



SIFAT UDDIN

SRI Lanka, the pearl of Indian Ocean and Bangladesh has a warm relationship and this has been consistent since the bloody birth of Bangladesh in 1971. But this relationship couldn't reach its zenith because of consistent ignorance from intellectuals to popular leaders and mass media over the years. In Bangladesh public perceptions are too much influenced by the concept of 'great power' or 'super power'. If Rajapaksa were the premier of any great or super power he could attract huge media coverage. There could have been a buzz for days before his arrival. In Bangladesh a popular mindset works when it comes to India, Pakistan, China or USA. The media jump upon Ministry of Foreign Affairs and intellectuals start to talk in many seminars-forums about upcoming heads of government of the above mentioned countries. This zeal doesn't work for other states like Sri Lanka. What I say is that all these are common popular blun-

der. When it comes to bilateral relations, it comes with an option to achieve whosoever is in the other side. Eventually we forget that in the negotiation table with great or super power on the other side is not always necessarily helping us to gain; rather we sacrifice our interest. On the contrary, when there is an opposition with equal status then we have greater chance to gain. That's why states like Sri Lanka should get no less attention from our leaders and media.

Bangladesh and Sri Lanka did business of \$46 millions in the fiscal year of 2009-10. But its potential deserves more than twice or thrice. Still there is yet to be direct air and sea links between these two countries. The state level talk for direct air link was held in 2008 but yet to find the light of reality. On the export-import side both sides can increase their quantity of international business. Bangladesh can export pharmaceuticals, vegetable to Sri Lanka. During Rajapaksa's visit both sides agreed also to diversify

the basket of tradable goods and looked for innovative ways to add fresh impetus to trade and commercial relations. This is a good sign. Bangladesh can seek invest-

Bangladesh needs to know how it can come forth for Srilanka. Bangladesh can increase its import volume to reduce dependence upon other neighboring

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ment in sectors like textile, knit-wear, linen, leather, pharmaceuticals, agro based industries, IT, education and hospitality, etc. Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina also pointed those out to her Sri Lankan counterpart. But you can't always seek benefit without giving something in return.

countries.

In the last joint statement both sides emphasized on terrorism along with other security issues. Both sides vowed steadfast support in combating separatist terrorism in Sri Lanka and in this context, for extending support to Sri Lanka at international forums, including the

UN. Bangladesh sought Sri Lanka's support for Bangladesh's candidature for the non-permanent membership to the UNSC for the period of 2016-17. Sri Lanka also assured its support.

How Sri Lanka looks at Bangladesh? There is a common trait present between these two countries. This trait is-'concern over India'. Both these countries have to live under Indian influence. During the recent visit Rajapaksa sought 'strong political relations' with Bangladesh. This political statement is enough to indicate what Srilanka thinks about Bangladesh and its political motivation to offset Indian influence.

There is another similarity between these two SAARC countries which relates to relationship with China. Bangladesh and Srilanka both have excellent relations with China. For Sri Lanka the victory against Tamil rebels was actually propelled by China's help, military and otherwise. For Bangladesh, China is one of the

largest importers of its goods. China is supposed to build up two deep sea ports--one in Chittagong, Bangladesh and another in Hambantota, Srilanka along with another in Kyaukphyu, Myanmar. China is trying to offset India in the Indian Ocean.

It can be said that Sri Lanka has been a friendly state for Bangladesh without any ups and downs for a longtime. Bangladesh needs to utilize this friendly environment more effectively. Bangladeshi researchers on international relations should come up with new areas of potentialities where the two countries can cooperate for their mutual interest. This will help to strengthen Bangladesh's position in regional and international forums. That's why we should rethink our relationship with Sri Lanka and thus should come out from existing traditional concepts of 'small state' or 'small power'.

The writer is a member of fairbd.net group and a Masters in International Relations, University of Dhaka, Bangladesh.



SOMASUNM

The mythos of Obama and Osama

LARBI SADIKI

OBAMA and Osama. Two names that will henceforth be coupled. The hunter, Obama, is leader of the most powerful and feared nation on earth. Osama, the hunted, was leader of a borderless state -- a non-state actor -- and probably the most feared religio-political association of the modern world since the rise of the Ismaili Hashashin assassins between the 11th and 13th centuries. Obama and Osama may rhyme, but that is not their only correlation.

The Pygmalion syndrome

A Pygmalion resides in both of them. They are, to an extent, sculptors. In turn, these two sculptors, Obama and Osama, are examples of how extraordinary men -- when struck by the power of ideas, ideals and dreams, regardless of the cause -- go on about sculpting their Galateas -- their statues, dummies or puppets.

