

## One year of Iraq invasion

### A journey backwards

PRESIDENT Bush is still convinced that the war on Iraq was a legitimate attempt by the US to oust President Saddam's regime. But his ideas have not been that convincing to his people, as nearly 50 percent Americans now believe that the president is not handling the Iraq situation correctly.

The war effectively demolished the moral force of international order since it was waged in face of a barrage of protests from peace-loving people all over the world. Even some staunch US allies did not approve of President Bush's plan. So the war has bred divisiveness among the international community, which could only make the task of fighting terrorism even harder.

Terrorism, which President Bush sought to eliminate, has not lost its force. Terrorist strikes have led to more deaths and destruction in countries like Turkey, Saudi Arabia and Spain, though it is not clear whether the same terrorist group masterminded all these attacks. President Bush has little to show for the war that has been so costly in terms of men and material. It has very rightly been termed by Senator John Kerry as the 'worst diplomatic blunder' in the 200-year history of the US.

Public opinion in his own country is a good indicator for the US president to realise that his grandiose plan of liquidating a dictator has backfired, particularly because the WMD theory turned out to be a brazen lie. American troops are fighting an unequal and morally unjustifiable war that is taking a heavy toll of human lives on both sides. And what is most disquieting about the Iraq scenario is that no end to the hostilities is in sight.

And what about the people of Iraq who were sidetracked in the war between Bush and Saddam? It was a mistake on the part of the US war strategists to think that Iraqi people would welcome the foreign invaders. They have suffered and are still suffering as the country bleeds from war and sectarian violence. The interim government installed by the US is far from a broad based entity capable of running Iraq smoothly. The question of returning its sovereignty is a very tricky one, though Americans are telling the world that their plan is to clear the way for a people's government in Baghdad. But the talk of power transfer by July 1 appears to be more of a political ruse than a seriously conceived plan, since no indigenous leadership acceptable to the Iraqi people has emerged.

## Bangladesh Business Awards 2003

### Recognising the nation builders

INADEQUATE infrastructure, limited access to finance, over-regulation, extortion and corruption are usually the problems that entrepreneurs and businessmen and women in Bangladesh have to contend with. In this climate, the achievements of the winners of the Bangladesh Business Awards 2003, jointly sponsored by The Daily Star and DHL, stand out and their contributions to the nation's development do merit a high degree of appreciation.

What the recipients of the awards, Mohammad Mizanur Rahman, chairman of PHP Group, Monjulika Chakma, proprietor of Bain Textile, MM Ispahani Ltd., and Coats Bangladesh Limited, have shown is that it is possible to build thriving, successful and profitable enterprises, and that too in a manner which is socially responsible.

The award-winners stand as living testimony to the fact that there is no incompatibility between conducting business legally and morally and being competitive and successful. They have also demonstrated the benefit that accrues to the nation through the efforts men and women under their charge who worked tirelessly to establish profitable businesses and enterprises.

The four award-winners have been recognised not only for their innovative business acumen, but also for their contribution to the nation's economic development. These are individuals and businesses who create employment, help build the economy, and pay their taxes. We applaud them not merely for their success and their ability, but also for all they have done for Bangladesh.

Without the innovative, risk-taking, and socially conscious individuals and companies like the award-winners, we would never get ahead. These are the kinds of people that the nation needs in greater numbers. They are truly worthy of emulation by the new generation entrepreneurs. The Bangladesh Business Awards 2003 recipients are heroes for our modern world. Hats off to them.

# Terrorists shouldn't be allowed to relish victory

KAZI ANWARUL MASUD

THE horrific and heinous massacre of innocent civilians in Madrid on 11<sup>th</sup> March, comparable to the nine-ten terrorist attacks in the US, has once again reminded the world that the war against terrorism (in the words of Henry Kissinger) "has no front lines... (it is) a common enterprise and not an American projection of an American national view". He described the nine-ten events as a wake up call from "indolence and self-satisfaction" and that a day before September 11<sup>th</sup> the American people would have been astonished to hear that there were fundamental differences between the United States and Islam and that there was such a thing as a concept of war of civilizations.

