

A heinous crime by Israel



MUSLEHUDDIN AHMAD

THE assassination of Sk. Ahmed Yasin, the spiritual leader of Hamas, by Israel under the direct order of Prime Minister Ariel Sharon was not only a heinous crime, but also a grave mistake on the part of Israel as this has inflamed the entire Palestinian and Arab community and in a way the entire Muslim world. The murder of 67-year old wheel chair bound crippled Hamas leader Yasin has been condemned by the Arabs and the world community except America, the protector of Israel. Hamas leaders said this killing has "opened the gates of Hell". It's all war, war and war chanted by Hamas members and other Palestinians. One gets baffled by the extreme stupidity of Sharon government that killing of the leader they will stop terrorism. Of course, it's not just stupidity murder is in Sharon's blood. It's again Sabra refugee camp where this assassination was carried out and later in a press interview Sharon thanked Israeli army for their heroic work. This reminds the world of the mass-murder Sharon ordered in Sabra and Shatilla during 80s. He is calling Arafat and others murderers; what is he?

This assassination may have let loose the hell and Israelis would now be in extreme danger. There is extreme anger everywhere in the Arab world. There will undoubtedly be more suicide bombings to avenge the death of Hamas leader Sk.Yasin. Already hundreds of Hamas members expressed their readiness to sacrifice their lives to take full revenge of this murder. Because of Sharon the Israelis will be the

sufferers; now innocent Israelis would find themselves as targets. Sharon is the curse for the Israeli people.

Despite deep grief and anger in the Arab world and particularly in the Palestinian territories, Arafat has called for calm and asked both sides not to kill innocent civilians. According to him, the public on both sides have had enough sufferings; it's time to stop it. Unfortunately, Arafat

electing Sharon and his extreme rightist Likud party to power. And they have been paying the price for this for the last three years; they already buried hundreds of Israeli dead and as it seems more would come after this assassination. Sharon came to power with the promise to make Israel safe. Indeed, the Israelis are terribly unsafe today under Sharon as unfortunately the Americans are under President Bush.

any change. Surprisingly, Bush Administration never considered the idea of asking Arafat to visit the White House though President Clinton did it while in office. If President Clinton considered Arafat a terrorist he would have never invited him to the White House. Arafat's visit created a lot of good will for America and it was generally felt that if Clinton had a little more time in hand he could have suc-

cession invaded the situation still worse. America indeed lost its credibility to act as the impartial broker and hence the present volatile situation and consequent extreme terrorism -killings and counter killings. Unfortunately, from Israeli side this is state terrorism as the killings are done by the state machinery and under the orders of the head of the government but from Palestinian side this is done by the people under occupation, terrible oppression and deprivation. The world must understand this difference before they declare some one as terrorist. If the Jewish state is not a terrorist state, then Palestinians are also not terrorists. If Bush Administration insists on declaring Hamas as a terrorist organization, then it should also accept that Israel is a terrorist state. That will bring real balance in the UNSC debates and consequent resolutions. The argument that Israel only retaliates to the suicide bombings is not correct. Indeed, the wrongs were committed first by Israel as it did not end the occupation despite scores of UN resolutions in favor of ending occupation

Even Hamas which is condemned for its suicide bombings, agreed to stop all suicide bombings if Israel agreed to withdraw its forces from occupied territories. Indeed, Sk Yasin openly said that Hamas would stop all bombings once Israeli forces are withdrawn to pre-1967 borders. Israel never agreed to this. So it's no use harping on the same jargon terrorism. The world must find out the real causes of terrorism that leads to deaths of innocent civilians and also the deaths of the suicide bombers themselves. Life is the most precious thing for any one. It's not a fun to sacrifice one's life. One does it under extreme situations. Nobody is going to condone suicide bombings and killings of innocent lives, but it's high time for the US and the international community to find out the causes, the truth behind such ruthless and devastating actions, and remove those. Terrorism can not be removed by military actions; this has to be done by removing the causes. That's the only way to move towards some form of peace.

Muslehuddin Ahmad is the former Secretary & Ambassador and presently the founder Vice Chancellor of Presidency University. He is also the former VC of North South University.

SPOTLIGHT ON MIDDLE EAST

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appears to be the next in Sharon murder list. One would not be surprised if Sharon carries it out suddenly. Sharon knows there will be world condemnation if Arafat is killed but would this affect Sharon and his government? No, as long as Bush administration is there to support to him. Bush administration has already vetoed the UNSC resolution that could officially condemn Sk Yasin's killing. In the UNSC there were 11 votes in favor, 3 (UK, Germany, and Romania) abstained and USA cast the negative vote. In other words, American Admin vetoed the resolution. This shows the amount of support USA gives to Israel even on Israel's extrajudicial killings. How could USA be the impartial party in the peace process?

