

PLEASURE IS ALL MINE

# The new genre uprising



SHAH HUSAIN IMAM

**D**EVILS incarnate are beating a retreat. Traditional protagonists of devilry are abandoning them with a manifest liking towards the requiem to the fallen or near-fallen regimes.

Washington, Brussels and London find themselves on a different trajectory, all on the same page reading and playing to an updated script. The regimes they had backed up with arms sale for oil security and principally as a "bulwark" against Islamist extremism have clearly outlived their utility.

Quintessentially, the clincher is the politics-neutral surge of popular movements, not led by any identifiable political party or leader; but, of course, with a political aim to oust those who misruled for years. Notable is the army's role change to top it up.

It was spontaneous in origin and collective through relayed messages -- efforts to jam them falling through cracks of neighbourhood contagion. Jamming internet, blog, twitter, Facebook and social network medium is theoretically feasible, mobile texting is particularly the softest target. But you need a very large landmass like China to be avoiding any powerful receptacle in an adjacent country for messages to sneak in and out. Besides, there are the satellite viewings. That way, countries can no longer hide things, neither from their own people nor those overseas. That is an impregnable bonding factor, a huge political capital in the hands of peoples.

Some samples of misrule and tyranny. The "sovereign wealth funds" of countries under the stranglehold of self-serving leaders who thrived on dynastic lineage or

usurped power or defrauded election wins are under the microscope. Some these found their way into personal and family investments overseas. Then, of course, there are the stashed away funds of the grantees.

An Arab on the topside of the hierarchy built a \$600 million Marbella Island villa in Spain only to stay for 8-9 days in a year with his panoply of paraphernalia. He would have flown in aboard 7 jumbo jets, full with victuals and what have you! The examples can be multiplied -- thanks to compunction free splurge of most ruling families.

By a stark contrast, unemployment deepening and food prices throughout the world rising, the peoples are in no mood to countenance the plundering of their own resources by incompetent and scheming rulers.

But how pampered they were? Once Gaddafi's son was arrested in Paris for a criminal offence, but his release quickly followed. The Libyan ruler had only threatened to withdraw all Libyan investments in France. Again, it was British Prime Minister Tony Blair who had a hand in softening the pariah status of Gaddafi.

All those in revolt may not have a readymade agenda or even a vision for any orderly change, or replacement of the old system in any copy-book fashion. All they are rebelling against are total lack of voice in governance, discriminatory treatment by the state, marginalisation in the economy with all peaceable routes for self-development or change in the political life of the country slammed shut. Their most pronounced and yet unspoken longing is for equitable distribution of wealth in the face of a runaway rich-poor gap, the most articulate middle class youth with a bit of world view leading the protests.



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The conventional set of geopolitical perceptions may have turned upside down. It's not the swan song of US hegemony, rather a change of course to display soft-power to remain a global player by lunging closer to the peoples. They are only acting to a shift in the frame of references. They need not prop up undemocratic governments with military aid and ammunition which the latter use against their own people earning discredit for the West. They after all have strategic

military presence on land and at sea. The expense accounts make a compelling reading. The US to date has spent on Afghanistan and Iraq wars and involvements to the tune of \$20 trillion. Even with an abatement strategy, she spends \$300 million per day. The UK's expenditure in Afghanistan shows £1.490 million in 2007-08, £2.623 million in 2008-09 and £4.200 million in 2009-10. On Iraq, the UK figures were £1584.3 million in 2007-08 and

£1470.55 million in 2008-09. The US and British tax-payers would have it no more demurring at the hemorrhage, both in monetary and human terms. The UK is cutting back on defence expenditure but the hawks are cynical. One of them fumed over buying just one nuclear frigate, and not three as planned. Taking a swipe at the UK-France treaty on joint use of frigates, he says: "How could we have made such a deal with a country whose language we do not even

understand"? President Obama is under pressure to slash down allocations to implement his historic health policy with Nancy Pelosi, the Democratic minority leader in the US House of Representatives demanding reduction in environmental allocations. This is indicative of crunch time in the USA, apart from running up debts with China.

A flashback to comprehend a proverbial Afghan quip: "Americans have watches, we have got time." Right from 330 BC when Alexander the Great's twice-attempted invasion of Afghanistan floundered through attacks of Arab armies, Chinghis Khan's Mongol army to three Anglo-Afghan wars, Soviet invasion and the US-led invasion, the warlords of Afghanistan seem perennially invincible. Taking advantage of the difficult terrain that warded off foreign occupation, the Taliban keeps surfacing under different guises even across the border into Pakistan.

The Islamic extremism's manifestly lethal violence against innocent civilians is no winner with even hardcore religious devotees. Their two remaining sticking points are: hatred towards "kufi" presence of foreign troops in Muslim countries and the Palestine issue; to a lesser extent perhaps, Kashmir. Hopefully, a rethink has got underway in the Western world: neutralise the two ammos through severe cutbacks on defence presence and an early resolution of Israel-Palestine question to the satisfaction of both parties so that the ultra extremist elements are effectively isolated. Perhaps easier said, than done. Yet, a modest step may have been taken through an apparent emphasis on self-management left to the embattled peoples of the Muslim world.

The writer is Associate Editor, The Daily Star.