While Al-Qaida's culpability about the crimes committed on nine-ten is incontrovertible, the authorship of the Madrid massacre remains shrouded in mystery despite the arrests of a few Moroccan nationals as alleged perpetrators of the crime. US based Centre for Defence Information (CDI) in a recent report cast doubt on the claim of responsibility for the bombing by Abu Hafs al-Murabit, a group reportedly linked with Al-Qaida. According to CDI the report not only lacks credibility having falsely claiming that it was behind the power outage in North America last year but also because Al-Qaida is generally slower in claiming responsibility for terrorist acts. Besides, reports of Arabic Quranic tapes being found with detonators in a stolen car appears to be childish tradecraft to steer the course of investigation, and no less importantly the justifiable anger of the people in a different direction.

It should not smack of anti-Semitism to remind ourselves that late last year the Euro barometer poll described Israel as the biggest threat to international peace which prompted the Israeli government to warn the European Union "to stop the rampant brain washing against and demonisation of Israel before Europe deteriorates once again to dark sections of its past". Clearly the Israeli government was anxious not to lose any further European support to its genocidal

activities in Palestine.

While these are early days to conclusively arrive at an indictment as to the authorship of Madrid bombing, the just defeated Aznar government had initially blamed Basque separatists Euzkadi Ta Askatasuna (ETA) for the carnage. There were good reasons for their suspicion. The Madrid bombing did fit with ETA's recent activities with two suspected members of the group being arrested barely two weeks before 11<sup>th</sup> March along with one thousand pounds of explosives believed to have been destined for Madrid. Besides the explosives used in Madrid bombing were reportedly of a type previously used by ETA. Another ETA-

government's strong stand against terrorism and terrorist organisations like ETA, Irish Prime Minister Bertie Ahern as the current President of the European Council has pledged that EU would "not be deflected from pursuit of democracy and justice by these desperate acts (and) to combat all forms of terrorism in accordance with the provisions on the Charter of the United Nations". Pointing out that the European Security Strategy adopted by the European Council last December which identified terrorism as one of the key threats to EU interests, Bertie Ahern has appealed to EU members to assume obligations contained in the Solidarity Clause which pro-

belief, encapsulated by Henry Kissinger among others, that for the entire post-war period the security of free people anywhere has depended upon America's willingness to defend them. Therefore, argues Kissinger, if America fails to react on an attack on its own territory the whole structure of security of post-war world will disintegrate even for those people who are critical of the US. Kissinger ridicules those circles in American society who before nine-ten found it fashionable to speak of the end of history (a clear allusion to Francis Fukuyama's thesis posited in his book *The End of History and the Last Man*), and of those in Europe who seek European iden-

been put forward by retired General Wesley Clark, till recently a contender for the Democratic Party nomination for the US Presidency. In his book *Winning Modern Wars* General Clark argues that the Bush administration instead of widening the war on terror should have adopted a "targeted" approach i.e. the Iraq war was a strategic mistake and the US focus should have been on the total destruction of Al-Qaida network. This argument gathers force if the most recent result of the investigation by the Spanish authorities points to the involvement of an Al-Qaida supported Moroccan Islamist outfit in the Madrid bombing. Clark also criticises Bush

the application of which produced more support rather than reduce the Islamist agenda relating to the US. Ignoring the internecine struggle within the Islamic world for the possession of its essence Bush administration fueled western construction of Islam as a cultural whole and as a monolith. The vast range of Islamic cultures, political systems and religious beliefs were totally obscured.

Though it is now universally recognised that the likes of monstrosity wrought in Madrid can not have any justification, yet it may be instructive to find out the root causes of terrorism wherever it may occur. Dialogue between civilisations and different faiths are essential to achieve socialisation and syncretisation of economic and political power. As it the Muslim diaspora in the West is suffering from progressive alienation from the mainstream of western society. The West must try to understand that the values the Muslims have are different from theirs. It is also necessary to realise that in the course of western exuberance to usher in democracy, say in Iraq with the expectation of domino effect throughout greater Middle East, the west has to consider Henry Kissinger's warning "that an attempt to bring about in a very brief period of time the evolution that took centuries in the west is more likely to produce chaos than democracy".

