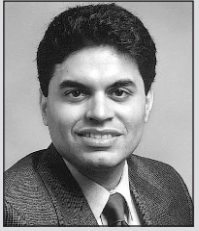


Pssst ... nobody loves a torturer



FAREED ZAKARIA writes from Washington

AS President Bush's approval ratings sink at home, the glee across the globe rises. He remains the most unpopular political figure in the world, and newspapers from Europe to Asia are delighting in his troubles.

Last week's protests in Mar del Plata were happily replayed on television everywhere. So what is the leader of the free world to do? Well, I have a suggestion that might improve Bush's image abroad and it doesn't require that Karen Hughes go anywhere. It would actually help Bush at home as well, and it has the additional virtue of being the right thing to do. It's simple: end the administration's disastrous experiment with officially sanctioned torture. We now have plenty of documents and testimonials that make plain that the administration created an atmosphere in which the interrogation of prisoners could lapse into torture. After 9/11, high up in the administration the White House and the Pentagon officials and lawyers were asked to find ways to bend and stretch the traditional rules of war. Donald Rumsfeld publicly declared that the Geneva Conventions did not apply to the war against al Qaeda. Whether or not these legalisms were correct, their most important effect was the message they sent down the chain of command: "Push

the envelope."

For example, when Rumsfeld read a report documenting some of the new interrogation procedures at Guantanamo in November 2002, including having detainees stand for four hours, he scribbled a note in the margin, "Why is standing limited to 4 hours? I stand for 8 hours a day." (Rumsfeld probably does not stand for eight hours, scarcely clad and barely fed, with bright lights, prison guards and attack dogs trained on him.) The signal Rumsfeld was sending was clear: "Get tougher." No one at the top

who have died in Iraq and Afghanistan in US custody. Most died under circumstances that suggest torture. The reports use words like "strangulation," "asphyxiation," and "blunt force injuries." Even the "natural deaths were caused by 'Arteriosclerotic Cardiovascular disease'" in other words, sudden heart attacks.

Sen. John McCain has proposed making absolutely clear in law that the United States does not permit the torture of prisoners returning America to the position it had taken for five

Iraq when the general population really turned against the United States and he will say, "Abu Ghraib." A few months before the scandal broke, Coalition Provisional Authority polls showed Iraqi support for the occupation at 63 percent. A month after Abu Ghraib, the number was 9 per cent. Polls showed that 71 per cent of Iraqis were surprised by the revelations. Most telling, 61 per cent of Iraqis polled believed that no one would be punished for the torture at Abu Ghraib. Of the 29 per cent who said they believed someone would be punished, 52 per cent said that such punishment would extend only to "the little people."

America washes its dirty linen in public. When scandals such as this one hit, they do sully America's image in the world. But what usually also gets broadcast around the world is the vivid reality that the United States forces accountability and punishes wrongdoing, even at the highest levels. Initially, people the world over thought Americans were crazy during Watergate, but they came to respect a rule of law so strong that even a president could not break it. But today, what angers friends of America abroad is not that abuses like those at Abu Ghraib happened. Some lapses are probably an inevitable consequence of war, terrorism and insurgencies. What angers them is that no one beyond a few "little people" have been punished, the system has not been overhauled, and even now, after all that has happened, the White House is spending time, effort and precious political capital in a strange, stubborn and surely futile quest to preserve the option to torture.

Fareed Zakaria is Editor of Newsweek International. © 2005, Newsweek Inc. All rights reserved. Reprinted by arrangement.

This is a case of more than just bad public relations. Ask any soldier in Iraq when the general population really turned against the United States and he will say, "Abu Ghraib." A few months before the scandal broke, Coalition Provisional Authority polls showed Iraqi support for the occupation at 63 percent. A month after Abu Ghraib, the number was 9 per cent.

was outlining what soldiers should not do, which lines they should not cross, which laws they should remember to adhere to strictly. The Pentagon's own report after investigating Abu Ghraib, by Gen. George Fay, speaks of "doctrinal confusion ... a lack of doctrine ... (and) systemic failures" as the causes for the incidents of torture. In a 2 million-person bureaucracy, such calculated ambiguities will inevitably lead to something like Abu Ghraib.

