

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



MUSLEHUDDIN AHMAD

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 defend itself and consequently

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 bombings and then brand them as

Mossad. He also mentioned that Israel has a special area of jail 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 from the misdeeds of Israeli government. Venunu clearly said that there is no need for a Jewish state at all.

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 N-weapons 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.

Muslehuddin Ahmad is a former Secretary and Ambassador and presently Vice Chancellor of Presidency University. He is also the Chairman of CIVICWATCH-Bangladesh.

ABMS ZAHUR

WE 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 mid-level 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 Ahmediya 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.

election commitments. Politicisation of police has made it almost totally 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 capability.

knowledge and experience. These officials must point out the problems that may be anticipated in implementation of the respective policy decision. In pointing out the problem they may also suggest partial modification/revision of the policy decisions. It is, however, desirable that changes are made before the implementation. If changes are made at or during the implementation stage, implementation is not only delayed unduly but lots of complications may also occur.

The role of opposition appears to 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 government. As usual Awami League has adopted the strategy of observing hartal, holding mass rallies and resorting to perhaps other means to dislodge the government.

The Bikalpa Dhara or Oikya Procheta has not yet shown any clear strategy to enter the movement. From such a situation it may be assumed that this unrest would continue for quite some time and we may have to suffer for an indefinite period.

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 hear that government is taking necessary measures to increase the capability of administration. The government itself admits that bureaucratic inefficiency is a great impediment to successful implementation of policy decisions. Our implementation of policy decisions is considered as poor while politicisation of bureaucracy is largely responsible for poor performance. The reported contemplation of government about appointing some senior retired government officials at high salaries on contract basis to raise the level of bureaucracy will be meaningful if such officials (a) receive full cooperation from the existing personnel and (b) proper respect is shown to their

ABMS Zahur is a retired Joint Secretary.

SPOTLIGHT ON MIDDLE EAST

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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