

THINK OF YOUR HOMELAND

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By

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The regrettable events of Sept. 11 provided an excuse to American president George Bush to perpetrate terrorism not in Afghanistan only but through the length and breadth of the entire world, and do so in the name of 'war against terrorism'. The untenable, absurd and cruel charges on the basis of which this all is being done have encouraged Israel and its blood-thirsty prime minister Ariel Sharon to play havoc with the life and property of Palestinians in Gaza, West Bank and other parts of the occupied territory. Also, on the basis of these very assumptions Indian leadership has created an atmosphere of war jingoism to thrust a war on Pakistan. General Pervez Musharraf, who has been duped by warnings of George Bush, is swallowing humiliations one after another, after having committed the original sin. The same Western leaders and journalists who called him murderer of democracy, military dictator, and declared him 'persona non grata' – President Clinton did not even like to be photographed or shown handshaking with him on television – are now holding him in their embrace, just to feed his egotism. They seem to be competing with each other in portraying him as a bold, discerning, far-sighted and moderate fellow, just to continue extracting new concessions from him with every passing day in return of this flattery and brainy bribery.

After destroying Afghanistan, getting foot-hold for its military, and establishing a government of its liking in the country, America's new targets are the resistance movement in Kashmir and those movements of Pakistan and the Muslim world that envision establishment of Islam as a complete code and way of life. These movements offer formidable resistance against Western colonialism and hegemony. The Jihad that once symbolized the struggle for freedom and war against Communism is now waged against the new colonialism. Quite understandably, therefore, the colonialists are declaring it a synonym of terrorism. The same Mujahideen whom President Ronald Reagan welcomed in the White House in 1985, on whose faces he saw an angelic glow, and over whose heads he searched the shade of the leadership of America's war of liberation, including George Washington, now have been declared as the most hateful, condemned people, liable to death!

America started with Afghanistan and al-Qaeda, but freedom movements and forces engaged in struggle against foreign occupation throughout the world are at its target – be it in Palestine or in Kashmir, in Chechnya or in Kosovo, or Moros in the Philippines. In addition to applying military power and blackmail to quell these forces, the rulers of these countries, too, are being employed to put restrictions on religious education institutions (madaris), to control the institution of mosque and pulpit, and thus stamp the spirit of Jihad. The Western colonialism has always targeted Jihad and raised such people from amongst the Muslims and encouraged such thinking

that castigated Jihad and considered it out-lived or dangerous for the new world. From the educated, liberal and modernists to the ones in religious guise, in robes and cloak, all tried to proscribe Jihad and banish its spirit from Muslim public but they had to bite dust and what Allah had ordained remained unaffected. The same drama is again being staged as ground-leveling for the new colonialism.

### Musharraf's Address of 12<sup>th</sup> January

This is the background to General Musharraf's address of 12<sup>th</sup> January. This was an address that was being talked about throughout the world even before being delivered, the announcement of its main points was being made not only from Islamabad but also from Washington, and not only by the General but also by the members of the American Congress.

By banning Lashkar-e-Taiba and Jaish-e-Muhammad, the government had already told which way the wind blew and which measures it wanted to take. There were news of ban on Tehrik-e-Jafaria and Sipah-e-Sahaba and the two organizations had also been warned in advance. For quite long, Western forces had been running negative campaign against religious education institutions and the role of mosque. Under their shadow, Pakistan secular and liberal lobby and the English Press were promoting the agenda of Western forces by publishing features on education and training of these institutions and its link with militancy. General Musharraf had himself exposed his real plan when soon after assuming power he had declared Atta-Turk as his ideal. But, he had to retreat in the face of prompt and strong public reaction. Now once again, considering the circumstances much favorable, and with the backing of Western nations, he is reverting to his real agenda by adopting the course of division between religion and politics with muted words and illusory assertions. His avowals about keeping religion and politics separate, registration of mosques and madaris, and restriction of obtaining approval for building a mosque or madrassah are the first step in this direction.