In conclusion one must say unequivocally that the perpetrators who caused the death of more than two hundred innocent people and wounded many more must be brought to account. If they prove to be Islamist extremists then the entire Muslim world should condemn their actions because these murderers are doing no good to Islam and the Muslims. If they turn out to be ETA then Spain has to put its own house in order. But under no circumstances terrorists should be allowed to relish victory which they most certainly would have if the international unity and will to fight terrorism is fractured.

Kazi Anwarul Masud is a former Secretary and Ambassador.

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style feature was using remote detonation instead of suicide bombers favoured by Islamic extremists. Additionally the banning of Batasuna, the political arm of ETA in March last year, arrest of many suspected ETA members, outlawing of ETA-linked newspapers in concert with graduated American steps to designating ETA as a Foreign Terrorist Organization (FTO) to Specially Designated Global Terrorist (SDGT) further vitiated the confrontational relationship between ETA and the Spanish government.

The defeat of Aznar government in the just held elections was partly due to dithering in placing the blame for the Madrid massacre first on ETA and then shifting the blame to Islamic terrorists. One must also remember that Jose Aznar's unqualified support for the Iraq invasion, described as a "disaster" and the occupation of Iraq as a 'fiasco' by Jose Rodriguez Zapatero, the Prime Minister-elect, was hugely unpopular among the Spaniards.

Understandably the Madrid bombing has been strongly condemned by President Bush who on March 12<sup>th</sup> conveyed to the Spanish ambassador in Washington his appreciation "so very much your

vides for member states to come to the assistance of each other in response to new threats, arising from terrorist and non-State entities, directed against civilian population and democratic institutions in the EU.

Similarly the just concluded counter-terrorism meeting in its Vienna Declaration, inter-alia, reaffirmed the central role to be played by the UNSC Counter Terrorism Committee (CTC) in the global efforts to combat terrorism. Even the New York Times editorialised (on 12<sup>th</sup> March) in the following words: "At a time like this trans-Atlantic squabbling about the nature of terrorist threats and how to fight it seems tragically misplaced. Terrorism threatens all of us. Terrorists respect no national boundaries, political systems, ideologies or religion. The fight against them must be just as multi-national".

Despite the gradual American realisation, as perceived among others by Joseph Nye Jr (The Paradox of American Power) that any retreat to a traditional policy focus on unipolarity, hegemony, sovereignty, and unilateralism would fail to produce the right outcome: it is difficult for Americans to move away from their unshakeable

distinction of the US and NATO (The Ruttenberg Lectures 2001).

A more extreme view has been advocated till recently by the Chairman of US Defence Board Richard Perle (An end to evil: how to win the war on terror) calling for a fundamental reorientation of US foreign policy, bureaucratic structure and domestic security policy mounting an implacable campaign to oppose terrorism. Perle (and David Frum) suggests that the US should have no compunction than a police sharp shooter feels to eliminate dictators when it serves the American interests. The expansive approach advocated by the likes of Richard Perle evades a basic question posed by many. Would, for example, a policy fomenting revolution in Iran, blockading North Korea, encouraging disintegration of Saudi Arabia, and refusing the Palestinians statehood be a better way to enhance US security? The neo-cons prescription would help convert the already controversial Bush doctrine into Brezhnev doctrine and NATO into Warsaw Pact where the most powerful member would dictate policies devoid of legitimacy and support of other members of the alliance.

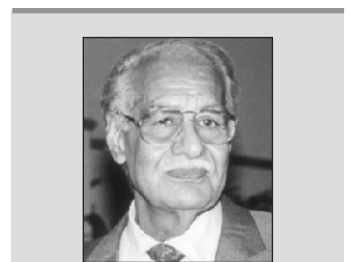
Another strand of thought has

administration of alienating allies and distancing the US from the UN and NATO in its war on terror.

