

War on Terror at crossroad

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Donald Rumsfeld was justifiably exasperated. His now famous memo issued to his top aides last October underlined the lack of metrics to know whether the US was winning or losing the war on terror. He wondered whether the madrassas and radical clerics were producing more terrorists than the number the US was "capturing or killing or deterring or dissuading." Particularly, after the tragic events of 9-11, many scholars and analysts throughout the world have delved deeply into this phenomenon -- terrorism -- which liberal thinker Paul Berman concludes is an old scourge in new clothing. Berman finds that terrorism springs from the same sources as fascism did because al-Qaeda and radical Islam are driven by the fear and hatred of liberal ideas of tolerance, and rejects the "hideous schizophrenia" of Western attempts at dividing state from religion and promoting individual freedom which is seen by the extremists as effectively encouraging the societal degeneration to the level of Sodom and Gomorrah and therefore as prime candidates for God's wrath.

Going back to the essence of this discourse it is imperative that countries like Bangladesh do not give the impression of harbouring religious intolerance. While Bangladesh is generally accepted as a moderate Muslim country, aberrant behaviour of some of her citizens reflecting a trend of incipient Islamic extremism which go unpunished, are noticed at home and abroad and harm the image of the country. One must not forget that the West's identification of the twin threats to its security posed by proliferation of weapons of mass destruction and terrorism is seen through the prism of religious intolerance.

administration, as Henry Kissinger had of Nixon administration, traces the current spate of terrorism as the present incarnation of centuries old Muslim rage against Christian "infidels" for displacing the Muslims from temporal ascendancy and becoming a contestant for spiritual supremacy. Lewis' thesis describes Islam as a doctrine that rejects modernity and is thus placed in a continual clash with Judeo-Christian civilisations. Such deterministic viewpoint is comparable to McCarthyism's misdiagnosis of the "red menace" by lumping together then Soviet, Chinese, and Third World nationalism into one monolithic and inseparable threat. The great danger of Lewis' thesis is not only that it indicates falsification of Francis Fukuyama's declaration of the triumph of liberal democracy

over Cold War totalitarianism, but also validates Samuel Huntington's *Clash of Civilizations* premise by pitching the western world against billion odd Muslims inhabiting in more than fifty countries of the globe. Such sweeping generalisation not only misses some of the fundamental differences between the Arab and the non-Arab Muslim worlds, but also the raging conflict within the Muslim world for the soul of Islam. Walter Lacquer who charted out a distinguished career for himself by studying terrorism for decades, and long before 9-11, found terrorists among the Bolsheviks, Tamil Tigers, and the IRA, thus dispelling the prevailing conventional wisdom that terrorism is Islam-specific or even religion-specific. As any cursory glance at the history of terror-

ism will demonstrate, its lineage dates back long before the advent of Islam, and terrorism as an instrument of politico-religious statement has been used by the Jews (zealot-sciari), Hindus (Thugees), Muslims (assassins-hashishins), and Christians (Inquisition and IRA). But historically terrorism has not been a continuous phenomenon and did not get currency until British philosopher Edmund Burke demonised the French Revolution (1789), and even then its motivation was mostly political and secular. The renaissance of religious terrorism was partly caused by the vacuum left by the demise of communism, which was not filled up by the benefits promised by liberal democracy. Indeed Francis Fukuyama had conceded that the revival of religion in "some way attests to a broad unhappiness with the impersonality and spiritual vacuity of liberal consumerist societies." This unhappiness was acutely felt throughout the developing world, and in particular in the Muslim world, housing about one and a half billion people. G-8 and the expanded G-10 do not include a single Muslim country (it is understood the measure of inclusion is not religion based) and G-20 (founded in 1999) has among the emerging economies Turkey and Indonesia. While in the case of Turkey, President Bush's call for its inclusion in the European Union was seen as uncalled for American intrusion and interference, Indonesia in post-Suharto era is swimming in the cauldron of political instability and economic woes.