As one could see, Sharon ordered this assassination to divert the attention of the Israeli public from the misdeeds he committed during his election by allegedly taking unlawful funds through his son. Sharon has been under police interrogation for the last couple of weeks. Polls show that his Political support has substantially gone down. Indeed, Israelis have unfortunately committed the political blunder by

Indeed, Sharon got undue support from President Bush. He already visited White House seven or eight times and going to have another shortly. Quartet's Road Map envisages Palestinian State by 2005. Bush Administration must understand that it is Sharon who opposed the Road Map and asked for over 22 amendments though Palestinians accepted it without

ceded in renegotiating the deal for some form of peace. But Bush Admin never tried this.

The worst part was that Bush Admin fell into the trap of Sharon a mass murderer- and went along with Sharon in considering Arafat a terrorist. This is the failure of the present American Administration which added to the tension that already existed in the area. Thereafter, the Iraq

The smell of a real scandal

JONATHAN ALTER

THE Democrats are over the top. Last week the Democratic National Committee was once again trying to close the propaganda gap with the GOP, which has a much surer instinct for the jugular. The DNC risked a lawsuit from Burger King with what the party calls its daily "Home of the Whopper" blast e-mail. This time the supposed Republican "lie" was that certain items for sale on the Bush for President Web site were partly manufactured in Burma, despite an import ban against that despotic country. Now, it's fine to point this out, but the Democrats are in danger of losing perspective on mendacity in the Bush administration, crying wolf so often that voters stop noticing the real abuses. That's what was

benefit on Christmas Eve.

Recall how that bill squeaked through Congress only after some heads were cracked. A retiring Republican from Michigan, Rep. Nick Smith, even charges that supporters of the bill offered him a bribe in the form of financial support for the political campaign of his son. The bill was priced at the time at \$400 billion over 10 years. After the deed was done (the specifics of which amounted to a huge giveaway to the pharmaceutical and healthcare industries), it came out that the real cost will be at least \$551.5 billiona difference of \$150-plus billion that will translate into trillions over time. Now we learn that the Bush administration knew the truth beforehand and squelched it. Rick Foster, the chief actuary for Medicare, says he was told he would be fired if he passed along the higher esti-

The run-up to the Iraq war was more hype than lie. Medicare is a clearer example of dishonesty and corruption at high levels.

wrong with John Kerry's off-mike comments about the Republicans' being a bunch of liars and crooks. To be believable, he has to go to real cases with real culprits, like the Big Medicare Con now coming to light.

The whole world knows we "got taken for a ride," as the president of Poland says, on Iraq. But because Bush & Co. were as shocked as anyone at the absence of WMD, that's more in the category of grotesque hype than outright lie. The Medicare story is a clearer example of dishonesty and, yes, corruption at high levels. As former Treasury secretary Paul O'Neill's statements make clear, the lying about budget numbers began early in the administration, when the White House falsely claimed that the government could not use the surplus to further draw down the debt. It continued after 9/11, when an assistant Treasury secretary complained that the administration was squandering the national consensus by insisting on tax-cut projections that weren't real. But the most shocking deception took place in the run-up to the signing of the Medicare prescription-drug

mates to Congress. "I'll fire him so fast his head will spin," Thomas Scully, then head of Medicare, said last June, according to an aide who has now gone public.

I knew Tom Scully a bit when he worked for Bush's father during the early 1990s. He is a whip-smart health-policy expert and Bush-family loyalist. He denies making the firing comment or saying that Foster was guilty of "insubordination" for wanting to tell Congress the truth. But Scully, who (natch) now works as a highly paid lobbyist on health issues, is stuck with the fact that Foster made clear efforts to be honest about the cost of this monstrosity.

As for Bush himself, there are only two possibilities, both bad. The first is that he never learned the true cost of one of the major policy initiatives of his presidency. If so, he was incompetent. The second, more plausible, alternative is that he simply chose the lower, more convenient number and didn't have any problem with the honest figures produced by the bureaucracy's getting "deep-sixed," as they used to say during Watergate.

You might think this is standard operating procedure in Washington. It is not. Every White House sends the press secretary out to spin the numbers that emerge on a weekly or monthly basis from the Department of Health and Human Services, the Bureau of Labor Statistics and other agencies. But applying political pressure to cook the numbers themselves is a true scandal.

The Bush administration now has an old-fashioned credibility gap. If numbers are released saying that the economy is perking up, why should anyone believe them? After all, it counts hamburger flippers as manufacturing jobs. The context of the election only magnifies the issue. New Bush ads charge that Kerry wants to raise taxes by \$900 billion. This is a made-up number; Kerry has no such proposal. But even if he did, voters would not be able to take the Bush campaign's word on it, because its word is no longer good. The challenge for the Democrats is to resist the temptation to make their own phony claims, or to hype the usual petty distortions of politics into "lies." The truth is damaging enough.

Jonathan Alter is a senior writer of Newsweek.

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The strategy of decision making

KAZI ALAUDDIN AHMED

THE organisational machinery is propelled by decisions -- decisions to act or not to act, to change or to stand still, to delay or to move.

