

LEBANON'S 'GARBAGE MOVEMENT'

Implications for Bangladesh

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OVER the past several weeks, the world witnessed the #YouStink anti-government protest in Lebanon...

This 'garbage movement' is a new instance to the world and in fact is a wake-up call to the world leaders that 'garbage' can also be a factor for a mass scale movement against the government.

Though it is argued that such protest arose due to the ineffectiveness of the government over garbage management, it can be argued that such a movement is a manifestation of the people's frustrations against the government over a number of issues including rampant corruption in the country, cronyism, sectarian politics and 'gang' tribal mentality.



Lebanese protesters wear Guy Fawkes masks to voice their grievances against the government at a You Stink rally.

PHOTO: AFP

class in Lebanon".

Lebanon is a country which is severely divided by sect and class. After a 15-year long civil war ended in 1990, power and resources of the country were "essentially divided up among the former combatants in a system of sectarian political patronage."

People of a country usually protest so that their grievances are heard by the state. Socio-economic development has hardly been

noticed over several decades in Lebanon, leading people to feel angry. For instance, no new power plant has been built in Lebanon for decades. Moreover, despite having rich water resources, many families use salty well water to make up the shortfall, or buy water to fill tanks or purchase bottled drinking water for their daily use due to the absence of proper water management and utilisation.

The garbage movement might have some

internal as well as external implications for Bangladesh. From the recent protests in Lebanon, the Bangladesh government could learn that if the grievances of people are not addressed effectively, it could inevitably result in a people's uprising.

Now people are more well-aware about their rights than earlier. Our political class needs to keep in mind this.

Like Lebanon, can an issue like garbage management propel such a movement in Bangladesh? Along with the garbage and odour pollution, air, water, and food poisoning in Dhaka and other cities of the country has become very commonplace.

In addition, the growing level of corruption in every sector of the country, the increased level of unemployment rates and the severe traffic jam problem needs to be quickly and efficiently addressed as these are causes of grievances for the country's population.

Externally, Bangladesh needs to take good care of Bangladeshi expatriates in Lebanon. It is estimated that more than 10,000 Bangladeshi diaspora live in Lebanon.

The bottom line is that even though the socio-economic development in Bangladesh is highly appreciable, the issues mentioned above need to be addressed at the earliest for the greater interest of everyone.

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BLUNDERS IN IRAQ AND THE BIRTH OF ISIS A WAY OUT OF EXTREMISM

RUBY AMATULLA

AFTER the exhaustive de-Baathification process, disbandment of 300,000 Saddam's Sunni army, and imprisonment of many Sunni leaders, the occupying power, mainly the United States of America, flared up hatred and revenge among the Sunni group that governed Iraq since the Ottoman Empire.

Much of these could be avoided if some visionary steps were taken, such as setting up a power-sharing arrangement among the three ethnic groups: Shia [60 percent], Sunni [18 percent] and Kurds [21 percent].

These steps, difficult in other times, could have been done relatively easily in the primordial period when there was a total power vacuum - except the occupying power [mainly America] - after Saddam Hussain was executed, and the Iraqi political factors and forces were just beginning to take shape.

Extremism does not rise where good governance and stability prevail. Al-Qaeda, Taliban in Afghanistan, Boko Haram in Nigeria, Al-Shabab in Somalia and ISIS in Iraq and Syria all originated in utter chaos, turmoil, repression and subjugation of certain groups, and due to poor or lack of governance.

In Iraq, under pressures from Shia and Kurdish groups and Grand Ayatollah Ali al-Sistani, who - in order to attain the Shia dominance - played on America's democratic ideology, America was compelled to announce a premature election in 2005. America complied and the American neo-conservatives, who wanted to influence Iraq through Shia rule, were happy. Consequently, the

constituent assembly that the election produced consisted of 60 percent of Shias; however, the constitutional body framed was not acceptable by the Sunnis. Realising early on that this was a game they would invariably be made to lose, Sunnis boycotted the election and went on the offensive.

Therefore, a step in the right direction could entail proper rehabilitation and integration of the Sunnis into the society. Similar integrating processes were undertaken for the Nazis and Japanese after World War II and later for South African whites.

The Muslim world, along with others, have been paying a high price for Western follies from a long time. The long reign and exploitation of colonial powers, the Treaty of Versailles of 1919 and the post World War II period resulted in a conflict-ridden Middle East. Puppet governments and consequent repressions during the Cold War, the propagation of neo-imperialism and later globalisation by the West have also caused immeasurable injustice and trouble for this region.

No matter how wrong and oppressive a group was in the past, a substantial part of that can always be reclaimed and reintegrated into the society through a visionary process. In doing so, a win-win state of affairs ensues and the society becomes victorious.

One does not need reconciliation where there are no serious disagreements or a difficult past. Nelson Mandela

realised that after seeing the consequences of Zimbabwe's failure to integrate. Right after he got out of prison in 1994, he created the Truth and Reconciliation Commission through which he punished only a handful of perpetrators but the rest were integrated into the society.

completely incorporate a power-sharing system. Tunisia, on the contrary, is becoming a success story of our time by marginalising the lurking extremism through inclusive politics and power-sharing via proportional representation.

As for Iraq, America, in collaboration with the international community, can still exert enough pressure to help bring about inclusive politics and power-sharing arrange-

ments.

Other preset formula as was done in Lebanon in the past. Striking a delicate balance between the national and provincial governments is also imperative. The army should consist of all three groups with specific quotas assigned to each group to ensure inclusiveness.