## Remembering Peelkhana martyrs One more year

M. EMAMUL HAQUE  
Dear Colonel Mojib,

**F**AMILY and friends have gathered today to honour your memories, your courage and your selfless service to your country. As we think about all the joy that you brought into our lives, we are always able to smile and laugh through the tears and the pain. One thing we all know is that you are somewhere safe and at peace with your beloved colleagues who embraced martyrdom for the motherland on February 25 and 26, 2009. We indeed feel proud about the sacrifice and courage of all your comrades, 57 bright army officers, one jawan and a BDR official, but sadly you all had to prove your worth to the nation with your supreme sacrifice. The nation will always miss you, and at the same time this will haunt us forever.

We are proud of you for the way you all upheld your morals. I hope your morals will reverberate in the hearts of our youth.

Dear Col. Mojib (my dear Dada), though I have never told you, perhaps you know that I always take pride in introducing myself to others as your younger brother. You were a great role model to me and still are. You had such a strong personality, and always led by example everywhere you went. I often hear good things about you from people who do not know that we are brothers. You were a man of quality with the characteristics of a Good Soldier.

Amma used to share traditional wisdom with us, which says that the back plough always follows the front plough. I hope this will be true in our life. We, your surviving three siblings, are trying to follow you and hold the patriotism in our hearts. It's not only us; your colleagues also know how you gave your heart to being a soldier for this country. Many of our relatives say you had set an example for your siblings and I feel that



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you are still doing the same. Dear Dada, you had a way of doing things that would brighten up anyone's day. I often try to imitate your voice and call myself especially when I am alone just to get some energy from your voice. Do you know that your photo which I have at the entrance of my house gives me immense strength to look forward and face all difficulties and challenges of life? This is the photo of your last command, raising your sword up to the sky to tell us all how much love you had for your country.

Your colleagues say that you were a great soldier and a commander. You won the hearts and minds of your superiors, colleagues and those under your command. The photo album discovered in your burnt down house after your painful death, which contains remarks by your UN mission colleagues from different countries, sheds a beautiful light on your character and personality as well as the quality of your leadership.

Major Hamdi Jafar of Jordan, who served under your command writes about you "...not just a man of arms but

also a man of tolerance, understanding heart, intellect and one who can pick up officers from all sorts of emotional ditches, one who makes big problems look so small and easy to solve, change the atmosphere of isolation into one family and home... a brother figure as well as an achieving commander."

James T. Armstrong of the Royal Air Force of UK says: "It has been my pleasure to work with Col. Mojib in the pursuit of peace in Georgia/Abkhazia. He has created a 'Paradise' under his leadership in Gali. He has helped foster good relationships between the military observers from many different nations and diverse cultures and moulded them into a strong team that is loyal to Gali sector and the United Nation's Observer Mission in Georgia."

You were such a gem of a person among your friends -- they wrote in your memory: "Mojib had an extraordinary character, who knew the song in friends' hearts and sang that to them when their memory failed. Mojib was a true friend, who always assisted us readily, took everything patiently, defended heroically, and continued friendship

unchangeably." I had no idea that you had met so many people and touched so many hearts. You will always be remembered by everyone who had the pleasure of being around you. I have not forgotten how you felt about our youth; you had immense faith in the young generation of this country. You had a strong feeling that the young could do miracles for this country. We have a specific plan to work with the youth and will soon launch a scheme to encourage them to uphold the patriotism.

I am sure you will be happy to know that our leading painters of the country banded together last Friday for paying tribute to all of you who embraced martyrdom for the country. All their art work will be on display for 7 days at the Dhaka Art Center from today (February 25). Our artists felt shame as human beings watching the brutality unleashed by the murderers when they mutilated the martyred bodies. They have expressed their deep respect for all of you.

Just know your families are proud; the nation is proud; just know the army is proud.

I know our government will respect the demand of the people and announce the day (February 25) as "Shaheed Sena Dibosh." The general mass joins all your friends and colleagues to demand for a monument, acknowledging all of your supreme sacrifice. I hope the monument will be built in a suitable public place, and will energise our youth and inspire patriotism. We have so much to learn from you all, our martyred brothers.

Dear Dada, you will be missed along with all your martyred comrades, but you will never be forgotten. We will do all that is possible for us through the "Colonel Mojib Trust," the foundation that we have set up in your name, which will keep strengthening us.

We are proud of you our martyred brothers.

NEHREEN MOJIB

**T**WELVE months, three sixty five days, eight thousand seven hundred and fifty hours we (Shaheed families) have passed without our loved ones. We all are living like a house without a roof. We are living our lives without the big oak tree that used to give shade to the other trees; whom other trees could lean on for love, support and strength.

But one fine morning that oak tree was cut-off from its roots, yet we all are living a life without that shade and support, with emptiness in our hearts.

Who says that "Time is the best healer"? No its not. This wound will never heal. My father taught me three important things in life -- to live with dignity, have self-respect as an honest person and to have faith in the Almighty. I was lucky my loved one held the same values, which he followed throughout his life and tried hard to instill those values in his children.

Today, my loved one is no more but his good deeds will always remain to give us power and strength.

Often, I shiver at the thought that my children miss their father on "Father's Day." I can imagine how much they miss their father who used to play the most vital role in their daily life, whose presence give them huge pleasure, whose loving touch could heal their deepest wound. In the absence of our loved ones we are trying to live by getting strength from their morals.

Will we ever be able to forget those horrifying memories that we had? The question only remains and the truth is silent.

Sometimes we Shaheed families feel very lonely and cry out loud, and ask everyone to join us in our cry.

I wish I could say, let us put our individuality on the shelf and bring out our collective energy and pray in the memory of those deceased officers. In the memory of our fallen heroes let us have a monument where everyone can go and pay tribute to those divine souls. Lets observe February 25 as "Shaheed Sena Debosh."