

# Chaos in the Middle East



ARSHAD-UZ ZAMAN

FOR more than half a century the epicentre of chaos in the Middle East has been the Palestine-Israel conflict, where hope and despair live side by side. To this has been added the invasion of Iraq by the US and Britain. Add to that the 9/11, and terrorism has taken the centre stage. Indeed the world looks like a rudderless ship.

If we start our narration from 9/11, we witness the most fundamental change in the world. The sole superpower US loses that privileged position because for the first time in her 200-year old history she is hit on her seat of economic power -- the twin towers in New York and the Pentagon in Washington D.C. And this happens in broad daylight before TV cameras and the whole world watches the spectacle in disbelief. The culprit -- Osama Bin Laden -- is quickly identified and his hide-out, Afghanistan, where rules a pariah regime -- the Taliban -- is attacked by the US, with her willing ally, Pakistan, the creator of the Taliban leader is ousted but Bin Laden remains beyond reach. One interesting side effect of the invasion of Afghanistan is the once again warming relationship between President Bush of the US and the military dictator of Pakistan Gen. Pervez Musharraf, till then in the dog house because he had ousted an elected government of Pakistan. The US goes one step further. She wants to

transplant diplomacy in the rocky, barren terrain of Afghanistan but continues her camaraderie with dictator Musharraf.

Then comes Iraq and it is by no means finished yet. A huge propaganda was launched through the mighty media machine of CNN and BBC that Iraqi dictator

has brought in tow the British and several other countries, who have contributed troops. This has landed those governments in serious trouble with their own electorate. Thus we have witnessed that in Spain the government has lost elections to a contender, who openly campaigned

for withdrawal from Iraq, and Zapatero won the elections and has withdrawn his troops. And Spain is a valued NATO ally of the US. There are other countries like the Philippines, who have done likewise and many others are tottering on the brink. The Al-Qaeda has become a feared name

and from almost under every brick an Al-Qaeda operative emerges. Suicide bombing has become commonplace and is taking place daily in Iraq or elsewhere.

The latest and the most daring such exploit is no doubt the London bombs, whose fallout is continuing. London police has taken a

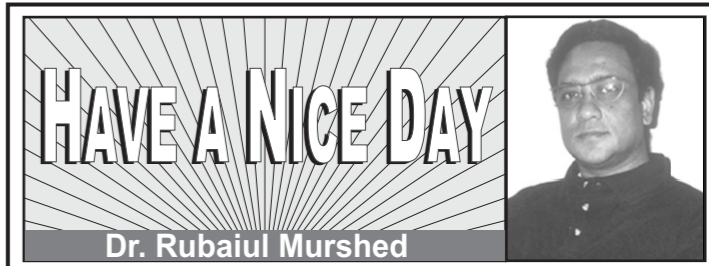
high profile role, since they had remarkable success in identifying perpetrators of the crime. In Britain and in Europe there are several million Muslims, who live life of law abiding citizen, who do not have remotely any connection, with terrorism of any variety. Yet in Madrid, the French Home Minister in presence of his Spanish counterpart, threatened the Imams of French mosques that they should be careful with their preaching or they could be expelled from France! He was no doubt doing his campaigning for his election to the highest post of President of France. Yet he was playing with fire! That a large body of people like the Muslims in the west should feel nervous about their fate is not a sign of health. It is remarkable that the Al-Qaeda feel so strong that they can take on Britain, the most valued ally of the US in this global confrontation.

From the misadventure in Iraq, the chaos appears to spread world wide. The Iraq crisis from US official stance appears to be open ended. In spite of rising voices in the US, due largely to the loss of lives of young US soldiers daily, President Bush did not seem inclined to listen to any idea of a pullout. Yet there seems no way out than a withdrawal from Iraq now. It may not be the most honourable way out of the terrible mess created by the invasion, but there does not appear to be any other alternative.

In the midst of so much turmoil, the Palestine-Israel negotiations continue haltingly. Israel seems to be preparing to withdraw from Gaza and hand over the territory to Palestinian authority. That Prime Minister Ariel Sharon is facing resistance from Israeli settlers can be easily understood. Palestinian Authority boss Mahmoud Abbas is facing resistance from Hamas, who fear a diminution of their authority.

It will be a miracle if in a world of chaos, a Palestine state is born. We must keep our fingers crossed.

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All health information to keep you up to date

## Cancers and some answers

**D** ID you know that in 1893 when it was found that the US president Grover Cleveland developed cancer, his doctors feared that cancer was an alien invader. Today after 100 years, still sometimes cancer has no answer, especially when it is not primarily detected. That's why it is better to know about early warning signs for different types of cancer. Chances of cure are good if cancer is identified early.