And the incidents clearly go well beyond Abu Ghraib. During the past few months, declassified documents and testimony from Army officers make abundantly clear that torture and abuse of prisoners is something that has become quite widespread since 9/11. The most recent evidence comes from autopsies of 44 prisoners

decades. McCain's amendment, endorsed by Colin Powell, passed the Senate last month by 90 to 9 in a stunning rebuke of administration policy. But Republicans in the House are trying to kill it. Vice President Cheney is making great exertions to gut it with loopholes. The White House has threatened to veto the entire defense budget, to which McCain's proposal was originally attached, unless his ban is removed. White House spokesmen don't answer questions about the bill plainly, and Cheney simply refuses to explain his views at all. (As the writer Andrew Sullivan has noted, someone needs to remind the vice president that he is an elected and accountable public servant, not a monarch.)

This is a case of more than just bad public relations. Ask any soldier in

Saarc and the Gujral Doctrine

BILLY I AHMED

AS the 12th Indian Prime Minister, Mr. I K Gujral, holding charge of External Ministry, had become the chief arbiter of Indian foreign policy which has come to be known as "Gujral Doctrine" in recent times. In a speech at the Bandaranaika Center for International Studies in Colombo, Sri Lanka on January 20, 1997, he said, the "Gujral Doctrine, if I may call it so, states that, first, with its neighbours like Bangladesh, Bhutan, Maldives, Nepal and Sri Lanka, India does not ask for reciprocity, but gives and accommodates what it can in good faith and trust. Second, we believe that no South Asian country should allow its territory to be used against the interests of another country of the region. Third, that none should interfere in the internal affairs of another. Fourth, all South Asian countries must respect each other's territorial integrity and sovereignty. And finally, they should settle all their disputes through peaceful bilateral negotiations."

However, Gujral Doctrine does not mark any significant departure and deviation from the long accepted and practiced Nehruvian vision of mutual friendship, cooperation, non-alignment and non-interference in one another's internal matters. But it lays greater emphasis on more positive and open dialogue on two-sided issues. The policy aims at improving relations with immediate neighbours in particular and with all others in general. This is the right approach to overcome hostility, tension and suspicion in bilateral relations. Keep the door open and continue the dialogue without any preconditions, is the cornerstone of the policy. Gujral

believed that as a major power in the region, India had to take the initiative on the diplomatic front without considering the short-term gains or cost.

Further, he believed that India should accommodate the neighbours in good faith and trust without expecting the same reciprocity and response. India has to take the prime responsibility for stepping up cooperation among the seven countries. Gujral wanted SARRC to become an effective vehicle for all-round progress in the

Gujral believed in keeping with the SAPTA agreement and spirit to provide for the grant of non-reciprocal trade concession to the least developed countries of the region. "Even otherwise" he said, "as the largest economy in the region, we are conscious of our role and responsibility in ensuring that economic and trade liberalisation takes place in a just and equitable manner."

But there are many who oppose this policy of unilateral concessions to the neighbours. The detractors of the

India should resist all monopolistic strategies adopted by the developed countries as it has done for NPT, CTBT, and Chemical Weapon Treaty. To convert SARRC into a dynamic organisation like EU and others, India ought to lead from the front, while other member countries must trust each other. The Gujral Doctrine is the right approach as it is based on good faith, intentions, and mutual accommodation.

region with India's initiative and efforts. Economic cooperation and settlement of issues through bilateral talks and discussions is the core of the doctrine. There is no alternative to dialogue and discussions for resolving disputes between two countries. Doors of dialogues, both official and non-official, should be kept open. There should be no interruption in the channels of communication and dialogue.

The doctrine envisages genuine cooperation and trust based on the spirit of give and take, but India needs to give more to its neighbours and accept as little as possible in return because on it devolves the responsibility for stepping up collaboration and cooperation in the region.

doctrine say that such a policy towards Pakistan can prove counter-productive and harmful because it sends wrong signals of weakness and appeasement. They say that Pakistan's willingness to come to the negotiation table to discuss bilateral issues was dictated more by the international political and economic pressure than any other thing.

The other principle of the Doctrine is not using a country's territory to undermine another country's security and territorial integrity. It would help a lot in checking terrorist and insurgency from across borders. If these principles are imposed and effort made to curb terrorism, all the member countries would benefit.

