

# Vision... 2055?

Planning & Development  
Management

BY VISIONARY

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The majority of people were sceptical and cynical when I posed this question: Where do you see Pakistan in 2055? Most felt they won't be around, so why bother? Others felt that the way things are going, Pakistan won't be around, so stop wasting your time on dreams and enjoy what you can of the moment. "Toon apni nabhair, tenoon horan naal ki, toon gathri hi sambhaal tenoon choraan naal ki." When I ask them what will happen to the future generations of this country, they say "Allah Maalik hai." God will look after them, true, but don't we, His Vicegerents on earth, have a responsibility?

On receiving such positive and encouraging answers I decided to break bread with the Tangaywala, the Maali, the Maasi, the Cook, the Mazdoor, the Kissan and their children, I asked them, "What if India or China or America or Iran takes over the country tomorrow. How would you feel?" Initially their response was emotional. No. No way. Our elders sacrificed their lives to get us this freedom we will not allow it to happen. When asked what they would do they all started looking at each other. Then I asked them if they truly felt they were free. This question broke open the floodgates of complaints of the oppression and injustice meted out to them at the hands of the various Governments. They felt completely alienated and lost with no hope in sight. Finally I asked them if it would make a difference to them if tomorrow Sonia Gandhi took over Pakistan but ensured that their children were provided free quality education up to matric and on merit were inducted into colleges and research institutes at par with the world, ensured an environment to pursue a livelihood commensurate to their merit with free will and dignity, also provided clean drinking water, hygienic living conditions and non harassment at the hands of police or other government agencies? With one voice they all replied, "No it won't make a difference if she takes over!"

That in essence, my educated well-off elitist and least bothered Generals, Bureaucrats, Politicians, etc etc, is the VISION 2055 for the masses of this country. They are not asking you for skyscrapers, monorails, speed trains, space travel, or opulent and debauched living, but the basics, the very very very basics!!!

Because of the narrow and myopic way in which previous governments have applied it, we have turned religion and the ideology of Pakistan into yokes rather than liberating ideals. The various monuments constructed to highlight our Unity Faith and Discipline mock at our hypocrisy. As a Nation we seem to be without an aim. Can you imagine waking up in the morning and not knowing where to go, or worse, not having anywhere to go? While preserving our greater ideology we need to focus on a mid-term objective immediately. For the next 50 years we should incorporate 'Justice, Liberty and Progress' as our National aim.

Many factors are responsible for the present state of confusion, separatism and overall lack of national

one degree or another. Second, centralisation : this aggravated the remaining smaller provinces, specially when provincial autonomy was seen to be usurped. Third, superficial emphases on Islam, alienated the 10 percent minority population and also resulted in creating an extremist and blocked mindset.

I sometimes wish Malaysia was located where Pakistan is, because then geo-politically it would be Truly Asia. This location combined with the vibrant economy would have enhanced the magnetic attraction for ECO, SAARC and other regional states as far away as Egypt. To reach where it is today, Malaysia planted the seeds 15-20 years ago and then constantly nurtured and pruned them to enjoy the fruits today. We would need to add compost to our present soil, choose the best seeds and train the *maalis* to ensure that in 2055 our orchards are the best in bearing fruit of the times. For this, the following steps have to be taken forthwith:

Political stability: I have already stated earlier that democracy is an animal alien to this part of the world. We need consistency in administration to enable this seed to take root. An administration which is decisive, visionary, possesses ability and is not-corrupt. A presidential form of government with thirty provinces with max devolution of powers to the provinces. Why should the Centre hold 65-70 percent of the funds/revenue? This needs to be inverted immediately. The right checks and balances are the need of the time. Further, ensure selection of clean and upright judges with complete independence of judiciary. An independent judiciary will automatically help achieve efficient and judicious departments of police, income tax, revenue, etc.

Education: Formulate an education policy and a curriculum focused to achieve a particular aim. We should shed medieval teaching methods and adapt tools whereby the student who enrolls in pre-school on 1 January 2005 should come out well equipped by 2018 to take on further studies in metallurgy, hydrology, nanotechnology, microtechnology, biotechnology, genetic engineering, space technology and to adopt new methods of generating energy by focusing on fuel cell technology, wind power

ensures respect and well being. As a nation we have to industrialise and take out the full potential of our resources. We seem to be grinning wide by achieving \$12 billion in exports. With our resources that was never a problem. The real challenge is to cross \$100 billion. This can be done! We have to move out of the 'cotton-centric' mindset. Let APTMA look after itself and expand with market realities. Government departments should focus on harnessing SMEs towards value addition in other agricultural commodities. Over 40 percent of our fruit and vegetable is wasted. We should immediately encourage dehydration plants or value added downstream products. We should also be encouraging the local chemical industry to set up an industrial zone in the Salt Range foothills to encourage SMEs to set up unlimited industry for the local as well as export markets. Here the Mines department should encourage the small and medium entrepreneur instead of sticking to the corrupt practice of discouraging industrialisation by allowing leases only for projects worth over Rs 300 million. Similar zones be set up in Baluchistan, Sind and NWFP near the resources. The government should use the \$11 billion forex reserve as equity for creating infrastructure worth \$40 billion instead of depositing the amount with some foreign bank and earning a measly 4-5 percent. Creating infrastructure at that huge level would change the very landscape for our future generations. At the same time we should stop privatisation of profitable corporations like NBP and PTCL.

Foreign Policy / Trade: Would have to primarily be focused around India, China and Iran. A second circle should include USA and ASEAN, with Europe, the Mideast, etc in the outer circle.

Religion: The way we are spreading an odd version of our religion through madrassas and most illiterate mullahs is giving us a siege mentality about our own religion, which is the most enlightened in the world. Hinda used to throw dirt and stones in the Holy Prophet's (PBUH) way. One day he passed and there was no filth. On enquiry he was told she was unwell. He went and asked after her health. This in essence is part of our religion: being magnanimous and enlightened. Let's read and understand the Quran ourselves, and accept its teachings with free will instead of from fear of the mullah.

There is so much more to say, but paucity of space forces me to wrap up. The General can give a New Year's Gift to the nation by being brave and announcing his retirement, letting the decent and professional VCOAS take over the reins. He should announce a presidential form of government and let all who are not criminals take part in fair and transparent elections. Hopefully when he gets legally elected he can create a team which will sow the seed, nurture it, prune it, create a just society, with law and order and the three guiding principles of 'Justice, Liberty and Progress' to guide him in implementing some of the above points, which if done will give the

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Many factors are responsible for the present state of confusion, separatism and overall lack of national direction, and much has been written. The three main factors in my opinion have been: First, declaring Urdu the national language. This alienated 54 per cent of Pakistan's population in then East Pakistan and the ripple affected the remaining provinces in

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**Industrialisation:** A beggar's family cannot have self respect and dignity. The children out begging are prey to humiliation, torture and rape. Self-sufficiency

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