**Dubious politics of Pakistan**

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March 31, 2021

In Pakistan politics is a game played by mentally mediocre and financially elite. We are living in a country where the populist discourse is flourishing everywhere. In today’s political arena of Pakistan who is hero and who will end as zero remains evident to all. It is true in a country like Pakistan where a “pious and honest” mediocre can attract big crowds and make fool of the masses. In much more civilised societies where the norms of honesty are much higher, it would be very difficult to elevate personalities like Imran Khan to such heights but it is fairly easy to manipulate in the viscerally country where the ordinary citizens are desperately looking for some breathing space and hardly find their bread. “Pious and honest” Imran Khan, for many is not less than an angel even then after nearly three years’ rule has he anything to show and justify the masses and go in 2023 general election. The trouble is that narcissistic was in a hurry to become the Premier of Pakistan as many opportunities have been missed. The PTI sit- in (dharna) of 2014 was assigned to destabilise the Nawaz government and clinch powers of the Prime Minister. The powers clinched were not of mere Nawaz Sharif but of a Prime Ministers ever ahead. When Nawaz Sharif was replaced and Imran Khan seated without enough proper preparation he had nothing in hand except mere repeated stereotype speeches about lofty projects for the boom of economy such as hatching of “eggs n chicks” and breading of calves
Factually in the beginning Pervez Musharraf was Imran Khan’s great hero because he expected to get the top slot of Premiership from the General. But when ignoring Imran Khan General Musharraf selected Mir Zafarullah Khan Jamali and afterwards Shaukat Aziz as Premier, Imran Khan changed Musharraf’s status to a great disaster. Imran Khan was very happy with the top media because it provided Imran great support and because it was strengthening him to the hilt before the elections. But after the elections, when media became critical of Imran’s dubious policies and positions, it was reduced, barred and censored. The honourable Chief Justice of Pakistan Iftikhar Muhammad Chaudhry was Imran’s great hero for constantly knocking down the PPP but after Iftkhar Chaudhry didn’t stand by Imran’s election petitions, he was blasted as a big treacherous. Above all, honourable Chief Election Commissioner Fakhruddin G Ibrahim was Imran’s another great ideal and hero but when Fakhar uddin G Ibrahim couldn’t deliver up to Imran’s great unending expectations, he was charged as incompetent liability. Within the party everyone knows what happened to Akbar S Babar, honourable Justice Wajeehuddin Ahmad, Hamid Khan Advocate, Hafeezullah Niazi and many others.

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Imran Khan’s blossoming political alliances are also noteworthy. The Muthidda Qomi Movement (MQM) remained his pet-hate target but now is his main ally. Today in political arena of Pakistan who is hero and who will end as zero remains evident to all. The power chapter of Chaudhrys of Gujrat is a prelude to a budding alliance in Imran Khan government. Much the same sort of bonhomie is beginning to tell between Imran and the Chaudhrys of Gujrat. The same Chaudhrys remained Musharraf’s political partners and refused to give him any electoral leverage in Punjab during the 2002 elections. Now they are comrades-in-arms in the joint struggle to destabilize, weaken and eventually to keep Nawaz Sharif away from the country. Imran’s understanding with the establishment is another aura. He has unfailingly whipped up public sentiment in its favour whenever it has been cross with elected civilian governments. On PPP’s Interior Minister Rehman Malik’s attempt to bring the political wing of the ISI under him, on the objectionable clauses in Kerry-Lugar-Berman aid to Pakistan bill, on the May 2nd Osama bin Laden debacle, on Memogate, on the “state within the state” accusation by the then Prime Minister, Yousaf Raza Gilani, on the blockage of NATO supplies following Salala, and now most vociferously on the top media houses confrontation and on the General Musharraf case he is silent which is a very big concession to the power house. Hidden attempt to pressurise assorted politicians to join the PTI in 2012 is known to all.

Undoubtedly, it was this dubious relationship that helped to explain the induction of several key politicians into Imran Khan’s fold despite the lofty lota credentials of majority of them. Sheikh Rashid, who has a ringside seat in the inner circle of IK advisors, is a self-claimed GHQ man who was once Nawaz Sharif’s and then Musharraf’s Federal Minister. Asad Omar is the son of an army general, Shah Mahmood Qureshi jumped the PPP ship when nudged by the establishment on the Raymond Davis matter, Jehangir Tareen was Musharraf’s blue-eyed, Shafqat Mahmood served in Musharraf’s Punjab cabinet in 2000, Khurshid Kasuri was Musharraf’s Foreign Minister and many more.
Imran’s sit in was clearly aimed at destabilising the Sharif regime. It was followed up by a vicious attack on the top media group and a stinging denunciation of the judiciary. This betrays the perennial objective of the power house to keep every civilian government in a hunkered down defensive posture vis a vis the military establishment. In 1998 Benazir Bhutto was lumped with President Ishaq Khan and Foreign Minister Sahibzada Yaqub Ali Khan while Aitzaz Ahsan was swiftly cut down to size for being soft on India, later she was sacked. In 1990, Nawaz Sharif was lumped with President Ishaq and Gen Waheed Kakar shown the out door in1993. In1997, when Nawaz Sharif got too big for his boots after easing out both President Farooq Leghari and General Jehangir Karamat, he was ousted by a military coup. President Asif Zardari was hounded on one pretext or the other from 2008 -13, in alliance with the media and judiciary. Now Nawaz Sharif is in trouble over his attempt to try General Pervaiz Musharraf for treason and to seize control of national security and foreign policy.

It is said that the power house is planning another political arrangement as earlier. The problem with this theory is that the power house is to contend with popular force. Now there will be two, PPP and PML-N, covering both Sindh and Punjab, which will make it very difficult to play such a game. The establishment is only seeking to rap Nawaz Sharif again on the knuckles and teach him to stay in his place on key issues like national security, foreign policy and the sacred cow status of the military rather than putting Imran Khan in decorum to lead Pakistan gracefully next. Now Imran Khan is being used for hidden political goals just as other politicians. Who will be hero or zero doesn’t remain hidden. Make a hero and end as zero.

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