India needs to be exact, clear and

firm about its policies and programmes with foreign countries. Periodic discussions, friendship, consultations and exchange of views are necessary to promote peace, cooperation and economic development.

The Indo-Pak relation is improving. India's open-heartedness in extending aid to the recent earthquake victims in Pakistan and vis-a-vis Musharraf's statement to help India in finding out the culprits responsible for the recent Delhi bomb attack, is a positive sign of two-way improvement in the relationship of the two important member countries of SAARC.

Nevertheless, in the context of Bangladesh and the theme of Gujral Doctrine, much more is expected of India. Issues like Ganges water sharing, trade imbalance, push-in of Indians into Bangladesh territory and killing of innocent Bangladeshis by BSF living near the porous Indo-Bangladesh border, needs attention.

India should resist all monopolistic strategies adopted by the developed countries as it has done for NPT, CTBT, and Chemical Weapon Treaty. With fundamental recasting of South Asia's regional relationship, it could propel the region to the forefront of the Asian resurgence.

To convert SARRC into a dynamic organisation like EU and others, India ought to lead from the front, while other member countries must trust each other. The Gujral Doctrine is the right approach as it is based on good faith, intentions, and mutual accommodation.

Billy I Ahmed is a researcher.

Humanity ought to take lessons from every calamity

SUBIR KUMAR BHATTACHARYYA

HUMANITY has been victims of calamities both natural and man-made from time immemorial. Each leaves behind in its wake a trail of destruction in terms of men and material and long-term human sufferings of varying intensity depending on its magnitude. It also leaves behind a coded message that we ought to decipher and heed to bolster the chances of our survival and sharpen our collective wisdom. The code is not difficult to decipher. Once decoded, the message is unambiguous and simple. The message may be clearly defined in three sentences:

1) The very existence of humanity, the most intelligent species on earth and endowed with the sense of self is under constant threats.

2) While the threats are multi-dimensional, vicious and ever growing, man's response is shortsighted, inadequate and ad hoc, to say the least.

3) The earth is the only planet in the solar system (so far known) hospitable to life forms, and probably the only abode in the whole universe to support superior life form like the Homo sapiens.

Are we not therefore under moral obligation collectively to ensure safety and security of our planet and create conditions favourable for growth and well-being of succeeding generations? Let us examine the enormity and multifaceted dimensions of each threat and the response of humanity thereto as well as the prospect of our winning every battle.

A powerful earthquake measuring 7.6 on the Richter scale struck in the morning of 08 October 2005 many parts of Pakistan and its region of Kashmir and Indian Jammu and Kashmir claiming tens of thousands of human lives as well as causing immense human sufferings and colossal damage to properties. I take this opportunity to convey my deep condolences to the bereaved families and wish the injured early recovery. May God give all sufferers fortitude and courage to overcome the tragedy that befell on them. It is redeeming to note that more than six billion people in the world today feel oneness with the victims of the earthquake. A few days back, hurricane Katrina and Rita wreaked havoc in quick succession on the southeastern coast of the US. Loss of lives and properties as well as human miseries laid bare the grim reality how vulnerable and ill-prepared even the most economically and scientifically advanced country in the world is.

While natural calamities like earthquake, cyclone/tornado, forest fire etc. are occurring off and on, man-made disasters are happening more frequently. Major man-made disasters that struck recently like release of toxic fumes in Bhopal in India in 1984, melt-down of Chernobyl nuclear reactor in Kiev, Ukraine in 1986, that in Brazil in 1987 and two in Japan in 1994 and 2004 at Tokaimura and Mihama respectively, and oil-spill from mega oil tankers like Exxon Valdez in 1989, Mega Borg in 1990 and Erika and Haven more recently are illustrative of man's inability to ensure full safety and security of its operations.

Man's response to disasters due to its own ignorance and callousness is equally appalling. Global warming due to greenhouse effect, ozone-layer depletion (mitigation process is going on satisfactorily), dumping of toxic wastes including nuclear waste into land, river and sea, deforestation, loss of biodiversity or extinction of species due to human activities, particularly attempts at tampering with nature are depleting as well as degrading natural resource-base like quality of air and water, forests, hills and mountains, wetlands and bio-diversity. Over exploration of natural resources and demographic pressure are major contributory factors for dwindling of arable land, forest, fish and other natural resources on which future survival and well being of humanity depend.

