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COMMENT

UNPALATABLE TRUTH

THE recent spate of revelations, from the antics of President Reagan's National Security Council to the machinations of Britain's MI5, have once again raised the question of credibility of 'free,' and 'representative,' governments. It is clear for all and sundry that what is said and what is actually carried out are poles apart. Hypocrisy, it would appear, has become the norm for these political leaders. What is worse is that often the media is harnessed to doctor the facts and make the falsehood and immorality respectable.

The case of the seven-year old Iraqi aggression of Iran provides a good example. Last month the German Foreign Minister, Hans Deitrich Genscher, in a conversation with Dr Ali Akber Vilayati, his Iranian counterpart, agreed that Iraq was indeed the aggressor. This is a known and oft-repeated fact, but it has not been officially acknowledged by the international community since most of it is engaged in aiding Iraq in its aggression. Mr Genscher's remarks came at a very awkward time. President Reagan and Premier Thatcher were engaged in a frantic effort to brand Iran as the culprit and get the United Nations to outlaw it. The Iraqi attack on the US warship *Stark* was also blamed on Iran, and the US was about to formally enter the war on Iraq's side via the reflagging of Kuwaiti tankers. Mr Genscher's remarks carried the clear implication that aggression was not only being condoned but actively encouraged. Overnight he became a very unpopular man in the capitals of the 'free,' and 'justice-loving,' world!

Even at the United Nations, the weight of US bullying has meant that the international body has been unable to state the obvious. In resolutions after resolutions calling for an end to the Gulf war it has failed to point a finger at the aggressor or hint at any formula to make the aggressor pay for violating another member country's rights. Even a clear and unequivocal condemnation of Iraq's frequent use of chemical weapons has not been forthcoming. The credibility of the organisation is in tatters.

Additionally, if one looks at the international community's record on Israeli aggression and acquisition of territory by force, one cannot escape concluding that in the present scheme of things right is subject to might. US veto has been often employed in the Security Council to emphasise this very point. Moreover, the message from the centres of the 'mighty', vide the acrobatics of Oliver North et al, is that their might has turned into an evil genius and run amok.

This is clearly the end of the line for an order based on injustice and inequity. It remains to be seen what price the international community has to pay for falling prey to it before mustering the strength to confront it.

M Iqbal Asaria