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**True leadership**

There is no harm in Bilawal Bhutto’s proposal that a vote of no-confidence against the PM should be tried. It has always been an option of the PDM. Both the Long March and the vote of no-confidence can be tried simultaneously or separately.

Press conferences declaring that the establishment is neutral in political matters, and especially the recent verdict of the Election Commission of Pakistan nullifying the NA-75 elections held at Daska and ordering fresh elections in the same constituency are good omens in this direction. In addition to that there is also all the cribbing from government-allied parties. After all, Asif Ali Zardari is an experienced and successful hand at such manoeuvrings, especially given his intimate and special relations with the PML-Q etc.

Intra-party conflicts within the PTI have further added fuel to the fire as depicted by recent statements by Yar Muhammad Rind and Liaqat Jatoi. Furthermore, there is the offer by the PPP to the MQM to elect two MQM senators, in return for their votes for Yousaf Raza Gilani, in today's Senate polls.

The PDM have launched a gigantic effort to topple the present regime. To accomplish this, the PDM needs to understand the ground realities and make some adjustments/additions in their Charter.

With more than 50 years of experience in politics and especially having been an activist in the MRD and having witnessed many rollercoaster campaigns, being incarcerated during the Zia regime including at the notorious Lahore Fort twice and the Mianwali Katcha Jail, I would suggest the following:

In order to involve the regional and smaller parties, especially from the smaller provinces, to their fullest potentials and to strengthen and enhance the bond and make it more effective, the smaller and regional parties of the PDM should be extended a credible and attractive stake in the movement, by forging a Formal Election Alliance with a pledge and commitment to form a coalition government, with the semblance of an all-inclusive and broad-based national government, when and if they come into power. This would remove the 'trust deficit' which so far exists amongst the smaller parties. Such a move would also go a long way to strengthen the federation, which is a dire need of the hour.

The Major Parties should have the heart to concede and accommodate the regional and smaller parties. Otherwise, there is a natural feeling that after the movement and if and when a new government is formed, these parties would be left high and dry. Seat adjustments are possible in the majority of the seats of parliament and the provincial assemblies.

To be realistic, pragmatic and feasible, where there is a difference of opinion on seat adjustments, the PDM parties could even be allowed to contest against each other, though reluctantly and acknowledge the winners. For example, had the PDM formed such an alliance and contested the Gilgit-Baltistan elections jointly and not cancelled out each other, thus giving a free passage to the PTI, they would have formed a government there.

The public at large are well aware of the follies of the older leadership. The young leadership of the PDM should honestly accept, acknowledge and rectify the blunders and mistakes committed by their elders, thus erasing their past follies. That would be true leadership.

The national government should preferably be for a period of ten years/two tenures or at least one tenure, with a simple agenda: Pakistan, Pakistan and Pakistan – to rid this great country of the economic, political and cultural imbroglio of over 70 years.

To be true leaders, we should learn from history.

The writer is a former special assistant to the prime minister and a former convener of the MRD.