

Yesterday vs tomorrow

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yet another election of the corrupt? Musharraf wants five more years to continue his reforms. What reforms under a parliament of the corrupt which begets a government of thieves? If he were serious about reforms his foremost action would have been to cleanse the judiciary. Instead he put himself at its mercy. This is what happens when you spew out complex concepts without understanding them. How in God's name are they going to comprehend this global flux? The world is moving on but we are paralyzed, pulverized after September 11.

There's a silver lining discernible in the debris of the Twin Towers. Bigots may have risen to the surface like flotsam but the silent majority that wants peace and an equitable world order is beginning to speak. It started with protests against the multilateral agencies and the WTO. Millions of Americans don't agree with their President's warmongering or Britons with their Prime Minister's slavish support of Bush. The majority of Europeans reject war on Iraq, for they don't see just cause. More and more people everywhere are saying that without addressing the causes of terrorism there will be no peace; so long as state terrorism persists terrorism will remain. Muslims are questioning the existence of bigotry as unIslamic, rejecting the murder of innocents, whatever the cause. These societal schisms will be transcended by the outcome of today's struggle between the forces of yesterday and tomorrow.

The most important of these schisms is the distance

The Israeli and Palestinian peoples have equal rights to national self-determination and to live in peace and security. c) The Israeli and Palestinian peoples have equal rights to a fair share of the land and resources of historic Palestine.

"Fair-minded people throughout the world have long understood with some precision what a tenable solution, respecting these principles, would entail: a) Two national states, Israel and Palestine, with equal sovereignty, equal rights and equal responsibilities. b) Partition along the pre-1967 border as modified only by minor mutually agreed territorial swaps. c) Israeli evacuation of all settlements in the occupied territories except those within the agreed swapped areas. d) Palestinian and Arab recognition of Israel and renunciation of any further territorial claims. e) Palestinian acceptance of negotiated limitations on the 'right of return' in exchange for financial compensation for refugees.

"Several years ago, polls showed that majorities of both Israelis and Palestinians were willing to accept a compromise settlement of this kind. Despite the current carnage, that may still be the case; but compromise is difficult when majorities on both sides support provocative military actions that they view as purely defensive, while powerful minorities pursue maximalist territorial aims.

"If Israelis and Palestinians are unwilling or unable to negotiate a workable peace, the international community must take the lead in promoting one. This is in the long-term interest not only of Israelis and Palestinians, but also of Americans; recent events have made painfully clear that our own national security is deeply undermined by instability and injustice in the Middle East.

"The US bears a special responsibility for the current tragic impasse, by virtue of our massive economic and military support for the Israeli government: \$500 per Israeli citizen per year. Our country has an extraordinary leverage on Israeli policy, if only our government would dare to use it. As American Jews who care deeply about the long-term security of Israel, we call on our government to make continued aid conditional on Israeli acceptance of an internationally agreed two-state settlement.

"Rejectionists on both sides will of course attack any such settlement. Foreign troops may well be required to

With antediluvian bigots ruling America and weak and vacillating vassals in attendance, the only movement since September 11 has been backwards. That's what's changed. The façade tumbled. It became 'Them or Us'. The world had minutes to choose sides. There have been tragedies before and after, the worst being the nuclear bombing of Hiroshima and Nagasaki. Generations of weaklings have had to swallow the convoluted rationale that vaporizing millions of Japanese prevented the deaths of millions more. Left unsaid is that it's their conjecture. Left unsaid too is that the nuclear dead were Japanese; those notional millions 'saved' would mostly have been American.

The world commemorates September 11 because most of the victims were American. Who will commemorate the thousands more Afghan innocents? Who will wipe the tears of those who loved and lost needlessly? Afghans feel the same kind of anguish as Americans. Who will build memorials to their dead? What with? The rubble of their lives? From Daisy Cutter shrapnel and napalm sparks? Even Muslim leaders made no mention of those innocent Afghans as they bowed and scraped in New York. Forget it.

Let's worry about ourselves. It's all about accumulating power through wealth. Countries that prosper work closely with their business houses to capture world assets and market shares—that's one pillar of wisdom. When the first US finance minister enunciated the American ethos that what is good for business is good for America, he wasn't being original. Long before, the British government and the East India Company worked together to capture India's wealth and become a superpower.

Successful states have independent, powerful, honest and effective judicial systems—that's another pillar of wisdom. On these two pillars is the edifice of civilization built. Without this there can be no human development.

