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A Recipe For Pakistan



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Pakistan is in dire straits. Its problems are acute demanding a clear understanding and short / long term remedial measures. It is suffering from effects of religious militancy, a failing economy, political turmoil and a dysfunctional, corrupt, directionless government. Worst of all, the people are losing faith in the country and an utter state of demoralization and despondency is setting in. The internal and external threat scenario poses an extremely dangerous existential dilemma to Pakistan.

Under these dark circumstances Pakistan urgently needs to be turned around, its downward slide has to be checked. The importance and urgency of such corrective action ought to be evident to the South Asian region as also to the whole world. Today, a developing nexus of terrorism is based on Al Qaida and Taliban in Afghanistan, Taliban in the Tribal Agencies of Pakistan, extremists in parts of Pakistani society, Mujahedeen in Indian Held Kashmir, rising extremism in Muslim youth in India, ETIM in West China, radicalized Muslim groups in Uzbekistan, Al Qaida in Islamic Maghreb centered around Algeria and Mali and Al Qaida in Arab Peninsula based around Yemen and Somalia.

* Given the stature of this author, and the attention given to his views, we have chosen to print this article essentially as submitted.

The centre of gravity of this entire emerging terror nexus lies in Afghanistan and Tribal Agencies of Pakistan. Military sense says that the enemy has to be defeated at its centre of gravity. Losing at the centre of gravity means defeat at all the periphery. Such a defeat will first of all destabilize or even disintegrate Pakistan followed by destabilization of India followed by other regions. Such an upheaval will certainly increase radicalization in Muslim communities in Europe and U.S. with consequential increase in terrorist threats. This may appear a doomsday scenario but it is a realistic appraisal which should lead us to conclude that we cannot lose in Afghanistan and Tribal Agencies of Pakistan. Quitting the area without political stability is not an option.

✓ The question is how to revive Pakistan?

The basis is to have a government and a leader which can deliver to Pakistan and enjoy the trust and confidence of the largest possible majority of the people of Pakistan. The solution does not lie in any undemocratic or unconstitutional measure. The change has to come through the process of democratic, fair elections.

It can be hoped that people, having suffered the present democratic dispensation, will be motivated and wise enough to elect a leader with genuine mass mandate. The crowning glory will be if this leader of the people can unify in thought and action the support of the masses with back up of the Army and the Bureaucracy. We, therefore, have to patiently wait for the next elections, whether end term in 2013 or midterm in 2011/12. Unfortunately, Pakistan will continue to suffer for this period with prayers for its survival.

The three major political parties (PPP, PML(N), and PML(Q)) have all failed to deliver and lost the confidence of the people. Another political alternative (whether solo or coalition) seen as viable domestically and internationally must emerge and made to emerge on the scene if Pakistan has to survive. In my very humble view, my party APMIL in partnership with Imran Khan's PTI and MQM has the potential to meet the bill. My immediate aim, therefore, is to organize and structure my very new Party suitably to win the next elections. Then only can I implement my vision for Pakistan. I do not really have to reinvent the wheel other than to re-implement the socio economic policy with some adjustments that I successfully executed in my past 9 years tenure.

Having got into government saddle through democratic means the first issue to be tackled would be to revive Pakistan's failing economy. This will not be an easy task, especially in view of the doubling of our debt in the past two years and rising oil prices. The present economic malaise is because of a massive flight of capital and drying up of investment. Both are due to a lack of trust and faith in the present government and leadership. However, I am confident that with the faith, confidence and support of the people of Pakistan and the international community restored, a turnaround of the economy will be doable.

We have to focus on controlling the budget deficit. On the fiscal deficit we need to reduce our expenditure on running government through downsizing, controlling defense expenditure and reducing subsidies to government corporations which are hemorrhaging. On the earning side we need to take measures to substantially increase our revenue collection through widening the tax base and may be even reducing taxes. The tax to GDP ratio has to be improved. This is possible

through implementing modern international best practices of computerized database warehouse management. We, in the past did increase revenues from Rs. 308 billion in 2000 to over Rs. 1 trillion in 2007 (an increase of over 300%). The external balance of payment can be checked through increasing our exports, remittances and FDI.

We have to take measures to revive our dead industries, increase market access to U.S. and EU, diversify our export products and also explore diverse markets in order to substantially increase our export earnings. FDI has to be brought back into Pakistan. While we have to control our law and order situation, we also need to enhance our energy availability for industrial purposes. We had previously increased our FDI from about \$ 400 million to approximately \$8.4 billion. We need to further improve our performance. Pakistan's expenditure on debt servicing is debilitating. We have to try to reschedule our debts, specially the heavy interest ones. The world must cooperate to help us. We, on our part, must control our debts through controlling budget deficit. Our debt to GDP ratio must never exceed 60%. Remittances are doing reasonable well. We need to continue the upward trend.