Each is in love with a statuesque vision, a set of ideals or dreams that they have sought to breathe life into. Otherwise, how can one explain why a man who could have nymphs, Bentleys, yachts, and everything money can buy opts for the "illusionary" -- to paraphrase Marx -- rewards of the hereafter?

Obama could have opted for Al-Walid bin Talal's lifestyle. This is where he puzzles. It has to be the power of faith. Not unlike Osama in complexion and "otherness", Obama dazzles. A hyphenated US citizen par excellence rises to occupy the White House.

Neither his colour nor his paternal roots, nor possibly the suppressed Islamic identity, have stopped him from mastering the art of political sculpture of self and public.

Obama and Osama as icons

They are, however, iconic for different reasons. Both, inevitably, are constructed in a variety of discourses. What is constructed is also deconstructed according to one's bias.

Indeed, the two men belong to two diametrically opposed worlds and world outlooks. But both are social constructs, and their iconic status conjures up a spectrum of human feelings, ranging from love to hatred, admiration to suspicion.

Only very recently, Obama had to defend his "American-ness" to doubters, and very recently his birth in response to Donald Trump.

When "Holy War" was championed in Reagan's war-by-proxy against the former Soviets in the killing fields of Afghanistan, Osama was proudly embraced as a Saudi hero.

Post 9/11, he was disowned, and his Yemeni lineage marked a new discourse aimed at re-inventing, or re-writing, bin Laden's identity.

Both men sought to breathe life into their respective Galateas. For Obama, his core principles are a mix of left and right, centrism and progressivism,

laced with liberalism.

Osama's Galatea is a sculpture whose ivory is an eschatology and exegesis plated with a Salafi-Wahhabi interpretation of Islam.

Archaeology of power

Whether Pygmalion or Narcissus, Obama and Osama share a realist's vision of how power is wielded. As a result, Obama's state and Osama's base (literally, "Qaeda")-less state shamelessly deploy violence. Both are thus in love with a Galatea that is caught in an unstoppable archaeology of death and war-making.

Regardless of victimhood or guilt, both are victims of the ideals and ideas they are in love with, and in their pursuit -- a Godly transcendence or the deity of modernism and capitalism -- they construct myths, guards, weaponry, and languages to match. These are the ornaments of power with which they adorn their Galateas.

True, Osama is guilty of mass murder. The 3,000 lives killed heinously,

God, liberalism, democracy) -- a brand of "love" -- in the name of civility.

Countries had to be invaded (under Bush) and maintained by Obama, an incarceration system had to be invented (Guantanamo Bay), also still continuous under Obama -- and a senseless war against "terror", authored by the neo-cons and sustained, in the name of a similar idea of love for country, and its sanctity.

Contemplate, not celebrate

Many Muslims did celebrate when Osama inflicted pain on the US. That was wrong. Many more did not. Today there is a reversal of roles: Americans celebrating as the news of Osama's killing was made public.

The killing of Osama was a secret the Obama administration did well to hide from the world till after Will and Kate's wedding in Britain.

US citizens are free to celebrate as much as they like. But they are also presented with a chance to contem-

love -- but rarely reflect upon.

Celebration of fallen enemies -- without self-reflection -- may be no more worthy than celebrating a victory at a football match.

Osama no more -- Islam is not Osama

Arab revolutions erupted and triumphed in Tunisia and Egypt, partly burying Osama's Galatea. To an extent, they demonstrated in a vivid way that the "abode of Islam" is not blood-thirsty but freedom-thirsty.

But now Osama lays a soulless body, a trophy, already being paraded as a symbol of a hollow victory. Another body amid the countless fatalities in a senseless hubris and duel in which there are no innocents.

Osama's death should -- and one prays, will -- give Arabs and Muslims a reprieve from chaos and violence, and a moment to take stock that Osama's journeys delivered them against the Soviets but shackled them to systems of language, incarceration, profiling, and violence neither they nor the US and its allies can ever win.

In his stead there are new voices and forces of Islam which are pushing the boundaries of freedom to their most logical conclusion: an Islam in love with new conceptions of Galatea -- of toleration, good government, humane treatment of fellow citizens, transparent governance, fair and free competition, gender-friendly politics, and fair slicing of the economic cake. To show that Muslims are in love with a beautiful Islam.

In his stead rises Essam El-Iryan, Abd Elmounim Abou El-Futuh, and Mohammed Mursi among others, suggesting new possibilities for the linkage of Islam and the vision of politics from a Muslim perspective.

Not an end but a new beginning

For now, one chapter has been read in the book of US-Arab relations. In this chapter, Obama killed Osama.

For Osama, as is written in the holy Quran: "Say: The Angel of Death put in charge of you, will (duly) take your souls: Then shall ye be brought back to your Lord." There awaits his judgment.