The most formidable threat to human existence comes from microbes. According to notable scientists in the field of life sciences, the much-touted fight against bacteria that was believed to be won is in fact lost because many hitherto easily treatable

inevitably collapse as we can surmise from past experiences, and overwhelming number of victims will be left writhing in pain, agony and distress, and at the mercy of natural healing process.

Besides the above, hunger, poverty and malnutrition are eating into the vitals of more than half of world's 6.25 billion people. Deprivation is perhaps the most fertile ground for growth of militancy, terrorism and restive people around the globe. On top of these scourges, the probability of an asteroid, one of some 10,000-12,000 asteroids between the planets Mars and Jupiter that orbit the sun, hitting the earth and obliterating the existence of humanity, as an asteroid did exterminate dinosaurs some 39 million years ago, is increasing as recent scientific findings suggest. What is humanity doing to meet the challenges posed by all these enemies? Very little indeed. Moreover, men have been creating conditions where they remain engaged in internecine wars, conflicts and bloodletting communal violence.

Nuclear cataclysm in Hiroshima and

It is the conviction of scientists and philosophers alike that humanity is well-placed in terms of resources, experiences and expertise to triumph over any imaginable threat, but not yet prepared intellectually as one species to put up a decisive fight because its formidable strength and wisdom have been fragmented due to divisions along race, religion, cast and creed, gender, political power and wealth.

bacterial infections are now hardly responding to common antibiotics. As for example, infections by resistant strains of staphylococcus, one of the most common bacteria, which were treatable previously even with simple penicillin, do not now respond to available antibiotics except vancomycin. While new antibiotics keep on coming to markets, resistant strains are proliferating almost in equal proportion. It seems it is an arduous and long drawn-out fight where man can be complacent only at its own peril.

At a time when World Health Organisation was celebrating at its headquarters its triumph over and complete eradication of small pox caused by vaccinia virus from the surface of earth, new viruses mutated, swapped each other's genes, became virulent and jumped over inter-species barriers to claim more human lives, albeit in a moderate scale to date. This may not be the case in future. Since the outbreak of influenza pandemic in 1918, the probability of another one of similar magnitude or more has never been so real as it is today. There has been much talk within the scientific community about a catastrophic pandemic of avian flu by a virus named H5N1 originating from South-east Asia that is estimated to possess the lethal power to kill more than 150 million people because air travel by tens of millions of passengers annually would contain contagion extremely difficult to make. In the aftermath of such a pandemic as stated above, healthcare infrastructure all over the world will

Nagasaki is a stark reminder of man's inherent lust for power and hatred against one another. Their activities are contributing even to the intensification and worsening of conditions favourable for intensified and more widespread natural calamities. As is well known, the earthquake that hit some regions of Pakistan and India on 08 October was due to pent-up pressure along the meeting points of Indian and Eurasian tectonic plates. Some seismology experts believe explosions due to wars and conflicts in the regions of Kashmir might have intensified pressure that caused fissures and faults on the earth's crust making it one of the most vulnerable locations on earth for earthquakes. A question may naturally arise against the backdrop of multiplicity of threats. Is the humanity capable of overcoming the threats? The answer is both yes and no, and neither/or.

Total global wealth has quadrupled in just fifty years. Enormous advancement has been made in science and technology, particularly in understanding the universe, the behaviour of sub-atomic particles and in the field of life sciences including medicine, surgery, microbiology, biochemistry, and genetics and such other branches of knowledge as computer science and technology, energy, space exploration and development-related engineering and technology. While 50 billion dollars can lift children of all developing countries from the trap of hunger and poverty, more than twenty times this sum (about 1.2 trillion) is being spent annually for defence. The US spends about 500

billion in defence, Russian Federation about 50 billion, China about 40 billion, India 16 billion and Pakistan 3 billion. The amounts account for between 5 and 10 per cent of the GDP of these countries. On the contrary, most of the developed countries are reluctant even to set aside 0.7 percent of GDP for ODA despite the fact that at the Earth Summit at RIO in 1992, the developed countries pledged to contribute 0.7 percent of GDP to ODA.