The most commonly occurring cancers are breast cancer in women and prostate cancer in men. But a certain amount of lumpiness in the breast is not abnormal. Cancer in the tongue, stomach or pancreas is really intolerable but lung cancer is one of the types that cause the most deaths. The types of cancer vary from country to country. For example, in Australia the most commonly occurring cancer is the non-malignant skin cancer or in case of Japan 'stomach cancer' is not uncommon. Some cancers, such as pre-menopausal breast cancer may appear more commonly among certain relations. It has been seen that smoking doubles the risk of bladder cancer. After the age of 50, prostate gland commonly increases in size. A normal prostate is about the size of a table-tennis ball (the gland that surrounds the urethra). When prostate begins to grow, one of the changes that may happen is prostate cancer. Most of them are slow growing and usually do not shorten life. A man may have 'prostate cancer' without any symptoms.

Conventional cancer treatment means -- surgery, radiation and chemotherapy. But research is tirelessly being undertaken to look for more successful ways of dealing with this disease. In the beginning of last century, several pioneer radiologists suffered painful rashes from powerful biological effects of X rays and died of skin cancer and leukaemia. In treatment there are medical oncologists and radio-oncologists. In Bangladesh we have developed more or less in medical oncology but we couldn't build up palliative therapy or standard physiotherapy in the management of cancer treatment. But new hospitals in the city are coming up for more successful ways of dealing with this disease.

### Some Cancer prevention and early warning signs (when you should see your doctor)

- Early warning signs should not be ignored. These are:
- = Change in bowel or bladder habits
  - = Unusual bleeding or discharge
  - = A sore, which does not heal
  - = Lump in the breast or elsewhere
  - = Indigestion or finding difficulty in swallowing
  - = Noticeable change in a wart or mole
  - = Development of any unusual pigmented area
  - = Irregular vaginal bleeding or discharge
  - = Irritating persistent cough or hoarseness
  - = Impairment of hearing with noise in the same ear
- Several things to reduce the risk of cancer:
- = Regular breast self-examination (Consult a surgeon -- today lot of qualified women surgeons are also available in the city)
  - = Avoid excessive exposure to the sun -- use sunglasses and proper hats
  - = People above the age of 35-40 should have an annual check-up
  - = Do not smoke; and try to avoid a smoker when he/she is smoking
  - = Eat a healthy diet with lot of fibres
  - = Be aware of safety rules where exposure to chemicals (including artificial flavour and colour), radiation and other hazards increase the risk.

## THE HORIZON THIS WEEK

From the misadventure in Iraq, the chaos appears to spread world wide. The Iraq crisis from US official stance appears to be open ended. In spite of rising voices in the US, due largely to the loss of lives of young US soldiers daily, President Bush did not seem inclined to listen to any idea of a pullout. Yet there seems no way out than a withdrawal from Iraq now. It may not be the most honourable way out of the terrible mess created by the invasion, but there does not appear to be any other alternative.



PHOTO: AFP

US troops secure the site where a car bomb exploded outside the election commission office in south of the Baghdad killing three policemen and wounding 10 civilians, 17 July. The blitz of suicide bombings in Iraq showed no sign of abating after a bomber drove a tanker of liquified gas into a southern town killing at least 71 and wounding 156.

# Student politics and criminality

ANM NURUL HAQUE

**S**TUDENTS' participation in party-based politics and their involvement in various heinous crimes have become a familiar phenomenon in our country in recent days. Many of the student leaders and activists are now reported to be involved in mugging, killing, toll collection, abduction for money, and other such crimes. The recent incident of mugging of Tk 12 lakh by three leaders of the ruling BNP-affiliated Chhatra Dal at Baitul Mokarram gate is a case in point. The people from all strata of society are shocked that such a heinous crime was committed by the students of Dhaka College, one of the most prestigious educational institutions of the country. What is most worrying is that the criminality of this kind has become part of the pattern among the young activists of the main ruling party.

According to a report published in The Daily Star, around one hundred leaders and activists of the ruling BNP's student wing Jatiyatabadi Chhatra Dal (JCD) at different colleges in the city are involved in mugging and collecting toll from the shops and business firms adjacent to their colleges. A good number of JCD leaders and activists of Dhaka College unit are engaged in mugging and toll collection in New Market, Elephant Road, and Science Laboratory areas. The leaders and activists of the JCD unit of Titumir College are engaged in extortion in the Mahakhali areas. A group of JCD leaders and activists of Tejgaon College, allegedly sheltered by a ward commissioner of Dhaka City Corporation, collect toll from the traders of Farmgate. Mirpur Bagla College unit of JCD leaders and activists are engaged in mugging, collecting tolls, and other criminal activities in Mirpur-1 area. The JCD leaders and activists of Kabi Nazrul College are involved in extortion, snatching, and also drug peddling. A former JCD leader of Jagannath University leads a group of activists who are engaged in toll collection from the shops and business houses at Islampur, Sadarghat, Banglabazar, and Patuati. It is learnt that the leaders of the JCD city unit get a share of the money.