Insofar as sectarian intolerance and clashes are concerned, all dislike this. But, ethnic prejudices and parochialism, too, have inflicted the country and the clashes that took place in their wake were by far more gruesome, large-scale and more devastating for the country. The irony is that those who fan such prejudices and negative feelings are allies of the present government, for the simple reason that they, like the government of Pervez Musharraf, have the backing of Western forces. This is why they are safe (from being brought to book) and all the wrath is on religious elements. No doubt that the organizations that create anarchy in the country – sectarian, parochial or ethnic – are injurious to the unity, peace and stability, economic development and prosperity, but any analysis would reveal that majority of such organizations has had government's patronage and backing. To lay the blame for this strife and anarchy on religious elements is unjust and criminal. Moreover, even in sectarian homicide in the country, the instrumental role was not of the religious but of the saboteurs, from within and without, and of different agencies, a fact that

government functionaries including the interior minister have repeatedly admitted. This is quite another issue that all these aspects have now been ignored and the blame is laid at the door of religious elements.

General Musharraf declared Pakistan an Islamic state, vowed to keep religion and politics separate and not to allow using mosques for politics – all in one breath! He talked about Iqbal's conception of Pakistan, but forgot that Iqbal is for a complete unification of the sacred and the mundane, of religion and politics and wants to re-draw the world's map, the state and economy, on the foundations of religion. Iqbal's view is that politics-sans-religion inevitably leads to tyranny and injustice. He is for power's subordination to Deen (religion) and its use for the consolidation of a righteous government.

No follower of the Prophet (pbuh), who thinks that success can come only by following the model presented by the Prophet, can say that religion and politics are separate or mosques should be kept 'clean' of politics. The Qur'an and the Sunnah of the Prophet (pbuh) present a beautiful and convincing blending of ethical and political teachings. The Holy Prophet himself established a government, a model Islamic government, and gave to humanity a constitution and a code of law. Reflecting on this aspect of the life of the Prophet (pbuh), Iqbal says he had opened the door of the world with the key of the religion.

Religion and politics are not two separate entities. Religion teaches the way of life in the world. Religion is incomplete without politics and power, and politics is nothing but waywardness, transgression, and injustice without religion!

By announcing that approval would be required for building a mosque, General Musharraf has proved that he wants to discourage building mosques. There are restrictions on the use of loudspeaker. Such restrictions were neither accepted in the British colonial era, nor would be acceded to now. It is impossible not to use the institution of mosque for addressing issues of collective life. Though despotic and dictatorial regimes in every era have tried not to allow any dissenting voice from any quarter, and mosque and pulpit have been their particular targets, but the very objective of mosque is to educate people and teach them about collective life along with worship and prayers. The relationship between the two cannot be severed.

In his address, General Musharraf said that none of the religious parties catered for human needs of the Afghan people, and that this task was undertaken either by NGOs of some Western countries or by Abdul Sattar Edhi. By not mentioning the services of Jamaat-e-Islami and other Islamic welfare institutions, he deliberately tried to conceal the facts and mislead the nation and the world. The fact is that the services of al-Rasheed Trust, Ummah Tameer-e-Nau, Islamic Relief are laudable. If they were not ahead of the UN in this regard, they were not lagging behind, either. Also, the UN is running many of its relief programs with the help of these very Muslims because it lacks in workers and system required for such a task.

## The Concept of Ummah

The most questionable part of Musharraf's address is where he had advised Pakistanis to be detached from the issues of Muslims in other parts of the world, implying thereby that we are not the 'custodians' to set everything right. Certainly we are not so, nevertheless, we are Allah's soldiers and members of Muslim Ummah, one and single Ummah as ordained in the Qur'an: This Ummah of yours is a single Ummah.

General Musharraf's statements are tantamount to striking a blow to the ideology of Pakistan. Pakistan is an ideological state, Islam is its ideology, and Muslims of the subcontinent had carved it out on the map of the world. The Grand Jurist (Mufti-e-Azam) of Palestine in a speech in Makkah in 1972 had said that Muslims needed a center for themselves after the Ottoman Caliphate. Iqbal wanted establishment of such a country composed of the Muslim majority areas of the subcontinent that could provide a center to Muslims. Even those Muslims who knew that their areas would not be part of Pakistan played an active role in the struggle for Pakistan, just to have a center for Muslims in the world.