The United Nations was created in 1945 replacing the moribund League of Nations with the noble goal of employing collective power and wisdom through the UN in all international affairs to rid the world of Third World War as well as major wars and conflicts. But the goals still remain unmet while the UN is sometimes bypassed by big powers to serve their national interests. Humanity has the wherewithal to employ superior strategies and tactics based on frontiers of knowledge and rich past experiences to meet squarely any kind of challenge provided all nations can muster political will to cooperate closely and draw on each other's experiences and best practices, and employ combined wisdom and appropriate technologies setting aside conflicting national interests.

I believe humanity can find much more common denominators to unite than it tends to think it has to divide. As for example, all religions propagate the eternal message of love for humanity and compassion for all living beings as well as all other great virtues that humanity embodies. As regards races, there is basically no difference between one race and the other. In this context, I wish to quote views of Mr. Craig Venter, owner of Celera, whose significant contribution led to the early completion (sequencing completed in 2000) of Human Genome Project, undertaken by a consortium of a number of countries and lately by Celera in parallel. 'Racial superiority is a myth,' he once said to highlight unity of mankind, adding 'The genetic variation among 6 billion human beings (it is now over 6.2 billion) is much less than that of single troop of chimpanzees.' This proves beyond any shadow of doubt that humanity is more akin than it tends to think.

It is the conviction of scientists and philosophers alike that humanity is well-placed in terms of resources, experiences and expertise to triumph over any imaginable threat, but not yet prepared intellectually as one species to put up a decisive fight because its formidable strength and wisdom have been fragmented due to divisions along race, religion, cast and creed, gender, political power and wealth. However, rational and right-minded people all over the world can persuade their political leaders to muster political will and courage to resolve intra and inter-state differences through dialogue and draw on best scientific knowledge, technologies and expertise from each other's experiences and best practices to put up a joint front against the common enemies of humanity, that is, hunger, poverty, malnutrition, diseases, natural and man-made disasters and environmental degradation.

Subir Kumar Bhattacharyya is a former Ambassador.

A history of the Iraq war, told entirely in lies

SAM SMITH

ONCE again, we were defending both ourselves and the safety and survival of civilisation itself. September 11 signaled the arrival of an entirely different era. We faced perils we had never thought about, perils we had never seen before. For decades, terrorists had waged war against this country. Now, under the leadership of President Bush, America would wage war against them. It was a struggle between good and it was a struggle between evil.

It was absolutely clear that the number-one threat facing America was from Saddam Hussein. We know that Iraq and Al Qaeda had high-level contacts that went back a decade. We learned that Iraq had trained Al Qaeda members in bomb making and deadly gases. The regime had long-standing and continuing ties to terrorist organisations. Iraq and Al Qaeda had discussed safe-haven opportunities in Iraq. Iraqi officials denied accusations of ties with Al Qaeda. These denials simply were not credible. You couldn't distinguish between Al Qaeda and Saddam when you talked about the war on terror.

The fundamental question was, did Saddam Hussein have a weapons program? And the answer was, absolutely. His regime had large, unaccounted-for stockpiles of chemical and biological weapons--including VX, sarin, cyclosporin, and mustard gas, anthrax, botulism, and possibly smallpox. Our conservative estimate was that Iraq then had a stockpile of between 100 and 500 tons of chemical-weapons agent. That was enough agent to fill 16,000 battlefield rockets. We had sources that told us that Saddam Hussein recently authorised Iraqi field commanders to use chemical weapons--the very weapons the dictator told the world he did not have. And according to the British government, the Iraqi regime could launch a biological or chemical attack in as little as forty-five minutes after the orders were given. There could be no doubt that Saddam Hussein had biological weapons and the capability to rapidly produce more, any more.

Iraq possessed ballistic missiles with a likely range of hundreds of miles--far enough to strike Saudi Arabia, Israel, Turkey, and other nations. We also discovered through intelligence that Iraq had a growing fleet of manned and unmanned aerial vehicles that could be used to disperse chemical or biological weapons across broad areas. We were concerned that Iraq was exploring ways of using UAVs for missions targeting the United States.

