knowledge and experience. These

officials must point out the problems

that may be anticipated in imple-

mentation of the respective policy

decision. In pointing out the problem

they may also suggest partial modi-

fication/revision of the policy deci-

sions. It is, however, desirable that

changes are made before the

implementation. If changes are

made at or during the implementa-

tion stage, implementation is not

only delayed unduly but lots of

be tricky. They are, however, united

on one point i.e. resignation of the

government. Awami League is

pressing for mid-term election. The

alliance government do not see any

good reason for their resignation

which means they do not accept that

they have failed to run the govern-

ment. As usual Awami League has

The role of opposition appears to

complications may also occur.

POINT ** COUNTERPOINT

US supports Sharon, the assassin! How long this politics of confrontation?



MUSLEHUDDIN AHMAD

N Israel there are peace loving people like Yossi Belin, the former Justice Minister and like him many other peace activists, the members of the "Peace Now", and also assassin like Ariel Sharon and his ultra- rightist associates like Gissan and others. It's not that the present Israeli government under Sharon and its ultra-rightist members are killing only the Palestinian Hamas leaders like Sk Yassin and Abdul Aziz Rantissi and many others, they are also seriously violating human rights and international law by the inhuman treatment they deliver to the prisoners and openly threatening to assassinate even some Israelis. This sort of extra-judicial killings have been condemned by the international community including the EU but not the US.

The latest reports show that Ariel Sharon did mention to President Bush his ugly plan to assassinate Abdul Aziz Rantissi, successor of Sk Yassin of Hamas. President Bush probably could not have given him green signal openly, but reportedly later action by USAID to order out its personnel from Gaza just before the assassination show that the US administration was aware of the assassination plan. As it seems. Bush administration practically supported the assassination by saying that Israel has the right to defend itself.

The general impression is that Sharon has been doing such abominable things and getting direct or indirect support from some in the American Administration though most of the American people are against such extra-judicial killings. Unfortunately even John Kerry supported Israel on this and sand the Administration's song that 'Israel has the right to defend itself'. Even if it is an election strategy to get Jewish votes, still it

is very wrong. Who says Israel does not have the right to defend itself? This does not mean that Israel can kill anyone who appears to Israel an enemy. If that is so, then why should the civilized world condemn suicide bombings that kill Israelis as they are the occupiers (ref UN resolutions) of Palestinians' land and they are also seen by the Palestinians as the enemies? Every country should have similar rights to

Sharon against his latest plan to assassinate Arafat. The White House said 'pledge is a pledge'; so he should stick to it. It's a strange and unjust world. How can the head of a government which is a member of the UN openly announce assassination of a leader of another nation? And the maximum the civilized world does is request him not do it. Can this civilized world then have the right to denounce suicide bomb-

defend itself and consequently ings and then brand them as SPOTLIGHT ON MIDDLE EAST

It's a strange and unjust world. How can the head of a government which is a member of the UN openly announce assassination of a leader of another nation? And the maximum the civilized world does is request him not do it. Can this civilized world then have the right to denounce suicide bombings and then brand them as

adopt any measure within its means including suicide bombings as they do not have Apache helicopters and other American weapons to deal with the occupying enemy. Palestinians cannot bring in any arms as this becomes a crime, but for Israel even assassination is not a crime let alone piling up all deadly weapons including nuclear ones.

There is, however, an argument that suicide bombings kill innocent civilians. Yes, but the Palestinians argue that all Israelis (minus children and who oppose occupation) who support occupation are occupiers and hence enemies to Palestinian people as Israeli security forces kill innocent Palestinians and then justify by branding them as terrorists though they were not terrorists. So there is no end to such arguments and counter arguments.

Just last week Sharon openly said that he was no longer bound by his pledge to the US administration "not to harm Arafat". Assassination of Arafat is a life long vow of Sharon. This is why we said earlier that he would do it any way and the world would just condemn it, but would Israel bother about world reaction as long as America stands behind it? Anyway, it is a good thing that Bush administration has warned

terrorists? No, this is utterly wrong. 9/11 and today's terrorism and extreme security problems around the world are results of Israel's occupation of the Arab land and America's extended support to Israel and its own latest "imperial policies and actions."