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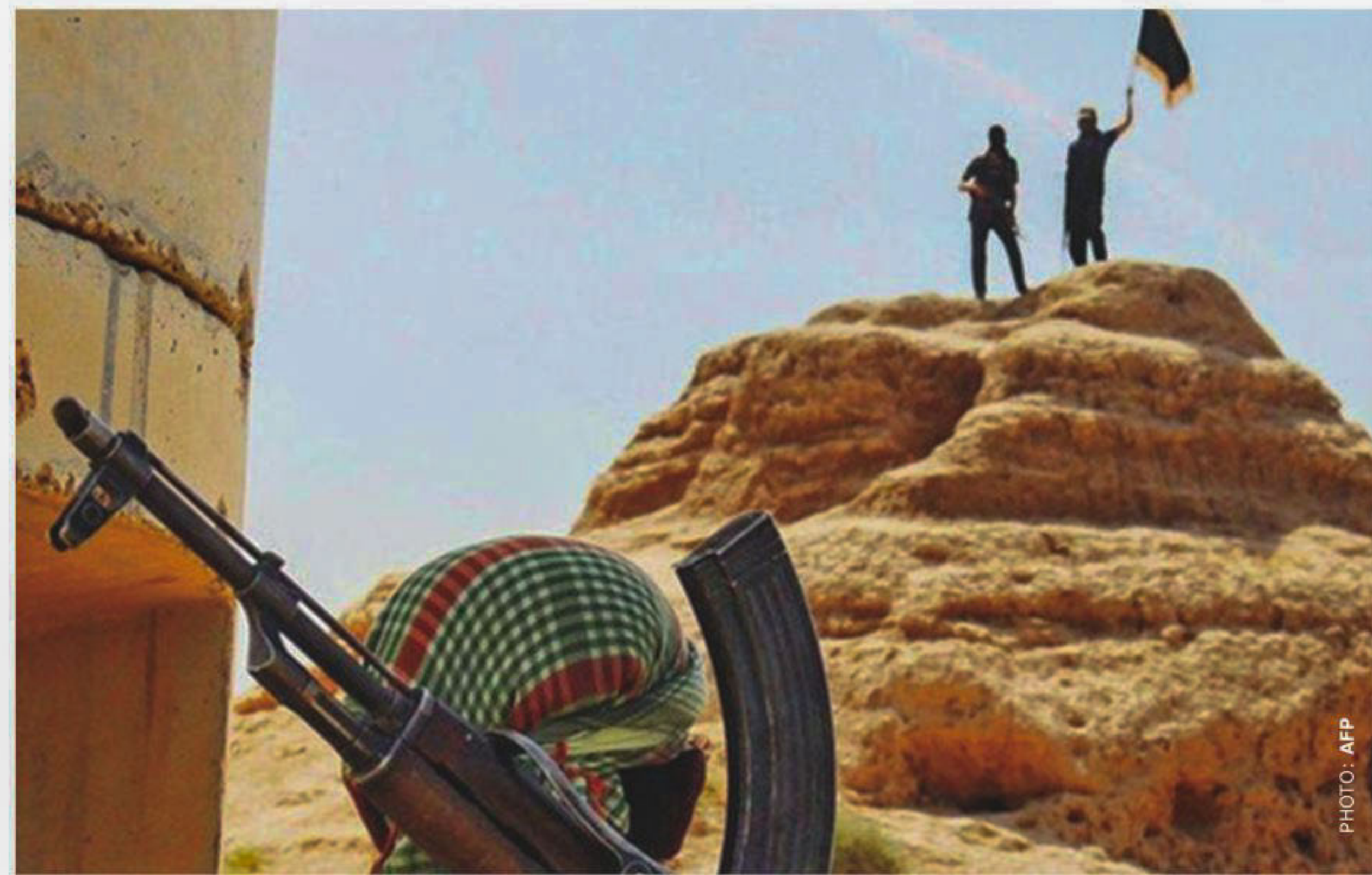


PHOTO: AFP

QUOTABLE Quote: How can you govern a country which has 246 varieties of cheese? Charles de Gaulle (1890-1970)

CROSSWORD BY THOMAS JOSEPH. ACROSS: 1 Counterfeit, 5 Andorra neighbor, 10 Pub orders, 11 Position, 12 Exploits, 13 Stuck, in a way, 14 Big nothing, 16 Creamer variety, 20 Draw out, 23 Tall tale, 24 Cut into cubes, 25 Party dip, 27 Punk rock offshoot, 28 Neatnik's no-nos, 29 Like some pans, 32 Harmless, as paint, 36 La Scala city, 39 Designer Wang, 40 Conjures up, 41 Adam's grandson, 42 Sorts, 43 Crazy talk. DOWN: 1 Satty's kin, 2 Not to mention, 3 Enthusiastic, 4 Cist, 5 Flea market unit, 6 Elbows on the table, 7 Kitchen pest, 8 Daquiri need, 9 Homer's neighbor, 11 Used up, 15 Nullified, 17 Woes, 18 Increase, 19 Some votes, 20 Serpent's spot, 21 Prom transport, 22 Clickable picture, 25 Splinter group, 26 Invite to one's place, 28 King of Crete, 30 Asp or adder, 31 Musical sounds, 33 TV's warrior princess, 34 Pressing need, 35 Play group, 36 Got together, 37 Vining plant, 38 Cut off.

BEETLE BAILEY by Mort Walker. BABY BLUES by Kirkman & Scott. Yesterday's answer crossword grid.

BEETLE BAILEY by Mort Walker. BABY BLUES by Kirkman & Scott. Comics panels showing characters in a bar and at a beach.