Quaid-e-Azam always considered the issues of the Muslim world as his own, and on the issue of Palestine, in particular, he earned the displeasure of the entire Western world but did support the oppressed Muslims of Palestine. Whether in Palestine or Chechnya, in Bosnia or Kosovo, on the issue of Khilafah or the war of liberation of Algeria, the Muslim people of Pakistan have always supported their brethren according to the teachings of Islam. By gibing about 'custodianship', attempts are made today to withdraw from the stand of Ummah's unity and support for the oppressed, which runs against both Faith and sense of dignity. It is not only a diversion from the vision of Iqbal and Jinnah, but a revolt against them. Iqbal's vision was of 'Muslim unity for warding off any dangers to the House of Allah'. What Iqbal and Jinnah, the General is talking about?

Though General Musharraf did not name, yet the American and Zionist influence is evident from his utterances. The Muslims of Pakistan have a deep attachment with Palestine. The Palestine issue is an issue of life and death for the Muslims of the whole world. To dissect Pakistan from Muslim Ummah and to wipe out the concept of Ummah is a prime wish of the Zionist lobby. By doing away with the concept of Ummah, America and Western nations want to divide Muslims along nationalist, ethnic and regional lines. This is a colonialist agenda. If you accept Iqbal as the one who gave the idea of Pakistan, then you should also accept his concept of nations and how they are made. In 'Israr-o-Rumooz', Iqbal has shed light on the development of a Muslim personality and Muslim nation, thus explaining the concept of nations in Islam. To advise Pakistan's Muslims to stand aloof from the issues of Muslims in other parts of the world is against the teachings of Qur'an and Sunnah, ideology of Pakistan and the vision of the poet-philosopher of Pakistan. By doing away with Khilafah, the Western nations made Arabs and Turks enemies of one another on nationalistic basis; and this division is the main reason of Ummah's decline. In this

background, the apprehension that the slogan of 'Pakistan First' may lead to asking Pakistani nation to recognize Israel in coming days is not entirely baseless. The pro-America secular lobby's propaganda for long has been that when no Muslim country comes to Pakistan's help in times of need, why it should create difficulties for itself for the sake of their interests.

To declare Palestine's issue as of Arabs' or of Palestinians' alone is a self-defeating folly. Al-Quds is the first Qibla of Muslims and the third Haram, for Pakistanis it is their own issue and not of others'. If other Muslim governments do not support us, the main reason for this is that the governments in Muslim countries are not independent and free in formulating their foreign policy. The real problem with Muslim Ummah is that the cliques running their governments do not represent their wishes and aspirations; they work for the interests of foreign colonial rule.

Though Pervez Musharraf concluded his address with Iqbal's couplet that means that *an individual's worth lasts as long as his association with Millat remains intact*, but we have to say that he could not understand the message of Iqbal in these lines. Iqbal's advice is clearly for unification with and merger in Ummah of Muslims!

This concept of nations is borne out by Qur'an and the teaching of the Prophet (pbuh). The Muslim nation of Pakistan would not accept any other view in this regard.

Of course we have to accord foremost importance to our country's integrity, defense and stability, it is, however, impossible for us to negate in the name of strengthening Pakistan the very concept of nations on which it was founded. Pakistan can become stronger and unified only on the basis of Islam's concept of nations, or the champions of regional and ethnic prejudices are out to tear it to pieces with the backing of their Western masters.