Two JCD cadres, one allegedly a close ally to dreaded criminal Emon, died in Rapid Action Battalion (Rab) crossfire in Savar on June 23. Khan Ahamed Wasib, former General Secretary of Mohammadpur Thana unit of JCD and Rajib Hossain Farrok a member of the same unit were held by Rab from the Pallabi areas. The Rab team recovered nine fire-arms including an AK-47 rifle from their possession. One Tanjil, a JCD leader of Dhaka University, was also held last year while committing robbery in a business house in Motijheel commercial area. The

president of JCD unit of Kabi Nazrul College was nabbed several times by police and Rab for his involvement in criminal activities, and still he continues his misdeeds.

It is also learnt that the intelligence departments have submitted reports to their higher authorities against the JCD leaders and activ-

Dhaka University campus, preventing the activists of Bangladesh Chhatra League (BCL) from returning to the campus. The JCD leaders, on motor cycles and in bands of ferocious groups, openly threatened that they would not allow the activists of BCL to return to the campus. The police and JCD activ-

occurred in the Shahjalal Science and Technology University in Sylhet. The collusive role by the JCD activists and police wreaked havoc in the campus injuring general students and also some of the teachers. The students and the teachers were only demanding justice by staging a sit-in demon-

known as the Oxford of the East, used to produce outstanding scholars, scientists, and writers. But it has lost its glory of the past. Now it is known as a campus of clashes, violence, and bomb blasts. The students, who have entered this university with genuine intention for higher education are also prevented from doing so, as they are forced to live in an atmosphere totally hostile to such pursuits. Not Dhaka University alone, such a situation is also common in almost all the public universities in the country.

Student politics in this country has a historical and glorious heritage. During the movement against British rule, the students took active part in different movements. The students of this country were the main architects of the language movement of 1952. The students were not then involved in party-based politics. The student politics of these days is not set on the basis of ideals, but based on arms. Many of the student leaders are non-students. They have sold their souls to the devil and have had recourse to student politics as a short-cut to riches. Most of the student leaders now possess cars, buses, flats, and shops in the capital city. These student leaders and activists are involved in various heinous crimes as they have mastered the art of criminality instead of any academic subjects.

The participation of students in party-based politics, and their involvement in various crimes has prompted many conscious citizens to ask for a complete ban on student politics in order to bring back discipline and academic atmosphere in all the educational institutions including the public universities. The general students of the public universities are also in favour of a permanent ban on student politics. The most silent decay in our national life has occurred in the sector of higher education, and is due to student politics. Frequent strikes, violence, and other impediments are taking a heavy toll on the general students of the public universities.

The political parties can never rid the public universities of ugly politics and their activists of criminality if their student wings are allowed to continue. The arrest of a few student activists and claim that they have been expelled from the student wing of their party is not a solution to such a grave problem. It is really painful to see how the students at the highest centres of learning are suffering due to dirty student politics. It is learnt that the government is thinking of banning student politics affiliated with political parties. The sooner the better.

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Campus often turns volatile due to violent student politics

ists who are engaged in various criminal activities like mugging, toll collection, and abduction for money. But the central leaders of the ruling BNP including its General Secretary have denied allegations against the leaders and activists of their student wing JCD, and said that these young men have been expelled and are no longer associated with JCD. It may be mentioned here that the leaders and activists of the Awami League's student wing Bangladesh Chhatra League (BCL) used to commit similar crimes when Awami League was in power. So it can be said that the criminality of this kind has become a part of student politics in these days.

What took place recently at Dhaka University in the wake of the death of a third year student of the psychology department, who was crushed to death by a bus at Shahbagh intersection, is truly cause for concern. The leaders and activists of JCD seized control of the

ists together were seen to keep the followers of BCL off the campus. The general students and many of the teachers were forced to run for their lives. The university administration failed to bring back the academic discipline and dignity to the campus due to the violence created by the JCD activists.

JCD also created violence of an unprecedented kind in Rajshahi University recently, following the naming of a new panel for appointment of the Vice Chancellor. The JCD leaders and activists ransacked as many as fifty five rooms belonging to the teachers of the various departments of the university. They also injured a good number of general students, as well as three teachers. The JCD leaders and activists went on such a rampage on the information that their preferred candidate had been ignored in the process for selection of a new Vice Chancellor.