Reviving the economy is to a large extent dependent on the law and order environment. We have to improve it. This will involve combating terrorism and extremism in all its facets:

➤ **Al Qaida:**

- ✓ Must be defeated with force.

➤ **Taliban:**

- ✓ A triple strategy of force, political dialogue and socio economic uplift plan needs to be followed.
 - For the force element we need to bank more on the second line force of Frontier Corps NWFP and Baluchistan. They are more suited and will be more acceptable to the people especially in the Tribal Agencies. However, their effectiveness needs to be enhanced through increased strength and more fire power of artillery medium guns and tanks. The army and air force will then remain in the supportive, reinforcing and backup role.
 - The political element should concentrate on weaning away the Pukhtuns from the Taliban but all parleys must be from a position of strength. Socio economic element will require foreign financial support for which the US and the world community ought to be forthcoming. The sealing of the Pak-Afghan border through mines or barbed wire needs to be seriously deliberated.

➤ Extremism in the society:

- ✓ Extremism is a state of mind. Its danger lies in the fact that an extremist can be indoctrinated to become a terrorist. Therefore, controlling extremism strikes at the root of terrorism.

We were following 5 points strategy during my period which will need to be implemented more aggressively.

- I. We need to control misuse of mosques propagating radical, militant ideas, stop proliferation of any printed material spreading militancy and ban/curb all extremist organizations.
- II. A Madrassa strategy to mainstream Taliban studying in them needs to be pursued vigorously. The moderate and minority religious sect of Baraylvhees (Sufi's known to be quite plugged-in divinely) needs to be encouraged to dominate the religious landscape in Pakistan's society and counter religious extremism.
- III. We need to identify and cut off links between extremist in society with Taliban in the Tribal Agencies and Mujahedeen operating in Indian Held Kashmir.
- IV. All this will need a concentrated effort and a changed orientation of the police. They will need qualitative improvement and reinforcement. The second line forces of Sindh and Punjab Rangers need increase in their strength, more officers from the Army and tasking towards controlling extremism in the society.
- V. Having revived the economy which forms the basis for all national, socio economic development, we need to concentrate entirely on the core responsibility of any good government or leader: "Welfare of the people and development of the State." It is this element of transferring economic gains to the people and the State which unites and gels people, develops their stake in the country.

I will take the welfare of the people first. Their standard of living has to be improved. This can be done through employment generation and poverty alleviation. There are three categories of unemployed for whom a different focus for job creation need to be developed. The first category is rural unemployed for whom we need to optimize agriculture, water management, dairy and livestock. The second category is the urban uneducated unemployed for whom we need to develop building and construction sector. The last is the urban educated unemployed for whom telecom and IT sectors would be most suited. With such directed focus I am sure employment generation and poverty alleviation will be a cure. For qualitative improvement of our youth we need to improve education and health. These are the sectors where we need involvement of

philanthropists and foreign assistance. The government alone will be unable to handle the magnitude of the demand. With Pakistan's resources and potential I am confident that an effective government and good leadership will be able to deliver on these ideals.

This now brings me to the progress and development of the State. This translates into improvement of communication infrastructure, development of water resources, a sound strategy to boost dairy, agriculture and livestock, revival of an export oriented industry, boosting of the telecom and IT sectors. All this is possible if our revenue collection is enhanced and enough funds become available for PSDP (Public Sector Development Projects). Interestingly we do not need to reinvent the wheel; we did all this successfully between, 2000-2007. We just have to repeat and refine all of it once again.

Execution of this vision will be facilitated through restructuring of government and civil services reforms to improve government performance. The modality of such a change was matured by me through a commission in 2006-2007. Implementation is the requirement now.

Coupled with this domestic strategy an effective exterior maneuver needs to be launched to enhance Pakistan's prestige abroad and resolve disputes regionally. An Indo-Pakistan rapprochement through conflict resolution will facilitate our domestic developmental strategy. It needs to be vigorously followed. The parameters for a Kashmir solution mutually pursued with India in the past could form the basis for moving forward. Relations with U.S. need to be improved through reestablishment of trust and confidence in each other. This is essential for executing our successful anti-terrorism strategy.

The situation in Pakistan is by no means simple or easy but with patriotic zeal, commitment and dedication I am confident that the above winning strategy is executable. It is in the world and regional interest that Pakistan is helped to preserve its solidarity and identity.

Pakistan Zindahbad.