In the same vein Senator Ted Kennedy recently accused President Bush of capitalising on the fear of the Americans following the nine-ten events to put a "spin" on the truth to justify a war that could well become one of the worst blunders in the history of the United States. Yet regardless of individual likes or dislikes throughout history American muscularity has been displayed on many occasions mostly for the good of mankind. As Madeline Albright puts it America's economic, military and technological prowess endows it with indispensability.

Another Secretary of State George Schultz giving a personal account of his years in the Reagan administration wrote that the use of force and credible use of force were legitimate instruments of national policy and should be viewed as such. He added that it would be "better to use force when you should than when you must". Clinton administration, however, broke the nexus between power and diplomacy which shocked the neo-conservatives. Clintonian "deficiency" was more than made up by the Bush doctrine of preemp-

## Ball in India's court



**KULDIP NAYYAR**  
writes from New Delhi

IN whatever light the posterity may take the birth of Bangladesh -- it celebrates its independence on March 26 -- the fact is that the Pakistan resolution demanding the grouping of Muslims in eastern and northwestern India was a precursor. That the two went apart within a span of 31 years is rather ironical. Another irony is that the person who sponsored the resolution at Lahore on March 23, 1940, was a Bengali Muslim, Fazul Haq, undivided Bengal's premier.

The resolution said: "The areas in which the Muslims are numerically in a majority, as in the north-western and eastern zones of India, they should be grouped to constitute independent states in which the constituent units shall be autonomous and sovereign." The phrase, 'independent states', indicated more than one.

This phrase came in handy to the people in East Pakistan during their freedom struggle. They argued that the creation of two 'independent states' was conceived in the very resolution which was put forward to demand for the creation of Pakistan. After some time, the phrase 'independent states' was brought to the notice of Quaid-e-Azam Mohammad Ali

Jinnah, founder of Pakistan. His explanation was that it was a typing mistake that spelt 'state' into 'states'.

Subsequently, Khaliqzaman, a UP Muslim League leader, said that he had changed the word "state" to "states" without "any intention" while drafting the resolution. However, another Muslim leader Ismail Khan, protested against the change of wording. In a letter to Khaliqzaman dated

clarified that before the creation of Bangladesh, the Bengali leaders raised this point. "But the creation of Pakistan was the result of a total settlement with the British; what the resolution said was not very material," he added. Jinnah's political secretary Khurshid also pooch-pooched the idea of two 'independent states.' He told me that the point of 'independent states' was raised by only 'one or two unimportant persons' at a

ern state would be 20 out of 32 million, that is, 63 per cent of the population and in the northeastern state 31 out of 57 million, that is, 56 per cent.

Surprisingly, the committee did not say a word on Kashmir which subsequently became an issue between India and Pakistan and resulted in three wars plus hostilities at Kargil. However, the committee suggested a central machinery "concerned with external

within Pakistan.

Bhutto threw the first brick when he announced that his Pakistan People's Party (PPP) would not attend the National Assembly's session fixed for March 3, 1971. He explained to me later that it was neither a boycott nor a threat; it was only meant to get more time to reach "a broad settlement" with Mujib. Yahya Khan, then Martial Law Administrator, reportedly said that he was forced by Bhutto to

three countries. If they do not fight them collectively and concertedly, they may become victims of fanatics and gunmen.

Following a joint statement by Prime Minister Atal Behari Vajpayee and President Pervez Musharraf, a new opportunity has arisen for normalising relations between India and Pakistan. Bangladesh should be part of the exercise. Why can't we free trade and travel from the shackles of age-old practices and rules?

"The problem is New Delhi," as editor of a leading English daily from Dhaka puts it. "India cannot tolerate a competitor from within the subcontinent, much less giving any substantial concession. Bangladesh knows it to its cost." This was more or less the impression of the Pakistan trade delegations which visited New Delhi recently. Probably, the governments suffer from mindset. But what I have seen after people-to-people contact in India and Pakistan gives me hope. There is a new awakening to the common heritage. People are seeking their baradari and going to places of their birth as if they are trying to reach their roots. The relationship between the two Bengals could deepen in the same way: people-to-people contact.