### The Concept of Jihad

General Musharraf created yet another confusion about the concept of Jihad. Quoting a Hadith (a tradition of the Prophet), he went on to talk about Jihad-e-Akbar and Jihad-e-Asghar (the bigger and the smaller Jihad). The learned scholars know that his interpretation is a pack of faults and against Islamic concept of Jihad. In no way it can be taken to mean that Jihad has come to an end, rather it takes into account all aspects of Jihad and casts them into one single whole. Islamic concept of Jihad is really comprehensive and unique. It is about preventing humanity from cruelty and transgression, and chaos and divisions, and risking one's life for Allah's pleasure and realization of noble ideals. Jihad is a form of worship of Allah, and an essential and immutable command of Allah's ordained law and Shariah. First of all, Jihad is about reforming the self so as to achieve purity of heart. This is necessary, so that one does not seek worldly wealth and power, but seeks Allah's pleasure, observes his ethical framework, and struggles only for those aims and objectives that Allah has declared as just and rightful.

Jihad also consists in putting one's weight on the side of truth with tongue and pen, by speaking and writing what is true and rightful, and canvassing for the establishment of justice and fair-play, and a system that submits only to Allah's commands. This is why the Holy Prophet said that witnessing for the truth and saying it before a despotic ruler is the best Jihad.

Along with this, Jihad is a war against the forces of tyranny and evil, so that the duty of "enjoining the right and forbidding the wrong" is fulfilled and man could get rid of oppression and injustice. The Jihad is waged with life, wealth, and sword. But the sword is raised in the defense of the right and protection of the oppressed; it is not raised for oppression or aggression. This makes Jihad-e-Akbar and Jihad-e-Asghar as constituting one same thing.

It becomes clear that Jihad-e-Akbar and Jihad-e-Asghar are not two separate things; they are two aspects of the same one reality. Jihad-e-Akbar is about the purity of heart, control of the self, nourishment of high moral values, and fulfilling the rights of Allah and His people. The Jihad that is waged with sword (Jihad bi-Saif), too, is for the same aims, for the realization and protection of the same values. Piety and self-control are the weapons in the battlefield as well. To be ready to offer his life for Allah's pleasure is the distinct hallmark of a Muslim.

In this background, General Musharraf's claim that "the Holy Prophet had said after the battle of Khyber that Jihad-e-Asghar has come to end and Jihad-e-Akbar has started. This means that Jihad bi-Saif (militancy) that is Jihad-e-Asghar has reached its end and war against poverty and illiteracy that is Jihad-e-Akbar has begun. At present, Pakistan needs Jihad-e-Akbar and it should be remembered that militant Jihad can only be started with the decision of the government in power", is such a brag that no Muslim can think of. Surely, his assertion is because of lack of knowledge and unscrupulousness, since a Muslim cannot utter or write about Jihad-e-Asghar's coming to an end. This has either been a pastime of Orientalists or product of convoluted thinking of such enemies of Islam as Bahauallah and Ghulam Ahmad Qadiyani. In the lifetime of the Prophet (pbuh), the battle of Mauta (Jamadi-ul-Awal, 8H), the Conquest of Makkah (Ramadhan, 8H), the battle of Hunain (Shawal, 8H), the Siege of Taif (Shawal, 8H), and the battle of Tabuk (Rajab, 9H) took place after the battle of Khyber (7H). Then, Jihad has been an Islamic tenet and a source of Islam's strength and glory ever since the Siddiqi Era (11-13H).

A General Musharraf talk about Jihad-e-Asghar's coming to an end though he is chief of the army whose very motto is: Faith, Piety, and Jihad in the Way of Allah. Jihad-e-Akbar and Jihad-e-Asghar are two aspects of the same reality and have been given expression in the beautiful words of "Faith, Piety and Jihad", and no division can be created between them.

The characteristic that the Hadith and other commands of Qur'an and Sunnah draw attention to, and which has been called Jihad-e-Akbar here, is the realization of the control over the self, reform of the inner-self, piety, cultivation of ethics and spirituality to ensure the use of all human abilities and capabilities for the establishment and supremacy of Allah's word. Undoubtedly, war against

poverty and illiteracy is a part of the teachings of Islam. Islam guarantees the provision of material needs along with the spiritual and moral requirements of all human beings as well as the attainment of good and prosperous life so that the state of "protection from hunger and fear" is achieved. Yet, the task of interpreting and explaining the Ahadith of the Prophet and other teachings of Shariah demands utmost care and sense of responsibility. On way back from Khyber, Jihad against poverty and illiteracy was not the issue. The objective was building moral strength and control of the self in its broader sense. Only that interpretation of a Hadith should be presented that is intended by it. There are other teachings about war against poverty and illiteracy, and interpreting this Hadith for that purpose is incorrect.