Decision is regarded as an act of volition. It is a determination that something shall or shall not take place. The leaders of the organisation are the architects of decision. As a matter of fact, it is the manager's prime stock in trade. Depending upon the skills with which decisions are made and the firmness with which a course is set, the quality of the organisation's performance can be determined. The manager must face issues and decide on the courses to resolve them effectively. This in turn inevitably entails a selection -- selecting one course over another, accepting one point of view and rejecting others, or supporting one individual instead of another. The process of such selection may be reasoned out with fact, arrived at by hunch, or dictated by whim.

During the days of the individual entrepreneur, the leader's caprice was excused as an indulgence of executive prerogative. In an era of corporate and cooperative enterprise, such behaviour is outmoded. Yet the myth persists that the sceptre of leadership vests the manager with omniscience. Someone has expressed it this way: "When a subordinate makes a mistake, he is in trouble. When a superior makes a mistake, it's a new policy."

The concept of the executive as a repository of all wisdom deludes the unwary and ensnares the unscrupulous. The executive has merely to issue the instruction and the job is done. These decisions made by executive whim, may or may not fit the facts. This type of executive mind, of course, expects the facts to conform to the plan. The manager, in making decisions, must look to facts, not fancy.

The mechanics of decision making are none the less illusive. With the press of daily affairs, The manager may overlook the impact of his decision or indecision. The farther he is removed from the details of day to day operations, the more insensitive he becomes to the results of decision or indecision. Yet, most ironically, the higher he is in the organisation, the greater will be the impact of his judgment.

It is, however, to be determined if the failure to act on the part of the manager or the act itself will seriously impede or interfere with a significant number of people in the organisation. Actually, decision does not always mean action; a decision not to act may sometimes take more courage than that to act. To decide in the negative is of course understandable but to refuse to

decide at all will not be excusable. In fact, the manager's frequent "no" for a decision may reflect two intriguing aspects: either he has the wrong people on the job or they do not understand their jobs. In either case the manager may not be able to escape the onus of his own responsibility. Evidently, he has a problem in not clarifying work requirements or in not selecting the correct people for the job. Inevitably therefore, in the resolution of managerial problems, decisions must be made between two or more alternatives.

Still then some managers seem to approach their jobs with the attitude once expressed by US President Calvin Coolidge: "Don't you think that four-fifths of our troubles in this life would disappear if we would only sit and keep still?" Silence was a weapon for Coolidge: "Silence is best defence Nine tenths of White House callers want something they ought not to have. If you keep dead still, they will run down in three or four minutes. If you even cough or smile, they will start up all over again."

If the manager is to fulfil his true role, he is ultimately pressed to a decision. This will entail going by these steps to organise his decision making process:

Defining the objective or the purpose to be served by a course of action. Someone has said, "A long journey begins with the first step. Determination of this first step will depend on the manager's knowledge of the result to be achieved by an action.

Seeking expert advices considered the most reliable source of intelligence. This step may be skipped when the manager is himself an expert and his own background and experience provide the necessary intelligence.

3) Getting the facts in order to assess the opportunities or the potential hazards, to anticipate potential hazards, requirements of personnel, facility and financial requirements. The key point here is to get information that is available and to avoid speculation. The manager must remember that more often than not, the solution to a problem is found in merely rearranging existing information.

4) Identifying the alternatives if there are different ways of accomplishing the same purpose or whether or not the desired objectives can be attained through some other course.

5) Evaluating the pros and cons, the advantages and disadvantages to be ascertained.

6) Deciding when the facts are in, and after considering the alternatives and weighing the pros and cons. This is the time when the manager must decide because he has no further scope to guess, nor to

entertain any misgiving.

7) Defining the plan, stating the objectives and assigning responsibility. This includes the "what," "when" and "how" of the whole plan and objectives. The assignment should be given to those who know how to do the job.

8) Following up is the last step in this phase. The decision to act is only the first step. When the manager has set the course, his concern from that point is to get the task completed.

The strategy of delay is adopted when the issue is not yet ripe for action. But if it is important enough not to drop, delay is the only sane course. It may however be kept alive or in the limelight for which the most effective technique can be to place the issue in the hands of a task force or a committee. Such a committee established for one specific purpose can be a valuable tool for management decision provided that: i) a definite time period is established for completing it after which it is dissolved; and (II) it is not required to make a decision that should be made by a manager.

Success in management lies in doing the right thing at the right time. To try to reach a solution before all aspects of a problem are clearly in view merely compounds the difficulty. When a problem first arises, the elements necessary for solution may not yet exist or may not yet be known.

The manager, in appraising the timeliness of action, may face two types of situations. First, he may be forced to act before his plan is ready; or, second, he may be able to let the plan "ripen." The first requires courage while the second, patience. In either case, the environment has a considerable bearing on the decision.

In assessing environment the manager's "feel" is probably as reliable as anything else, but there are a few tangible elements:

(i) Has there been a demand for the projected action?

(ii) Does the proposed action follow some other action that is now completed, or does it precede another that is ready for execution?

(iii) Does it carry out some programme initiated at a higher level of management?

(iv) Is it needed by some person or some group outside the organisation?

(v) Does it achieve a purpose which has been publicised; does it get someone "off the hook"?

Kazi Alauddin Ahmed is an industrial consultant.