Saddam Hussein was determined to get his hands on a nuclear bomb. We knew he'd been absolutely devoted to trying to acquire nuclear weapons, and we believed he had, in fact, reconstituted nuclear weapons. The British government learned that

All text is verbatim from senior Bush administration officials and advisers. In places, tenses have been changed for clarity.



US soldiers in Iraq

Saddam Hussein had recently sought significant quantities of uranium from Africa. Our intelligence sources told us that he had attempted to purchase high-strength aluminum tubes suitable for nuclear-weapons production. When the inspectors first went into Iraq and were denied finally the denied access, a report came out of the [International Atomic Energy Agency]

and imposed our will on them and we captured or, if necessary, killed them until we had imposed law and order. The Iraqi people were well on their way to freedom. The scenes of free Iraqis celebrating in the streets, riding American tanks, tearing down the statues of Saddam Hussein in the center of Baghdad were breathtaking. Watching them, one could not help

"The US acted to a threat from the dictator of Iraq. There is a lot of revisionist history now going on, but one thing is certain -- he is no longer a threat to the free world, and the people of Iraq are free. There's no doubt in my mind when it's all said and done, the facts will show the world the truth."

that they were six months away from developing a weapon. I didn't know what more evidence we needed.

Facing clear evidence of peril, we could not wait for the final proof that could come in the form of a mushroom cloud. The Iraqi dictator could not be permitted to threaten America and the world with horrible poisons and diseases and atomic weapons. Inspections would not work. We gave him a chance to allow the inspectors in, and he wouldn't let them in. The burden was on those people who thought he didn't have weapons of mass destruction to tell the world where they were.

We waged a war to save civilisation itself. We did not seek it, but we fought it, and we prevailed. We fought them

but think of the fall of the Berlin Wall and the collapse of the Iron Curtain.

It was entirely possible that in Iraq you had the most pro-American population that could be found anywhere in the Arab world. If you were looking for a historical analogy, it was probably closer to post-liberation France. We had the overwhelming support of the Iraqi people. Once we won, we got great support from everywhere.

The people of Iraq knew that every effort was made to spare innocent life, and to help Iraq recover from three decades of totalitarian rule. And plans were in place to provide Iraqis with massive amounts of food, as well as medicine and other essential supplies. The US devoted unprecedented

attention to humanitarian relief and the prevention of excessive damage to infrastructure and to unnecessary casualties.

The United States approached its postwar work with a two-part resolve: a commitment to stay and a commitment to leave. The United States had no intention of determining the precise form of Iraq's new government. That choice belonged to the Iraqi people. We have never been a colonial power. We do not leave behind occupying armies. We leave behind constitutions and parliaments. We don't take our force and go around the world and try to take other people's real estate or other people's resources, their oil. We never have and we never will.

The United States was not interested in the oil in that region. We were intent on ensuring that Iraq's oil resources remained under national Iraqi control, with the proceeds made available to support Iraqis in all parts of the country. The oil fields belonged to the people of Iraq, the government of Iraq, all of Iraq. We estimated that the potential income to the Iraqi people as a result of their oil could be somewhere in the \$20 [billion] to \$30 billion a year [range], and obviously, that would be money that would be used for their well-being. In other words, all of Iraq's oil belonged to all the people of Iraq.

We found the weapons of mass destruction. We found biological laboratories. And we found more weapons as time went on. I never believed that we'd just tumble over weapons of mass destruction in that country. But for those who said we hadn't found the banned manufacturing devices or banned weapons, they were wrong, we found them. We knew where they were.

We changed the regime of Iraq for the good of the Iraqi people. We didn't want to occupy Iraq. War is a terrible thing. We've tried every other means to achieve objectives without a war because we understood what the price of a war can be and what it is. We sought peace. We strove for peace. Nobody, but nobody, was more reluctant to go to war than President Bush.

It is not right to assume that any current problems in Iraq can be attributed to poor planning. The number of US forces in the Persian Gulf region dropped as a result of Operation Iraqi Freedom. This nation acted to a threat from the dictator of Iraq. There is a lot of revisionist history now going on, but one thing is certain -- he is no longer a threat to the free world, and the people of Iraq are free. There's no doubt in my mind when it's all said and done, the facts will show the world the truth. There is absolutely no doubt in my mind.

Sam Smith is the author of four books and the editor of The Progressive Review. Courtesy: Harper's Magazine.