Any statement of coming to an end of the Jihad with sword, that has been called Jihad-e-Asghar, would be considered a despicable attempt at 'changing the religion' and proscribing the eternal law of Islam, though it may be for lack of knowledge and understanding. How come the General knew that there is only one way of declaring Jihad? Surely, it is the right as well as obligation of an Islamic state to declare Jihad keeping in view the circumstances, but there are other legitimate and Shariah-sanctioned ways of doing so in keeping with the circumstances. If there is no Islamic state, then Jihad can be wage to establish the one. If Muslims are subjugated under a non-Muslim government, they can rise in Jihad (with sword) for their freedom with the advice and guidance of Ulema. Imam Ibn Taimiya gave Fatwa for Jihad against the Tataris. Sheikh Yousuf al-Qaradhawi and Ulema of the Muslim world gave Fatwa for Jihad in Palestine and Kashmir. Whether a government declares it or not, the decision about Jihad is taken in the light of the circumstances according to the principles and norms of Shariah. It would be better for General Musharraf to desist from making assertions in an area he had little command in, and this would be better for this unfortunate nation as well as Islam.

This should also be kept in view that anti-Islam forces have always tried to weaken the spirit of Jihad among Muslim people for the obvious reason that Jihad is the force with which their hegemony and occupation can be challenged and their transgression and excesses can be checked. When the colonial forces achieved domination over Muslims in the modern times, they had only two targets: the person of the Prophet (pbuh) and Islam's concept of Jihad. The personality and teachings of the Prophet give an identity to this Ummah and shape its global role, while Jihad is a force with which wicked and devilish system is challenged and humanity is brought out from the trap of injustice. As this is a formidable force in the way of the enemies' domination and occupation, they have made it their foremost target. The real culture of Jihad can guarantee our faith, freedom, and security.

### The Stand on Kashmir

General Pervez Musharraf's claim is that his policy with regard to Kashmir has not changed, that Pakistan would continue its moral, political and diplomatic support to the freedom movement of



oppressed Kashmiri Muslims. He also says, rightfully, that Kashmir is like blood in our body. Yet, what message does he convey by banning Jihadi organizations, arresting hundreds of their workers, and freezing their assets and accounts? When he says, under the US pressure and the Indian military blackmail, that he would not allow the use of Pakistan's territory for 'terrorism', then Indian leadership and American officials conclude that this stance also covers the freedom movement in Kashmir. What is the General's answer in this situation? Of course, Kashmir is like blood in our body and nothing but to protect the jugular vein of Kashmir and to check the hegemonic Indian designs is the *raison d'être* of keeping such a large military. Yet, the treatment meted out to Jihadi organizations, the way Jihad and Jihadi culture are being subjected to criticism and censure, conveys a devastating message to the brave people in the occupied Kashmir. If Kashmir is really like blood in body, then this blood should serve the purpose and cause of Jihad.

General Musharraf's address is a manifestation of recoiling and retreat. The main reason for this is that the decisions about the country's fate are not being taken through consultation, with the participation of the people and their reliable representatives. Power is concentrated among the few and one man has arrogated to himself the responsibility of being the custodian of national interest, he alone knows what national interest means! Dictatorship boasts strength, the fact however is that it is the weakest system of all.

### Demands of Democracy

Who can protect national interest, now? There is no parliament, and by taking oath under the PCO (Provisional Constitutional Order) the judges of Supreme Court and High Courts have openly pledged their loyalty to General Musharraf, instead of the Constitution. And the General is not only the Chief of Army Staff; he also wears the caps of Chief Executive and President. His assertion in France, "I command and they follow" about the military commanders and generals is obvious. To give the reigns of power to such a person who was made the Chief of Army Staff only accidentally and who has no public mandate, is to deprive the 140 million people of their rights.

