**Divine Retribution**

**The incidents of 9th May were a sequel to propagation of that false narrative.**

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February 02, 2024

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Special Court constituted to hear cipher case----after a protract­ed hearing owing to dilly dally­ing tactics used by Imran Khan and Shah Mahmood Qureshi the two accused---finally concluded the hearing and announced a short verdict on Tuesday sen­tencing both of them to ten years rigorous imprisonment. The sentence obviously is pre­mised on proven violation of the Official Secrets Act 1923.

Not surprisingly the PTI leader and lawyer Barrister Ali Zafar speaking to Geo News said that it was not a tri­al but a fraud with the justice system. The lawyers for Imran Khan and Shah Mehmood Qureshi were asked to step aside and told they couldn’t represent them. In their place state lawyers were appointed without permission.

I am afraid Barrister Ali Zafar has not been honest in regards to the realities of the case and how it was conducted. The case was tried in conformity with legal requirements and both the ac­cused were given the opportunity to defend themselves through the lawyers of their choice. But they employed de­laying tactics to thwart progression of the case and the court had perforce to provide state defence councils to them. I have consulted a number of legal and constitutional experts who endorsed the appointment of state defence coun­cils saying that if the accused and its ap­pointed lawyers do not cooperate with the court and try to delay the case, then the court can appoint defence councils to conclude the case.

[Peshawar police excuses itself from providing security to election candidates](https://www.nation.com.pk/03-Feb-2024/peshawar-police-excuses-itself-from-providing-security-to-election-candidates)

The reality is that the lawyers of Im­ran Khan and Shah Mahmood in spite of repeated calls by the court failed to appear before it and both the accused even quarreled with the judge during the proceedings of the case using inap­propriate remarks about him.

The PTI social media wizards and leaders taking cue from Ali Zafar have already started trolling the judge and the verdict delivered by him on the same lines. There has also been a mixed reaction on the issue by different legal and constitutional experts. However, there are still two forums for the con­victs to appeal against the sentences and one cannot say with certainty what will be the final outcome.

For the benefit of readers, it is perti­nent to explain the purpose and ratio­nale for the promulgation of Official Secrets Act and to put the case in its proper perspective. The Official Secrets Act is meant to protect classified infor­mation and upholding national security. It makes it obligatory on the individuals entrusted with access to official secrets to maintain strict confidentiality and refrain from unauthorized disclosure of the classified and secret informa­tion. By establishing legal consequenc­es for violations the legislation acts as a deterrent against espionage and oth­er activities that may pose a threat to the national interests. Almost all the states have heir secrets which are not supposed to be divulged or communi­cated to unauthorized persons, hostile states or made public for reasons of na­tional security. Accordingly there exist legislations to deal with such violations and indiscretions by any individual ir­respective of his status or position.

[LSM sector shows impressive growth rate](https://www.nation.com.pk/03-Feb-2024/lsm-sector-shows-impressive-growth-rate)

Ciphers are classified and secret com­munications which are sent by the am­bassadors to their governments back home giving their assessments on the disposition of the host country on bilat­eral issues or its considered position on developments occurring in the country of the ambassador.

The charges against Imran Khan were that he not only made the contents of that classified and secret information public but also tried to use it for prop­ping up his political agenda which also harmed Pakistan’s relations with the United States. He did not return the copy of the cipher to the ministry of for­eign affairs saying that he had lost it. Shah Mahmood also played a significant role as an accomplice to play with it.

The veracity of the charges against Imran Khan was undoubtedly estab­lished by the key witnesses from the Ministry of foreign affairs and former principal secretary Azam Khan in their statements before the court. Foreign Secretary Sohail Mehmood deposed that the copy of the cipher was not re­turned by Prime Ministers’s office to the ministry till his retirement. Addi­tional Secretary Faisal Niaz Tirmizi said that soon after Imran Khan divulged the theory of conspiracy in his public rally the US embassy had approach the min­istry for a copy of the communication an also expressed annoyance at what Imran Khan said about US role in the al­leged conspiracy to topple his govern­ment. It sent the relations between the two countries in a nosedive. The author of the cipher, our former ambassador to US Asad Majeed said it unequivocally that there was no mention of any con­spiracy and threat in the cipher mes­sage. The other witnesses also contra­dicted the stance taken by Imran Khan. It is pertinent to mention that the con­tents of the ciphers message were pub­lished in a US publication. It was there­fore an open and shut case. Imran Khan and Shah Mahmood Qureshi were guilty of breaching the official secrets act and deserved to be punished.

[IMF chief says central banks need to be guided by data in monetary policy](https://www.nation.com.pk/03-Feb-2024/imf-chief-says-central-banks-need-to-be-guided-by-data-in-monetary-policy)

The reality is that Imran Khan used the cipher to foment chaos, political instabil­ity and violence in the country by delib­erately building a false narrative of con­spiracy. The incidents of 9th May were a sequel to propagation of that false nar­rative. And if a leader or a public figure resorts to such irresponsible and crim­inal acts which undermine democra­cy, peace and national security then the punishment to him is justifiable from the political as well as legal perspective because nobody is above law.

There are examples available where rulers and public functionaries had to face the music for their indiscretions and illegal machinations. Former US President Richard Nixon had to resign for his involvement in Watergate scan­dal and if the next President Geral Ford had not pardoned him he would have ended in jail. Similarly action was taken against a former defence analyst Daniel Elesberg for leaking to the press details of US participation in Viet Nam war. Bill Clinton also had to face the conse­quences of flirting with Monica Lewin­sky using his position.

[Kakakhel urges people to cast vote for better future](https://www.nation.com.pk/03-Feb-2024/kakakhel-urges-people-to-cast-vote-for-better-future)

The court verdict is very significant because of the fact that no person could be allowed to jeopardize national secu­rity and diplomatic relations with oth­er countries. The court proved the fact that every person irrespective his status is accountable to law. Imran Khan and his spouse have also been awarded 14 years imprisonment each in the Toasha Khan (corruption) case. He still has to face cases regarding 9th May incidents.

The fate Imran Khan has met is un­doubtedly a Devine Retribution for his wrong doings. He himself is the archi­tect of his journey from hero to zero and fall from grace.

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