Given the evidence, clemency doesn't make sense. The government may now put some KRL personnel on trial, depending upon how confident it feels Pakistani physicist-nuclear expert Pervez Hoodbhoy says: "Since its inception, Pakistan's nuclear programme has been squarely under army supervision [and] multi-tiered security

No civilian leader has been allowed to enter the Kahuta enrichment plant, barring Ghulam Ishaq Khan, a former president trusted by the army. Some years ago, the French

1980s, Pakistan had a nuclear capability, but no missiles. It bought these from N. Korea, a willing seller. Pakistan's nuclear-trade

network is only "the tip" of a global iceberg, says International Atomic Energy Agency chief Mohamed ElBaradei: "International export controls have completely failed

A nuclear blackmarket has emerged, driven by fantastic

nuclear weapons and power programmes exist. It can't be eliminated -- short of global nuclear disarmament and shift to non-hazardous power tech-

It would be foolhardy for Indians to take a smug, "wetold-you-so" view of Pakistan's nuclear transfers. Having a proliferator on its borders doesn't help India. Nor does it extinguish its responsibility for hav-

ence between Indian and Pakistani cheating. India is technologically more advanced, and KRL personnel were criminals. But that must be seen in the context of a crude 60-year-old massdestruction technology, not something sophisticated, or of universal value.

Canadian and US help. India

reneged on its promise to use

CIRUS solely for "peaceful" purposes. So it hypocritically

called the 1974 test a "peace-

ful nuclear explosion". This

There is admittedly a differ-

too was a form of cheating.

The rational Indian response to the new developments would be to tighten controls on our nuclear facilities and exports to reduce the nuclear danger in the region and world.

India's true interest lies in global nuclear disarmament. Immediately, it lies in tight controls. US experts like Michael Krepon recently told a Senate committee that material to make "dirty bombs" could be procured from poorly quarded labs in India and Pakistan: both countries are "verv vulnerable".

The Bomb's makers have brought disgrace to Pakistan. The Bomb is a liability for India and Pakistan. The sooner they get rid of it, the

Praful Bidwai is an eminent Indian colum-

disarmament. Immediately, it lies in tight controls. US experts like Michael Krepon recently told a Senate committee that material to make "dirty bombs" could be procured from poorly guarded labs in India and Pakistan about handling the fallout. It is ambassador was manhandled cleverness. Designs are drawn ing teased, taunted and coaxed

States, whose policy-makers have been shaken.

Ever since last year's leaks suggesting Pakistan had swapped uranium centrifuges for ballistic missiles from N. Korea, the US has bought Gen Musharaf's line that the illicit commerce was the work of individual scientists" driven by "greed": it ended three years ago. But the secret transfers couldn't have suddenly stopped when Gen Musharraf took

Washington is playing this line because it needs Gen Musharraf in its war against Al-

However, no transfers of uranium centrifuges could have occurred from Pakistan's Kahuta enrichment plant without the consent of the armycontrolled security apparatus.

under pressure from the United when he as much as in one country, centrifuges are Pakistan into crossing the approached Kahuta.

> Pakistan has consciously traded in nuclear components. Ever since it decided to counter India's nuclear status after the 1974 Pokharan-L explosion, it made up for its technological backwardness by buying/stealing nuclear designs. In the late 1970s, Dr Khan managed to steal designs for highspeed uranium centrifuges from Holland. The metallurgist had huge government resources and total freedom from public scrutiny.

By the late 1980s, Kahuta produced highly enriched uranium. As Pakistan's nuclear capability grew, so did its blackmarket involvement -- and Dr Khan's wealth!

Of the three countries involved, N. Korea's deals were the most important. By the

telephones which have NWD

produced in another, they are then shipped via a third country

The danger of nuclear proliferation isn't confined to the global blackmarket. Huge guantities of weapons-grade fissile material routinely pass through "legitimate" civilian facilities the world over. Plutonium -- only 5 kilos is enough to make a Nagasaki-type Bomb -- is annually traded in tens of tonnes. There are large quantities of

"material-unaccounted-for" in global reprocessing facilities. One leaked IAEA report notes MUF enough for 20 bombs in