Making the situation even worse, the formidable crisis of post-Sept. 11 began to develop in the same era, about which the General said while briefing the politicians: The country's history has never witness a more dangerous situation and that President Bush has asked us to choose between entering the 21<sup>st</sup> century on the way of development and prosperity by siding with America or reverting to the Stone Age by refusing to side with it. At this point, the Ameer of Jamaat-e-slami asked the General why he was carrying the load of dealing with such an acute crisis, about which he had himself said that there had never been a more serious situation, alone. But the General could not come up with any answer.

In the meanwhile, Afghanistan has been completely destroyed. The government not only extended cooperation in destroying those whom the Pakistani establishment had propped up to rule in

Afghanistan. When the Taliban government was sent packing, the government went so far as to hand over the Taliban's ambassador in Pakistan to America, in dire contradiction to all diplomatic norms. The nation would have been spared this embarrassment and humiliation, had there been Constitution and constitutional institutions in the country and the people enjoyed some role in safeguarding the national interest. The Mujahideen of Jaish-e-Muhammad and Lashkar-e-Taiba, who stood with the army at every critical and difficult juncture, are now subject to the wrath of the same military government for orders from America. Hafiz Saeed and Maulana Masood Azhar are under detention at the behest of India.

In his address, the General announced ban on Sipah-e-Sahaba, Tehrik-e-Jafaria, and Tehrik-e-Nifaz-e-Shariat-e-Muhammadi along with Jaish-e-Muhammad and Lashkar-e-Taiba without proving their guilt in any court. Hundreds of their workers have been arrested. The question is: what stopped him from adopting a course where the allegations leveled against the arrested could be heard and judgment could be passed according to the principles of justice? What is the justification for indiscriminate arrests? When the US Secretary of State's tells the number of the arrested (as 1975) at a press conference in Islamabad just before departing for Delhi, it is not baseless to think that this all is being done, to a large extent, under the American pressure and the Indian military blackmail.

While newspapers are full of editorials, columnists are tired of writing, and the readers are continuously expressing their views in Letters to the Editor, and politicians are convening all-parties conferences to demand for interim national government, independent election commission and free and fair elections, but General Musharraf is adamant in insisting that he would amend the Constitution, would remain president, would establish a security council as an overseer of the Parliament, and would relinquish only after being satisfied that he has fulfilled his task of national rectification!

If some voice is raised against this state of affairs, then it is met with the charge of treason and rebellion. If the military leadership is asked to sense the critical nature of the time, the accusation of attempting for division in the military is hurled. This all means that General Musharraf wants to be a dictator, an unchallengeable ruler, as he terms criticism of his actions as criticism of the military. The question is: when the Army Chief is also the Chief Executive and the President (which are both political posts), and when he uses the power and leadership of the military as the force behind his political program, then how can he keep his political actions above public comment, criticism and accountability or use military's umbrella and sitting himself in the bunker. While not being above accountability, the military and its leadership enjoy a sort of protection under the constitution, and this is necessary for national defense interests, but this is for such a military leadership that keeps itself from getting involved in politics. When it crosses this safety line and becomes the custodian of everything, it comes under criticism and should have the nerve to bear with criticism and censure. We have always held that military's task is to defend the borders. By

being involved in politics, it becomes controversial. The responsibility for this rests with those who use the military beyond its constitutional obligations.

The democratic way of rectifying this situation is that politicians make their act together and struggle for restoration of people's rights and the Constitution, and wage a struggle for the demands of the All-Parties Conference. It is regrettable that politicians have not learnt the lesson even though much has gone wrong. Some of them are impatient for sharing power with the General, and as an easy way to this end they seek his patronage and support him of all matters right or wrong. Those who could not win over his patronage despite their best efforts present a picture of dejection. Yet, they avoid being close to religious parties, lest they invite the US anger and the chances of their coming to power may grow even bleaker. It is for certain that any government that comes to power with the US blessing and the military's backing would be a mere continuation of the past regimes. This would not bring about any change, while the country is in the need of a real change.