For Obama, he killed Osama -- legally or not is not the point.

The point is that this moment will form a meaningful moment only if the ghosts of hatred, hubris, and violence are laid to rest -- with Osama -- and the endless witch-hunt for the timeless terrorist Muslim or Osamas re-incarnate is reflected on for the sake of permanent reconciliation and collective healing -- and a collective Galatea is sculpted of new futures, new understanding, and new possibilities...

The writer is a senior lecturer in Middle East Politics at the University of Exeter, and author of Arab Democratisation: Elections without Democracy (Oxford University Press, 2009) and The Search for Arab Democracy: Discourses and Counter-Discourses (Columbia University Press, 2004). Source: Aljazeera.

How US spies found bin Laden's hideout



It took months of painstaking intelligence analysis to find Osama bin Laden in Pakistan -- but only three words "It's a go" uttered by President Barack Obama to launch the strike that would kill him. Obama told his national security advisor Tom Donilon and several other top aides on Friday morning that he would sign off on the daring plan in a moment of drama in the Diplomatic Room of the White House. The violent and sudden operation in which bin Laden died in a short, intense firefight Sunday in the Pakistani city of Abbottabad, contrasted with the months of painful piecing together of clues that finally tracked him down.

Ever since bin Laden escaped in Afghanistan's Tora Bora mountain region in 2001 after Al-Qaeda's deadly September 11 strikes, his trail had gone largely cold as he stayed hidden and avoided telephone calls that US spies could trace.

But senior officials said that they had a breakthrough last September, when they managed to link two couriers used by bin Laden to contact the outside world to a compound in the garrison city northeast of Islamabad. By last December, intelligence officials were convinced that there was a "high value target" living in the compound. But officials, from Obama on down, never had 100 percent certainty that the Al-Qaeda chief was inside the heavily fortified complex -- right up until the moment when they learned that he had been killed in the operation.

A senior official said that the clues that something was untoward the compound were amassed over months. "So we came across this compound, we paid close attention to it because it became clear that whoever was living here was trying to maintain a very discreet profile and was practicing a great deal of operational security," the official said. "We believe that Osama bin Laden and his family were living on the second and third floors of the main buildings."

Another official said that suspicions had been raised by extraordinary security measures taken at the compound -- and the fact those who lived there burned their trash, and did not put it out for collection. Also, "they had a million dollar home with no discernible income." It was not clear what role the Pakistani intelligence services were playing in the operation -- but given the closely held knowledge in Washington of the looming attack, any role at all by this stage seems unlikely. By March, Obama was sufficiently confident about the intelligence on the compound that he ordered the military to develop plans to attack it.

"We know there is a compound, we know some of the individuals there, we know they are associated with bin Laden, they live under extremely unique circumstances," the official said. "If you build the case, it clearly leads to the fact that there is somebody who is a high value terrorist there, and bin Laden is the only person that fits the profile of who that high value terrorist would be"...

Source: defencetalk.com



Osama bin Laden's death will forever be linked with Obama's name.

and his mis-reading of Islam confound Shia and Sunni.

Those Muslims who celebrated bin Laden's acts of mass murder are guilty by association. The doctors of Islam should have declared the age of war between Islam and the abode of non-Islam as null and without foundation in the Quran, or in many an exegesis in diverse schools of Islamic thought.

Osama's Galatea was sculpted, conveniently, out of a love with the ideal of "defence" of the "Umma", the global Islamic community.

To that end, he sculpted not an object of love, but maybe a counter-barbarity pitted against the barbarity that he thinks the capitalists, the secularists and their clients heaped on his "Umma", as if he were the "commander of the faithful".

Obama, ex-officio commander-in-chief, another type of faith, may be not as guilty as his predecessor in the grotesque violations of human rights in Iraq and Afghanistan, but sculpted his own barbarity out of the rallying myths (for country, sovereignty, compatriots,

plate. American lives -- regardless of numbers -- must be placed in terms of value and worth on equal footing with those of all humans regardless of colour, ethnicity, nationality, or creed.

When their elected governments support dictators -- Mubarak, Ben Ali, Abdallah Al-Saleh, even Gaddafi -- arm them, shield them with undeserved legitimacy and funding, they must contemplate the consequences of the governments they democratically place in the White House.

Of those consequences, the torture regimes, deaths, exiles, exclusion, and war by proxy -- in Gaza and Lebanon -- the invasion of Iraq and attendant regimes of secrecy, rendition flights, incarceration -- in which Americans are guilty directly or by association in the killing of non-American lives.

Their celebration will be more meaningful only if they heed the evil of indifference or ignorance of their successive elected administrations, with varying degrees and under different circumstances, of the acts committed in their name for myths that they cherish and