

TALKING POINT

ON PRESIDENT'S ADDRESS TO THE PARLIMENT

Press Release

27 October 2008

PROF. KHURSHID AHMAD



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Prof. khurshid Ahmad

Islamabad (October 27, 2008) : Senator Prof. Khurshid Ahmad, , Naib Aamir Jamaat-e- Islami and leader of the Independent Group of the Opposition in the Senate of Pakistan, while discussing the President's address to the Parliament has raised the following points in his speech in the Senate:

1. He welcomed that the President has addressed the joint session within two weeks of his election in contra distinction to General (Retd) Pervez Musharraf who did not fulfilled his constitutional obligation for four years.
2. He, however, expressed his disappointment that the address is full of platitudes and party propaganda and has fallen much short of what is expected of the Presidential address that is outlining the Government's legislative and other programmes for the next years.
3. The Government has failed, to fulfill the following promises that were made immediately after assumption of power in March 08 through 20 September 08 upto today:
 - a) Restoration of Judiciary.
 - b) Declaration about the illegality of the 3rd November action and all that was done under that.
 - c) Restoration of the 11973 Constitution as it was on 12 Oct 99 and the abrogation of changes brought about under 17th Amendments. The proposed Parliamentary Committee too has not been established until now instead of Mr. Zardari is trying to keep and use the authority arrogated by Retd Gen Musharraf through Constitutional devises.
 - d) In spite of President acting on the advice of the Prime Minister he claims in his address "I can steer the country out of the darkness with a help of this Government".
 - e) Freedom of Information Act.
 - f) Restoration of students unions, trade unions through due process of law.
 - g) Establishment of a proposed concuss on Kashmir.

- h) Fulfilling of other promises made in the Charter of Democracy which was also part of the manifesto of the PPP.
 - i) Despite seven months the present Government has failed to fulfill the above commitments and Mr. Zardari's address does not give any time table for the implementation of the commitments.
 - j) The address is extremely disappointing in respect of the disastrous military operation in FATA, Bajaur, Swat and Balochistan. Simple apology to the people of Balochistan is of no use. Actions are more important than words and the fact is that these bloody operations continue unabated as are violation of Pakistan sovereignty by the US and NATO forces. Nothing has been done to change the situation.
 - k) It is sad that Mr. Asif Zardari and Mr. Gilani are following the policies of General (Retd) Pervez Musharraf and have failed to bring any change as was expected as a result of 18th February elections.
4. The law and order situation, the energy and food crisis, and now the serious financial crisis are an index of the failure of the Government to come out with a cohesive policy and provide people with security of life and honor, ensure supply of essential commodities at reasonable price, national security and protection from foreign interventions and serious economic meltdown. The President's address fails to give any guidelines in respect of these serious challenges. The President's sermon that "the ideas cannot be killed by repression" is self contradictory and what his own government is doing in the name of Military operation against what they described is extremism. If there is extremism which cannot be erased by repression it is only the dialogue, education and mutual cooperation that such threats can be met.

Finally Prof. Khurshid Ahmad criticized lack of proper transparency and non-fulfillment of all promises about creation of a trustworthy system of accountability through judicious judicial system for all present and past rulers. NRO has not washed the charges and it is only through clarification via trustworthy judicial process that those responsible for past corruption and came to power can either get clarification or face the consequences on their misconduct. This is the one way justice can be achieved.

In conclusion, he said that Mr. Asif Ali Zardari has not delinked from PPP and has failed to emerge as head of the Federation as against head of a political party. This is a serious failure and there is high time to rectify this in these circumstances.