### The Crisis and the Way Out

Our civil-administration structure, economic system, judicial system, and military's structure and discipline have not been able to come out of the tangle of the clique that had British colonialist training. While poverty is rampant in the country and more than 30 percent of the population is living below the poverty line (i.e. have no access to even such basic facilities as balanced food, health, education, and shelter), a coterie of the few is stashing their wealth of loot and plunder abroad. Many of them are high civil and military bureaucrats. The Benazir and Sharif governments had been got rid off after a ceaseless struggle against corruption, and General Musharraf came to rule on the same wave of sentiments against corruption. But accountability has been made a tool for blackmail and political bargaining. This was done in the past and is being done even now. A politician who supports the General gets through all sorts of allegations of corruption unaffected, and becomes a 'like-minded', while the one who refuses to be a 'like-minded' gets fettered though he may not have even a single blemish on his character. In such circumstances, the need is of getting united of all those who instead of seeking the pleasure of America or the General, have the resolve and determination to see the society in its real Islamic, democratic and just hues. They should unite, march together, and launch struggle for the demands on which all the main parties in the country are in agreement:

- Restoration of the Constitution and establishment of an interim national government
- Establishment of an independent and powerful election commission
- Protection of the Constitution and resistance against constitutional amendments through unconstitutional means
- Rejection of security council that is above the Parliament and public representatives

There is only one way out of the present crisis: elections on the outline as sketched above, handing over the reigns of power to a God-fearing, people-loving, able and capable, and honest leadership through the democratic process. Jamaat-e-Islami had on Oct. 13, 1999, i.e. just after the military coup, expressed its expectation from the military and its leadership that they, with complete prudence and realization, would adopt the way that would ensure the continued effective existence of the Constitution, which is founded on the pillars of Islam, democracy, and federalism, in its real spirit. The Central Counsel of the Jamaat-e-Islami had given expression to its assessment of the situation in quite categorical words:

"The Central Counsel of the Jamaat-e-Islami Pakistan considers it necessary to reiterate its principled stand that the country has had enough experience of the Martial-Law and that Martial-Law does not present a solution to our problems. The Jamaat-e-Islami also announces that with mere change of face among the tested and corrupt political leaderships we cannot come out of the mire in which this self-aggrandizing political lot has led the nation to. Similarly, the technocrats who neither enjoy support of the people nor are accountable to them, cannot provide the right kind of leadership. Furthermore, the military leadership should keep in view in the light of the past experiences that both the rulers of the past, i.e. Benazir and Nawaz Sharif, who set new records of fascism and corruption were products of Martial-Law. If such people come to rule again, the results and public reaction cannot be different from that of the past."

This analysis of the Central Counsel of the Jamaat-e-Islami has proved correct, word by word. It is unfortunate that General Musharraf and his government did not learn any lesson from the past. There is one way of reform, even now. The Central Counsel of the Jamaat-e-Islami in its recent session (Jan. 7-9) once again called attention to the protection of the Constitution, start of the electoral process, establishment of a trusted government and of the society on the foundations of Islam, democracy and federalism as envisaged in the Constitution – for taking the country out of the quagmire it is in. In this context, the Counsel has demanded:

1. The government should desist from joining the odious conspiracy to make the Islamic Republic of Pakistan a secular state, should take measures to make it a real model Islamic state according to the objectives of the Constitution of Pakistan and promises of the Pakistan movement.
2. The consensual Constitution of 1973 should be restored. The government has no right whatsoever to amend the Constitution, nor do any courts have the right to confer such powers. Any step on the part of the government could be harmful for the integrity of the country. No attempt, therefore, be made to amend the Constitution or to superimpose any body, under any name, over the democratic institutions.