Another very sad story was out last week in Israel. Mordechai Venunu, originally a Jew, who was later converted to Christianity served 18 years of jail in solitary confinement because he, being a former Israeli nuclear technician divulged secret nuclear programme of Israel. He was released on April 21 with condition that he would report to Israeli police station every 48 hours and will not say anything about the nuclear programme. He will also not travel outside Tel Aviv.

As soon as he came out of the jail he started talking to the reporters. He said, on October 1986 he gave the information about Israel's secret nuclear programme to London's Sunday Times. The story of his arrest goes like this that he was kidnapped by Israeli secret service Mossad from London to Rome and then drugged and brought to Israel. Later he was convicted and put in Jail in solitary confinement. He said he received " cruel and barbaric treatment" in jail from

Mossad. He also mentioned that Israel has a special area of iail under Mossad, where the prisoners receive inhuman treatment from Mossad agents. Venunu also specifically complained that he suffered because he is a Christian. If he remained a Jew he would not have suffered at all. This should open the eyes of the world on the behaviour of the Jewish state and its state terrorism. Many members of the international community apparently have the impression that terrorism comes only from Islamic or Muslim community. But the fact of the matter is that the root of terrorism is the Jewish state of Israel and the unfortunate support it gets from the US administrations from time to time. Unfortunately, America itself has been suffering for the misdeeds of Israeli government. Venunu clearly said that there is no need for a Jewish state

Being out of jail he is now facing greater threat to his life as he has already been threatened to be assassinated because the Israeli government has branded him as " a threat to Israel's security". Nobody is surprised by this as the present Israeli government under Sharon has been assassinating people with impunity.

Venunu also said he has no more secrets to tell as he already gave the full information saying Israel has 200 atomic/hydrogen bombs. This story has been known to everyone.

Even John F Kennedy in those days warned Israel about its nuclear programme. Kennedy indeed said he could not stop others having n-weapons if he could not stop a tiny country like Israel. Thereafter, Kennedy was assassinated and reportedly no US President ever took the risk of questioning Israel's nuclear programme. Should one also assume that this is why Al-Baradei, DG of the Vienna based organisation and his associates never took the courage to question the Nweapons programme of Israel? Apparently he and his organisation are busy with Iran and N Korea and perhaps have no time to question Israel about its nuclear arsenal.

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A B M S ZAHUR

E are passing through a highly unstable political situation. We do not know what may happen in days ahead. Strangely enough, even in such an uncertain situation we hear that we may be attaining the stage of a midlevel developing country by 2020 (if we agree to export gas). But what is the actual situation today? Has the BNP been able to fulfil even a fraction of its major commitments it made during the election? Are we to believe that our development effort can be made successful even in a highly undesirable law and order situation by a politicised, corrupt and an inefficient administration in a criminalised political environment? Despite all its defects and deficiencies our private sector has been able to face such dangerous and deplorable problems even though our business community is reported to be panicky because of constant threats from terrorists. It is indeed regrettable that so far the government has miserably failed to provide adequate protection to our business community. Our intellectuals are also shattered because of dastardly attack on an eminent scholar like Dr Humayun Azad. Our minority communities are reportedly shaken by oppressive stance of majority community on microscopic minority like Ahmediya. It is true, some of us believe that it was a right step for Pakistan to declare Ahmediya as non-Muslims in 1974. But lack of adequate attention to repression of Ahmediva may tarnish the image of Bangladesh as a tolerant Islamic country. Will it be worthwhile to lose

the good name? Muslims of Bangladesh are perhaps relatively more devout than Muslims in other Islamic countries. Their attitude is more secular than many other Muslims because they are living with members of other major religious communities like Hindus, Christians and Buddhists for a long time. Their education system is also an important factor. However, there is an urgent need for modernisation of madrasa education to bring the pupils of madrasas closer to modern world.

In his quest for forming a political party to contest the Awami League at the political level Ziaur Rahman had to accommodate the members of certain parties who were virtually discarded by the common people though he himself was a distinguished freedom fighter with secular outlook. Among these parties the most organised were the Muslim League and the Jamaat-e-Islami.