9/11 was the perfect pretext for America to shake off all pretense and turn Afghanistan into its stationary aircraft carrier. Soon there will be others—Iraq, Saudi Arabia, Iran, Pakistan. It's dangerous having oil, disastrous having the temerity to determine the production levels and price of your own resource, hazardous being in the way

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9/11 was the perfect pretext for America to shake off all pretense and turn Afghanistan into its stationary aircraft carrier. Soon there will be others –Iraq, Saudi Arabia, Iran, Pakistan. It's dangerous having oil, disastrous having the temerity to determine the production levels and price of your own resource, hazardous being in the way of a possible pipeline. Just you wait and see.

America treats its successful businessmen like heroes; we treat them like criminals. Our dictum –what is good for the rapacious elite is good for Pakistan–has brought us to this sorry pass, down from our knees on to our faces. In the process we corrupted and emasculated the other vital pillar because an independent judiciary is dangerous to a corrupt order. One imagined that if after the Disaster of Democracy our rulers hadn't learned crucial lessons, after September 11 they would. While we desperadoes mistook an ordinary power struggle for revolution, our new rulers became champions for the length of their rhetoric and the paucity of results. I've never seen anyone like Musharraf who says such obviously good things, and so well, but takes such little action.

Instead of trying to save Pakistan our rulers gained false comfort by propping up the old iniquitous status quo, only knocking-out their political enemies while leaving the friendly corrupt in place to contest elections. It's no coincidence that Nawaz Sharif was convicted not for corruption but for hijacking. Without September 11 would this government have had the gall to openly mend the damaged status quo and strengthen its iniquity by calling

slavish support of Bush. The majority of Europeans reject war on Iraq, for they don't see just cause. More and more people everywhere are saying that without addressing the causes of terrorism there will be no peace; so long as state terrorism persists terrorism will remain. Muslims are questioning the existence of bigotry as unIslamic, rejecting the murder of innocents, whatever the cause. These societal schisms will be transcended by the outcome of today's struggle between the forces of yesterday and tomorrow.

The most important of these schisms is the distance American Jews are creating between themselves and the US government over its blind support of Israel. In an open letter to the US government in *The New York Times* of July 17, 2002 the Jews of America say:

"In the wake of the recent bloodshed in the Middle East, many Israelis and Palestinians –and their supporters in the United States –have reverted to an us-versus-them thinking in which they see themselves as righteous victims and ignore or minimize the injustices they have done, and continue to do, to other people.

"In fact, both the Israeli and Palestinian peoples have suffered great wrongs at the hands of the other, albeit in different and unequal ways; both have legitimate grievances, legitimate fears, and legitimate distrust of the other people's willingness to compromise for the sake of peace.

"Though the signers of this letter have a wide range of views about the blame for the present situation, we have a common view of what a solution will have to consist of.

"Incremental attempts at building trust have reached an impasse. The only alternative to endless war is a comprehensive settlement based on simple but radical principles:

a) Israeli and Palestinian lives are equally precious. b)

The US... tragic impasse, by virtue of our massive economic and military support for the Israeli government: \$500 per Israeli citizen per year. Our country has an extraordinary leverage on Israeli policy, if only our government would dare to use it. As American Jews who care deeply about the long-term security of Israel, we call on our government to make continued aid conditional on Israeli acceptance of an internationally agreed two-state settlement.

"Rejectionists on both sides will of course attack any such settlement. Foreign troops may well be required to enforce it, and they must be prepared to accept casualties. One may nevertheless hope that majorities of both Israelis and Palestinians will realize that an imperfect peace is preferable to endless war.

"There is no guarantee that this approach will work; but it is virtually guaranteed that all alternatives will fail."

You can see change coming. Bush is but a mirage, Sharon a chimera. They will go. Prince Abdullah got it right. The Jews are moving on and ahead with the times. They will ensure that they don't lose. Where are we headed? –Either stuck in time or retrogressing. If we continue procreating like this our population will be 400 million in fifty years. If we take drastic steps now we will still hit 230 million in our children's lifetimes. Can we sustain this? Abject poverty today is 40 percent. Then absolute poverty will be absolute with only 0.01 percent of a semi-educated populace lording it over millions of walking zombies. It's late already. But if we move fast we might just avoid total disaster. Else we will have destined ourselves to being pack mules of the sensible.

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