This is the time to establish a common market in the subcontinent as Europe has done. New Delhi has to allay the fears of Islamabad and Dhaka and create such a climate in the region that no neighbouring country should feel that it is being exploited. All want a share in the development. It can't be at the expense of one country or another.

Kuldip Nayyar is an eminent Indian columnist.

## BETWEEN THE LINES

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October 20, Khan said: "For the word states in the original resolution, the world state was substituted without any comment from anybody." What astounded him, he said, was that "Mr Jinnah ruled that the word states was a misprint. How can a chairman disregard the phraseology of the written constitution and base his ruling on his own unrecorded memory?"

It is, however, significant that the word "states" continued to appear for many years in the Muslim League's constitution, printed under the supervision of Liaquat Ali Khan, Jinnah's lieutenant. When I asked Zulfikar Ali Bhutto, Pakistan's president soon after the birth of Bangladesh in 1972, to comment on the misprint story, he laughingly said: "Quite a costly misprint; I must be careful about my stenographer." However, he

meeting of the Muslim legislators and others just before the creation of Pakistan. "None took it seriously," Khurshid added.

I believe there is more to it than meets the eye. It looks as if the idea of creating two Muslim states was there when the Pakistan proposal was taking shape. I found at London a report on the findings of a Muslim League committee constituted to implement the principle of the Lahore Resolution.

This committee recommended the formation of two Muslim States: one, in the northwest (Sind, Baluchistan, NWFP and Punjab); the other in northeast (Assam and Bengal excluding the districts of Bankura and Midnapur together with the district of Purnea from Bihar). It was estimated at that time that the Muslims in the northwest-

relations, defence, communications, customs and safeguards for minorities." Nothing like that happened after partition. India and Pakistan became two independent countries without any common subject or link. However, in 1971, East Pakistan broke away from West Pakistan.

The struggle for an autonomous state began from the day Jinnah said at Dhaka that people in East Pakistan would have to learn Urdu which was Pakistan's official language. Only a couple of years ago did Sheikh Hasina tell me that the foundation of Bangladesh was laid when there was official insistence on learning Urdu. The resentment as well as the feeling of neglect continued to grow in East Pakistan as the days went by. Still before March 26, all that Sheikh Mujibur Rahman wanted was autonomy

postpone the session.

The postponement of the session triggered off a chain of events which could not be controlled. Before attending the session, fixed for March 26, Mujib wanted the military personnel to retreat to their barracks and lifting of martial law. He also demanded for immediate transfer of power to the elected representatives of East Pakistan. Mujib was arrested on March 25-26 night. But the liberation war continued till Bangladesh freed itself.

More than three decades have passed since. All the three nations in the subcontinent are sovereign. But the equation they should have developed among them by now is lacking. This may well be the reason why fundamentalism and terrorism have spread in all the

# TO THE EDITOR TO THE EDITOR TO THE EDITOR TO THE EDITOR TO THE EDITOR

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.

## US Human Rights Report

I was carefully observing the reaction of our civil society over the US Human Rights Report published at the end of February 2004. I have gone through a couple of write-ups, including the letter of Mr. KR Zaman captioned "The US Human Rights Report" and the article of Mr. Oli Md. Abdullah titled "US Report on Human Rights and Contradiction in Policy" published in The Daily Star on 12 March, 2004. I have observed that many of the writers have tried to establish the argument that the US has no right to criticise other countries for human rights violation, as the US itself is violating human rights all over the world. I think out of deep respect for the rights of human beings, all the writers have come up with many examples of human

rights violation by the US. No doubt, the role of the US government has shocked them and they have criticised that country for criticising Bangladesh for human rights violations. After getting the US Human Rights Report 2003, the same reaction sparked in me also. But if we think deeply we will understand that such reaction is a contradiction to our stand because such reaction goes in favour of the human rights violators. I think "who" published the report is not the main issue to be discussed; but the main concern should be "what" is there in the report.