IAEA inspections cannot plug all these leaks. And yet they are the physical controls available on global movements of nuclear materials. The proliferation danger will remain so long as

nuclear threshold Pakistan's nuclear

programme has been reactive to India's. The world hyphenates India and Pakistan on nuclear weapons. They were named in a Security Council resolution, condemning their tests. If this is invoked against Pakistan, it can also be used against India. It won't do to claim a lily-white

status for India while painting Pakistan in dark colours. India too has bought, borrowed and dubiously procured nuclear materials from diverse sources: UK, US, USSR/Russia, Norway, France, China and Canada. Without their help in design, construction and material transfer, India couldn't have built its nuclear programme

The plutonium used in India's 1974 test came from CIRUS, a reactor built with

EDITOR TO THE EDITOR TO THE EDITOR

TO THE EDITOR TO THE EDITOR TO THE

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.

natured and simple-minded and painted about Dhaka Univercation if the fees were more revolutionary step by giving the Moral education peace- loving men. They are sity. This is despite the fact that than the ridiculous Tk 20 per people the opportunity to make We need to broadcast more satisfied with their simple life. month. If students can pay international calls from the effective programmes to raise

> so why blame poverty? Uncertainty in office is a source of concern to many. The lower-ranking employees suffer from a sense of uncertainty. Fear of losing job snatches a worker's joy, destroys the power

Nasreen Akhtar Mirpur, Dhaka-1216

Perhaps it is the social indiscipline that destroys a man's love for each other. But lack of love exists in every state, developing or even in a developed country,

of love and anger grows from lack of love. People with love could never do anything destructive. Love can solve so many problems of our life.

Teaching DU style

May I give you a different picture to what Mr. Masrur Hossain has

I do not disagree entirely with him. I would like to say that there is good example of excellent and dedicated teaching as well. Mr. Masrur himself did quite well--which he could not have done without a good first degree received at Dhaka University.

There are departments like ours where some teachers work in their laboratories until late hours and use foreign grant money to upgrade laboratories so that their students get an idea about the very modern and fast-moving areas in biological sciences. Use of these resources are crucial because the money sanctioned by the university for running undergraduate and graduate laboratories are totally inadequate.

Believe me, our students

would get a much better edu-

much more on their food, they should be asked to pay for their chance to study at the premier university of the country. For students unable to bear this burden, scholarships should be the answer. In my opinion, at least 30% students (it may be much greater) can afford to pay much more--why should the country (the tax payer and the farmer) pay for their education? Zeba I Serai

Professor

Dept. of Biochemistry & Molecular Biology University of Dhaka

Thanks to BTTB We thank the Bangladesh Telegraph and Telephone

Board (BTTB) for taking a

facilities and reducing the call rate considerably, it is very heartening because in the past the international call rate was too high, people are happy with this step. From the January 24, 2004, issue of newspapers we learned that the BTTB is planning to reduce the call

rate of NWD from next month, the call rate will be reduced by about 60 per cent, it is another piece of good news. It has been disclosed that if the Ministry of Finance approve the proposal, the new call rate will be effective within a short

We hope that the concerned ministry will not hesitate to approve the proposal.

Chartered Secretaries Act

The Institute of the Chartered Secretaries and Managers of Bangladesh (ICSMB) lodged the draft Act in late September 1998 proposing to the government to make appointment of Qualified Chartered Secretary in the public companies and other corporate houses mandatory. If enacted, the Act no doubt will help to develop the corporate management in the country.

In most of developed countries of the world, company secretaries are considered as chief administrators of the organisation and represent the company in the matters of corporate, legal and ministerial obligations. It may be

mentioned here that other South Asian countries have also adopted similar laws and improved their corporate governance significantly. In ndia and Pakistan, it was enacted in 1980 and 1997 respectively.

So, today when the much awaited Central Depository System (CDS) has been launched and is recognised as a milestone in the capital market of Bangladesh, it is a dire need to enact the Chartered Secretaries Act and have it approved from the cabinet.

Mansoor Ahmad Chittagong

Home truth

Lately, the Public Expenditure Review Commission, an innovative watchdog, has revealed a report. In this report PERC close the office of the prime minister and dwindle the size of our gigantic cabinet.

has asked the government to

The report is a timely one. At present the office of the PM is a labyrinth of bureaucracy. The size of the cabinet is stupendous. To minimise the outlay and maximise the utility of the state mechanism, the government should materialise the recommendations of PERC in toto. For good governance, power decentralisation is essential in our society. The govt should shut down some ministries to energise the vital I hope the authorities con-

cerned will ponder over this matter. Molla Mohammad Shaheen

Dept of English Dhaka University