"The Roots of Muslim Rage" (in the words of Bernard Lewis) are many and varied. Blizzard of speculation and intense forensic investigation, has interrogated this question incessantly for the last four years. This was and is necessary. Pew Global Attitude Project of June last year in a survey of Muslim countries found only four percent in Saudi Arabia, six percent in Morocco and Jordan, and thirteen percent in Egypt have favourable opinion of the US. Similar pattern holds across the Muslim world. In turn, a growing percentage of Americans are getting increasingly suspicious of Muslims and the Islamic world. This situation has possibly not been helped by the findings of the Senate Intelligence Committee, 9-11 Commission, and Lord Butler's report -- all findings blaming faulty intelligence reports for Iraq invasion, but exonerating President Bush and Prime Minister Blair on whose desks

the buck stops. In the US, understandably the Democrats (e.g. Senator Jay Rockefeller) wanted to pin down President Bush in order to carry Senator Kerry across the threshold in the November Presidential elections, the Republicans (e.g. Senator Pat Roberts) would let the buck slide down Bush's table. Election politics overrides bipartisan interests. In contrast, Butler's report was disappointing. His committee found the intelligence wanting, but let Tony Blair off without a slap on the knuckle for leading Britain into war on false pretences. At least Senator Rockefeller was candid enough to admit that had the US Congress known what the American public knows now, then the Congress would not have authorised President Bush to go to war.

Despite these ex-post facto admissions, the unremitting violence in Iraq and elsewhere is disquieting and particularly harmful for the Muslim diaspora in the West and the Islamic world in general who are tied to the apron string of the west for the much needed aid, trade, and investment. Intra-Islamic world economic transactions have always been negligible and are not expected to increase appreciably. The concept of an Islamic Common Market has remained within the bounds of intellectual exercise for over two decades. Besides the inexorable forces of globalisation would not allow economic partition along religious lines nor should even the most rabid theocracy advocate such a disastrous path. One must accept the fact that without interacting with the West the Muslim developing countries would only increase deprivation of their people which would further violent conflict not only with the countries perceived to have caused deprivation but also intra-state conflict where a single ethnic group has taken control of the resources of the country to the detriment of other groups.

In tracing the fault lines of clash of civilisations it is often forgotten that historically sovereignty being based on Christian religion there was no room in Latin Christendom for non-Christians, Christian dissenters, reformers, or pagans to be bestowed with sovereignty. A border was drawn to separate the European and Western world of sovereign states from non-Western world that were deemed to be unworthy or incapable of sovereignty and therefore were apt candidates for colonisation. It is believed that the Muslims, having a keener sense of history than their Western counterparts often remember the unglorified period of Western domination over what they perceived to be their own and hence nursed grievances against the West giving rise to aggrieved nationalism.

For various reasons, many countries in the developing world, and Muslim countries are no exception, do not have good memories of colonisation/occupation. It is universally recognised that Western occupation of Japan and Germany providing them with security against communist expansion released vast amount of resources to the governments of the two countries for initially infra-structural and later overall development of their economies, which otherwise they would have to spend on their defence. Today Japan is the second largest global economy and Germany is the powerhouse of the European Union. Incidentally both these countries are not deeply wedded to any religious faith (though they are neither atheist nor agnostic), lending force to the argument that there is an inverse relationship between religiosity and pace of economic development of any country.

Going back to the essence of this discourse it is imperative that countries like Bangladesh do not give the impression of harbouring religious intolerance. While Bangladesh is generally accepted as a moderate Muslim country, aberrant behaviour of some of her citizens reflecting a trend of incipient Islamic extremism which go unpunished, are noticed at home and abroad and harm the image of the country. One must not forget that the West's identification of the twin threats to its security posed by proliferation of weapons of mass destruction and terrorism is seen through the prism of religious intolerance as described in incredibly fascinating fashion by Harvard University's Jessica Stern of her meetings with religious extremists who are imbued with the concept of God's "instructions" to cleanse society through violence. The current salience of "Islamic Fundamentalism" with its insistence that being a Muslim is the defining principle of belonging to the only true faith which is both universal and transnational makes it imperative for Bangladesh to remain within the bounds of internationally accepted code of conduct.

মার্কেটাইল ব্যাংক লিমিটেড Mercantile Bank Limited

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BONUS SHARES

This is for information of the Shareholders of Mercantile Bank Limited that the Company in its 5th AGM held on June 14, 2004 declared 25% Stock Dividend for the year ended December 31, 2003 to the shareholders whose names appeared in the Register of Members as on 24 May 2004.

The Dividend Warrants have already been despatched through Central Courier Service. The Bonus Shares will be distributed in demat form through Central Depository System (CDS). Accordingly, the Shareholders are required to open Beneficiary Owner Account (BO A/C) with any Depository Participant (DP). BO Accounts can also be opened at our Investment Wing of the Credit Division of Mercantile Bank Limited, 61, Dilkusha C/A (5th floor), Dhaka-1000.

The Shareholders are requested to provide us with their BO A/C number by returning the annexed slip of the Dividend Notice which we have despatched to them on 8 July 2004 for submission to us on or before 20 July 2004 to enable us to credit their BO A/C with the Bonus Shares through CDS within scheduled time.