Needless to say that Zia had to concede certain privileges to these parties to gain their support. After the assassination of Zia the BNP had to face a tough time following the military coup by H M Ershad. It would not be a travesty of truth if we say that the Awami League received better treatment from Ershad compared to the BNP members. It was apparently due to Khaleda Zia's leadership and determination that the BNP not only survived but became fully capable of challenging the Awami League. It may be pointed out that under Khaleda Zia the party has assumed the colour of a civilian political party believing in multi-party democracy.

A government cannot run on sham publicity suppressing hard facts and gagging opposition or on blessings from any outside power or powers. One cannot dream of good governance in such a situation. Only drastic steps, which will certainly hurt a large number of sycophants or touts, can alleviate the nation from any impending catastrophe.

But despite its huge size and popularity the BNP perhaps has not vet attained maturity and as such lacks in clear political understanding. In its zeal to capture power it made a large number of commitments in its election campaign. The major and most sensitive commitments were restoration of law and order and eradication of corruption. With the unsavoury need for compromise and adjustment the alliance government started operating with a 60-member cabinet (the present number is 51). This has resulted in huge expenses, dilution in quality and delay in decisions. It has become a common knowl-

edge that the present government has failed to improve law and order situation. It also could not make any headway in eradicating corruption. In addition people are suffering badly due to unprecedented price hike of essential commodities. The patch work of shifting the home minister to the charge of the ministry of commerce and the resignation of an able minister has hardly improved the situation.

So long money and muscle rule Bangladesh politics we see no hope for any reduction in corrupt activities. So long politicisation of bureaucracy goes on the extent of corruption in bureaucracy can never be controlled.

It appears that the government is in a fix as to how to fulfil its pre-

ineffective. No amount of improvement in infrastructure, logistics or training can improve their performance so long as the police force is not allowed to work neutrally. If, as an experiment, the government allows the police force to work without political interference. I am sure they would be capable of showing their effectiveness even with the existing resources. Our experiences of the ninety days' caretaker government lead us to believe that our police force (which fought so valiantly against the occupation soldiers) has not lost its

interference is not stopped. The

other day we saw a news item on the

helplessness of a superintendent of

police. He has been threatened of

kidnapping of his sons and daughter

by terrorists. AN EPZ chief had to

lose his life to the terrorists. The

terrorists are forcing into passport

office to grab blank passports. The

chief of an NGO has been alleged to

be a dishonest man. His whole

office is not allowed to work indi-

rectly by the government which

loudly claims of being development

oriented. This is a part of existing

taking necessary measures to

increase the capability of adminis-

tration. The government itself

admits that bureaucratic inefficiency

is a great impediment to successful

implementation of policy decisions.

Our implementation of policy deci-

sions is considered as poor while

politicisation of bureaucracy is

largely responsible for poor perfor-

mance. The reported contemplation

of government about appointing

some senior retired government

officials at high salaries on contract

basis to raise the level of bureau-

cracy will be meaningful if such

officials (a) receive full cooperation

from the existing personnel and (b)

proper respect is shown to their

We hear that government is

state of affairs in the country.

election commitments. Politicisation

of police has made it almost totally

adopted the strategy of observing hartal, holding mass rallies and resorting to perhaps other means to dislodge the government. The Bikalpa Dhara or Oikya Prochesta has not yet shown any clear strategy to enter the movement. From such a situation it may be assumed that this unrest would The government is certainly continue for quite some time and we aware of the bad effect of may have to suffer for an indefinite criminalisation of politics. Law and order will not improve if political

We do not see any possibility of lessening money and muscle power in politics. No administrative reform can be expected soon. No brake in politicisation is apparent. It may not be incorrect to anticipate threatening phone calls to deputy commissioners, customs officials and income tax officials for compromise with terrorists or their agents. Even kidnappings of these officers or their wards may not be ruled out.

A government cannot run on sham publicity suppressing hard facts and gagging opposition or on blessings from any outside power or powers. One cannot dream of good governance in such a situation. Only drastic steps, which will certainly hurt a large number of sycophants or touts, can alleviate the nation from any impending catastrophe. We do not expect that after attaining such a popularity this government would continue to remain a silent observer till the administration collapses. Let us wait and see.

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