Can't we remember how two *adivashi* youths were shot dead in Modhupur forest recently by the law enforcers? Have we forgotten that all eleven members of a Hindu family in Banskhali were roasted alive by the politically influential hoodlums?

Don't we see the brutal suppression of the noted opposition leaders including the architect of our constitution Dr. Kamal and former premier president and noted physician Dr. B Chowdhury? These are some clear evidences of human rights violation. So what wrong was there in the report that deserves criticism?

Actually we live in a world which is now full of chaos and confusion. The role of the US government after 9/11 has confused the civil society and the human rights violators are taking advantage of that confusion. This confusion is more devastating than the destruction of the Twin Towers. The Secretary General of Amnesty International, Irene Khan, is repeatedly expressing her concern over this issue.

**Md. Firoj Alam**  
Programme Officer, Water Aid  
Banani, Dhaka

## Political scenario

The political scenario is volatile and turbulent. The ruling alliance has gone berserk at the alternative stream of Dr. B Chowdhury. Two MPs of BNP have resigned voluntarily to join the new political force. If Bangladesh is democratic, everyone has the right to practise his own political doctrine. Mr. Chowdhury, a former president of the Republic, was manhandled by the hoodlums in public.

We are appalled at this gesture of the government. We are really fed up with political vandalism. Our leaders have no commitment and political etiquette. Politics should be run by the meritorious, not the goons. The BNP is going to harm itself by adopting oppressive measures against political opponents.

**Molla Mohammad Shaheen**  
Deputy English, Dhaka University

**Eleven deaths: who is responsible?**

After hearing and watching the heart breaking news of the tragic deaths of eleven bright students, I feel an urge to write a few words about this as a teacher of a university and also a mother of a child who graduated in architecture from Khulna University a few years back. The news of the tragic deaths reached the parents at a time when they were waiting for their dearest children to come back home after finishing their final examinations. Being a mother I know how many sleepless nights the parents have passed. I cannot but sob for them. Some questions arise in my mind. Was it only their fate that led to their death? Could we shrug off our responsibility? Did we have enough precautionary measures at the beach? Did the tourist department take enough measures to safeguard the tourists? This is a remote beach where few people remain

around to warn the tourists or to take emergency steps to rescue victims. Was there any watchtower or a sufficient number of coastguards around? The tourism department should have taken all these measures before allowing people to visit such places. How do the authorities ignore their responsibility? What about the authorities of Khulna University or the Department of Architecture? How could they allow these students to move on their own without any supervising teacher?

**S Sultana**  
Department of Geography and Environment,  
Jahangirnagar University

## Is it democracy?

Armed activists, allegedly of the ruling BNP, went on the rampage at a beverage factory of an ex-party leader in Savar, injuring six work-

ers with bombs and gunshots that scared about 200 others out of work (DS, Mar 17). This was the fourth day in a row when Mannan's residence and business establishments were attacked by armed groups since his resignation from the BNP and parliament. According to Mannan, the damage to property and machinery would be worth about Tk 10 crore.

In Bangladesh, resignation from parliament and the party is not rare. In other countries, this kind of things happen albeit not so frequently. But nowhere can we find any example of attacking dissidents and damaging national property. That said, the voice of the oppressed cannot be silenced in the long run.

**Malik Akram Hossain**  
Hong Kong

**Aman's duty**  
This refers to Ms. Naomi's letter

(On Women's Day, Mar. 12). I support the writer's view about the role that every woman should have in society. As a man, I also want to take oath that if I am a father then I will treat both my daughter and son equally. I will do my best to educate her at the highest level. If I am a father-in-law, I will give love and rights to my daughter-in-law the same way I love my own daughter. If I can allow my daughter to do a job then there is no reason why I cannot allow my daughter-in-law to do the same. If I am a husband, I will take care of my wife's mother and sister the same way I care for my own mother and sister.

**Minhaj Ahmed**  
Uttara, Dhaka