If any Shareholder fails to receive the Dividend Notice by 19 July 2004 he is requested to collect the same from Mercantile Bank Limited, Share Department, 61, Dilkusha C/A (5th floor), Dhaka-1000.

Dated, Dhaka
18 July 2004

(Md. Shawkat Jahan Khan)
Assistant Vice President



admission

Autumn 2004

Admission Eligibility

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10:30 AM
Friday, July 30, 2004

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POSITIONS

Sl. No.	Position	Requisite Qualification	Experience
1.	Asst Manager (Admin.)	MBA / Masters	10-15 Years
2.	Asst Manager (Marketing)	- do -	- do -
3.	Production Manager (Label/Elastic)	MSc / BSc Engineer	-do-
4.	Sr. Executive (Commercial)	MBA / Masters	10-15 Years in Export oriented Garments Industry
5.	Executive (Store)	Graduate	10-15 Years
6.	Dyeing Master	- do -	-do-
7.	Designer (Label/Elastic)	- do -	5-8 Years
8.	Executive (Commercial)	- do -	7-10 Years
9.	Executive (Marketing)	- do -	-do-
10.	Jr. Executive (Marketing)	- do -	3-5 Years
11.	Jr. Executive (Commercial)	- do -	-do-
12.	Asst Production Manager (Zipper)	Graduate/Diploma Engineer	5-8 Years
13.	Asst Production Manager (Hanger/Thread)	- do -	-do-
14.	Asst Production Manager (Poly)	- do -	-do-
15.	Production Coordinator	MBA / BBA / Diploma Engineer	-do-
16.	Maintenance Engineer	BSc Engineer / Diploma Engineer - Mechanical / Electrical	-do-
17.	Security Supervisor	Ex Defense Personnel not below the rank of JCO	10-15 Years
18.	Foreman	HSC	-do-
19.	Boiler In Charge	- do -	7-10 Years
20.	Store Assistant	Graduate / HSC	5 Years
21.	Dyeing Technician (Zipper / Thread)	-do-	7-10 Years
22.	Dyeing Supervisor	HSC	-do-
23.	P.A. cum Receptionist - Female (Head office)	Graduate	5-10 Years
24.	Supervisor (Tape Loom)	HSC	-do-
25.	Supervisor (Sewing/Coil Forming)	-do-	-do-
26.	Supervisor (Nylon Zipper Unit)	-do-	-do-
27.	Supervisor (Metal Zipper Unit)	-do-	-do-
28.	Supervisor (Plastic Zipper Unit)	-do-	-do-
29.	Maintenance Assst (Electronics) Plastic Zipper	-do-	-do-
30.	Color Man (Plastic Zipper)	-do-	-do-
31.	Supervisor (Label)	-do-	-do-
32.	Supervisor (Hanger)	-do-	-do-
33.	Supervisor (Thread/Drawstring)	-do-	-do-
34.	Supervisor (Poly)	-do-	-do-
35.	Supervisor (Elastic)	-do-	-do-
36.	Coating Technician	SSC	3-6 Years
37.	Asst. Accountant	Graduate	4-5 Years
38.	Maintenance Asst (Zipper)	Diploma Engineer - Mechanical	10 Years
39.	Maintenance Asst (Poly)	-do-	7-10 Years
40.	Maintenance Asst. (Label/Thread/Elastic)	-do-	5-7 Years
41.	Generator Operator	SSC	7-10 Years
42.	Drawstring (Supervisor)	HSC	5 Years
43.	Dyeing Lab Technician	-do-	5-6 Years
44.	Asst Lab Technician	-do-	-do-
45.	Quality Inspector (Zipper)	-do-	5-10 Years
46.	Quality Checker (Zipper)	-do-	-do-
47.	Assistant Supervisor (Nylon) - Female	-do-	3-6 Years
48.	Assistant Supervisor (Metal) - Female	-do-	-do-
49.	Assistant supervisor (Plastic) - Female	HSC	-do-
50.	Time Keeper	Graduate /HSC	4-5 Years
51.	Skill Machine Operator: Zipper/Dyeing/Tape Loom/Sewing/Coil Forming Drawstring/Label/Thread/Poly/Hanger - Male/Female	Class VIII	5 Years
52.	Skill Machine Operator: Chain Injection & Open Injection Molding	-do-	5-10 Years

N.B. * Educational qualification may be relaxed in case of really deserving candidate(s).
* Any persuasion will be treated as disqualification for the candidature.

Senior Executive (Admin.)
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Kazi Anwarul Masud is a former Secretary and Ambassador.