An incident of such violence also

strated in front of the Vice Chancellor's office against a rape incident committed by the JCD elements. The JCD activists led by their leaders tried to scare them off by firing a few rounds of blank shots in front of the police force deployed there. The ordeal of the students and teachers did not end there. They chased them afterwards and beat them up. The police turned a blind eye when the JCD activists fired blank shots and attacked the students and teachers. The cohabitation between the police and the JCD activists to gag the voice of protest against the crimes committed by the JCD elements also exists in other universities.

The student politics which is presently in its most belligerent form, is no doubt responsible to a great extent for paralysing the public universities. In fact, higher education in the public universities of the country is now held hostage to politics. Dhaka University, once

# Rethinking our view of China

China and the United States need to anticipate some of the dislocations to come. For example, because China's banks still respond as much to Beijing's orders as to market signals, they often encourage surplus industrial capacity in sectors such as steel or autos. If China's growth slows, its spare capacity will be exported, causing serious trade problems in the West. China and the West should work to mitigate such episodes.

JEFFREY E. GARTEN

**T**HE backlash against China has been surprisingly slow in coming, given how fast the Middle Kingdom has emerged as an economic power. Now, as the period of benign acceptance gives way to growing trade frictions with China, there is no consensus on what philosophy ought to govern economic relations with China. Opinion in the big industrial nations is divided into two camps, both representing out-dated extremes.

One camp wants to contain China. It has supporters on the left and right, united by fear that this new power threatens jobs worldwide, and stands as a major obstacle to progress on human rights. Its capital is the Pentagon, led by Secretary of Defense Donald Rumsfeld, which worries that China's economic might will translate into a military and political challenge to US supremacy. Its chief complaint is that China doesn't play by the rules; for example, by building a trade surplus in ways that constitute aggressive mercantilism.

The opposing group, which includes many CEOs, top US officials like Alan Greenspan, and much of the US foreign-policy establishment, argues for unfettered engagement. It argues that the more of a stake China has in global commerce, the more Beijing must play by the rules.

Those arguing for containment are clearly gaining ground. That may be most true in Europe, where states like France, Germany, and Italy are far less adaptable than the United States, and more vulnerable to the rise of China. The problem is that containing a one-dimensional military superpower like the former Soviet Union meant encircling it with alliances such as Nato, fighting wars on its periphery and pouring aid into countries like Peru or Egypt to buy allies. But encircling an economic superpower like China would backfire. Trying to limit its influence by acts of trade protection would stall one of the world's two growth engines, and trigger a global slump. Given that China is a critical creditor to Uncle Sam, trying to control China's rise could cause a financial crash.

An economic rivalry can't be managed with military tactics. This is not a zero-sum game. When the



PHOTO: AFP

Jose Manuel Barroso (R), President of the European Commission meeting Chinese Premier Wen Jiabao (L) at the Great Hall of the People in Beijing, 14 July. Barroso was on a four day visit to China.

United States and China grow, all their trade partners win, too. Plus, leaders may command their armies, but can't issue orders to global markets, which are ruled by millions of private investors.

On the other hand, the enthusiastic "engagers" put too much faith in free markets. They fail to acknowledge that China's full-speed-ahead policies do threaten the Western work force, and dismiss too easily concerns about China's violation of intellectual property rights, its currency manipulations and its potentially destabilising pursuit of energy supplies at any cost.

There is a more realistic way to approach China. It would entail engaging China within a system that constrains all members under intelligent rules. China is being changed by its entrance into the global economy, even as it reshapes the global economy. It's time for Washington, Beijing, Brussels, Tokyo and others to start working together on managing this explosive process, rather than just putting out fires. A number of world trade and finance rules ought to be reassessed in light of China's rise, from environmental protection, to currency stability, labour standards, energy policy, data protection and even the codes of social responsibility at global companies, including those now emerging from China.

China and the United States need to anticipate some of the dislocations to come. For example,

because China's banks still respond as much to Beijing's orders as to market signals, they often encourage surplus industrial capacity in sectors such as steel or autos. If China's growth slows, its spare capacity will be exported, causing serious trade problems in the West. China and the West should work to mitigate such episodes. Case in point, China could choke off reckless lending in mutually agreed sectors, while the West prepares to cope with the fallout by strengthening worker-adjustment programs.

To encourage coordination, China should be welcomed as a member of major international groups such as the G8 and the International Energy Agency. In these settings, Beijing would feel directly the weight of global concerns, rather than dealing one-on-one with the United States or the EU, playing one off against the other. China would also have more influence on these international bodies, as it should. The only question about the Middle Kingdom's rise as an economic superpower is how it will unfold, with how much pain. A policy of containment is only likely to stoke its worst impulses, while a naive faith in the market is unlikely to minimise the disruptions. Finding the right balance will be difficult. But the options now on the table are sure to fail.

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