3. The government should start forthwith the process of elections for the national and provincial assemblies. These elections should be held according to the Articles 62 and 63 of the Constitution, on the basis of Proportionate Representation, and should be transparent, fair and impartial. By taking political and religion parties into confidence, an independent and all-powerful election commission comprising of capable, honest and trusted people should be established without delay. Also, the election for the post of President should be held according to the procedure as envisaged in the Constitution.
4. The elections should be held under an interim civil government composed of honest, reliable and capable people; those in this government should not contest elections.
5. Restrictions on political and religious parties be revoked and people's basic rights be restored. The parties should be allowed to continue their activities according to the agreed upon principles. Qazi Hussain Ahmad, Maulana Fazl-ur-Rahman and other political leaders be released.
6. The government should remove doubts about the Kashmir issue and declare it openly that to extend support to the oppressed Kashmiri people is our duty and that India should recall its 700,000 strong occupation force, which is involved in terrorism for many years.
7. After the rolling up of the Taliban government in Afghanistan, American troops in Pakistan should be forced to quit Pakistan, and the air-bases and other facilities be taken back from them. All necessary steps should be taken for the immediate release of the Pakistanis who have been rounded up in America. Also, a safe return for the Pakistanis stranded in Afghanistan should be arranged.
8. The whole nation should be prepared to meet the Indian war jingoism, the apologetic approach and the routine of meeting its demands be put to an end. India be asked to pull back its forces and war equipment from the borders.

This session of the Central Council expressed its resolve in unequivocal terms and its expectation that the entire nation would sink its differences and be like a fortified wall in the face of foreign aggression. All would stand up to the occasion and defeat the enemy, God willing.

The Central Council has also appealed to all patriotic political and religious parties for consultation and mutual cooperation for the integrity and respectful existence of the country, establishment of Islamic order, and for squarely facing the challenges, so that threats to the country could be averted and it once again be taken on the road to democracy to make it a welfare, democratic Islamic state in the real sense according to the vision of Iqbal and Jinnah and the objectives of the Pakistan movement.

Pakistan's economic, political, moral and ideological future depends on a right democratic system. Therefore, anyone who is a well-wisher of the country should give up the effort of imposing dictatorship, thereby making it a graveyard for democracy. No one should obstruct the way to democracy and pave way for the democratic and constitutional process as early as possible.

The leadership of the people should open up all the ways to reach out to the public, and restrictions should be removed from the natural leadership instead of embarking upon the experiment of cultivating artificial leadership through some institution. We are sure that mutual cooperation and collaboration of all patriotic religious and political forces would give strength to the collective struggle by which the nation would realize its destination.

This public struggle is a democratic and ideological movement that calls for reconstruction and reform. In no way it is against the military. This would rather be a strength for the military. The military would dispose of the additional load it is presently carrying, and would be able to attend to its real task. When a nation is awake and alive and united, its institutions also grow in strength and symbolize its pride. A good military man abides by the Constitution, law and regulations in his country and respects his country's elected representatives. To insist that military officials, and not the Parliament or the elected representatives, would confer constitution and rules on the nation is a misplaced and unjustified insistence. Individual continue coming and going, but national tradition and common values enjoy lasting and durable status. By submitting before the consensual Constitution of Pakistan, General Pervez Musharraf and his team would be winning for themselves laurels of magnanimity and large-heartedness. General Musharraf should not accuse those who put forward these suggestions and demands of trying to sow the seeds of division in the military; he should rather entertain good-will for them. He should accept others as having a right to present suggestion for the solution of problems the country is presently facing.

While it is difficult to decide as to who caused more harm to the country: politicians or civil and military bureaucrats. But it is clear from the history of Pakistan that the political process was not allowed to develop and grow in the country and military intervention, every now and then, has foiled the political process and tried to cultivate leaderships of its own liking. This has resulted in a propensity in the political parties to seek foreign support and military's backing. This is how political anarchy and chaos has gripped the country. The cure of this rot lies in going back to people and restoring and reactivating the constitutional system. A democracy may have some ills or flaws, but the treatment of the flaws of democracy lies in democratic process. They cannot be rectified through dictatorial or imperialistic means, since their blight is bigger than the flaws of democracy. It is the call of the time to spare the nation of these blights. This needs that all patriotic political workers should prepare for a countrywide campaign for re-awakening the people of the country, so that elections are held at the earliest and result in a leadership that could solve our national problems.

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