

# President's proposals

BY DR MUBASHIR HASAN

**P**resident General Pervez Musharraf has expounded a two-pronged strategy that he calls 'Enlightened Moderation'. It is gratifying that he has spoken his mind on vital questions that deserve debate and examination.

One part of his strategy, "to be delivered by the West, and the U.S. in particular, must aim at resolutely resolving all (presumably international) political disputes with justice and also assisting the socio-economic uplift of the deprived Muslim world."

The other part, "to be delivered by the Muslim world is to shun militancy, extremism and adopt the path of a socio-economic uplift". Apparently the president hopes that if the Western nations deliver their part and the Muslim world accepts his strategy, it will be "a win win solution for both the Muslim and the Non Muslim world".

General Pervez Musharraf boldly speaks of the unjust treatment of Muslims by the West in Palestine, Bosnia, Afghanistan, Chechnya and adds, "All subsequent reactions of the U.S. (following 9/11), their domestic responses against Muslims, their attitude towards Palestine and operations in Iraq have led to what he calls, "total polarisation of the Muslim masses against the U.S."

The president of Pakistan is publicly demanding a fundamental change in the outlook and policy on the part of the U.S. and the West. The question is, will or can the West "deliver"?

Consider first why the Western powers, and the U.S. in particular, perpetrate on weak countries unjust resolutions on political and economic questions that the president terms "disputes". Let us look at it from the point of view of a modern superpower. First, economic forces that the government is not capable of exercising much control on weigh it down. Second, it sees an opportunity in pursuing the traditional imperial goals.

A few centuries ago, the western nations, the English, Spaniards and Portuguese, in their conquests of the New World, employed brutal power, and even carried out genocide of the indigenous populations. They killed and made slaves in

millions, wiping out several races without any disputes. It was just pure aggression. During the last two hundred years, the U.S. established its he-

American administration will voluntarily, without external or internal pressure, change its present course. There can be no enlightened and moderate way of making another nation bow down to your will. An analogy nearer home may help in understanding this age-old axiom of the politics of power.

Consider for a moment, we have an army general ruling over Pakistan in the role of an American president. Assume also, the political elements clamouring for power and benefits in Pakistan, playing the role of weak Third world rulers that the US wishes to maintain as its clients. Our Pakistani general would immediately notice that the pressures on the American president of domestic politics and of huge economic interests vested in weak third world nations are not dissimilar to those faced by him in his own country. The general would recognise that he too is deeply dependent upon the politico-economic system over which he presides just as the US president is committed in his country.

Following the carrot and stick routine our general too has to seek the support of opportunist political and religious factions in his country just as the US president has to depend on the support of backward tribal and feudal leadership devoid of any popular mandate in third world countries. Just as the American president, the president of Pakistan has no power to effect any change in the fundamentals of the system that brought both of them into power.

History bears testimony to the fact that the generals who ruled over Pakistan were not able to effect any basic change in its system to usher a new political and social deal. Political and social conditions have steadily worsened and political stability has eluded the nation just as political stability in client nations has eluded the United States.

Driven by the necessity to advance their traditional vested interests, the generals, directly or through their puppet prime ministers, have rigidly followed in the footsteps of their predecessors. They have opted for stepping down, even risking their life, rather

than considering the option to deal with their political, economic and social problems in any other way.

There are still graver dimen-

gemony over Central and South America. It annexed Florida from Spain, wrested Texas from Mexico and conquered Philippines and numerous other islands in the Pacific.



sions to the problem. In August 1974, I warned Prime Minister Zulfikar Ali Bhutto that his policies "were a certain invitation to military intervention and disaster". In November 1974, I told

After World War II, the United States assumed leadership of the nations, determined to use physical force and economic pressure against the weaker ones. The British, the French, the Belgians and the Dutch, the imperial actors of the Old World got relegated to lower places in their alliance. The new imperialists refined their operational procedures but the mission remains unchanged, namely, subdue the globe politically and exploit it economically.

George W. Bush is embarked upon advancing the interests of his political party at home and economic interests of his nation abroad as his "great" predecessors had done. He is aiming at acquiring and controlling the natural resources of weak countries and building defences against potentially strong countries—for instance, China. He is embarked on a crusade which is fully justified in his mind on all grounds, doing a favour to Planet Earth, just as British carried, "the white-man's-burden."

Without the threat and use of violence, economic pressure and wanton bribing the ruling elite of the weak Third World nations, there is no way to bring into power and sustain client regimes to bid for the superpower and its allies. Things have now really turned sour for the U.S. and it cannot afford to wait for recalcitrant dictators "to die in their bed" as it was able to do thirty years earlier. Currently, the "Saddam Husseins" of today have to be removed forthwith. The writ of the "Sharons" has to be extended.

To achieve its targets, the American nation must rely on the traditional imperial means. "Mustrely", because there is no peaceful way to subdue and exploit poor nations. For their economic prosperity, there is no other practical way for the imperial nations left except to establish a direct control over the world's oil resources. "Oil is our civilisation", the American Secretary of State, James Baker explained to a friend of mine at the time of the First Gulf War.

The unceasing transfer of wealth from poor to rich nations is imperative to ensure prosperity of the West. No US government can afford to neglect it. At stake is the American way of life, as George W. Bush understands it. At risk is the vast economic system and the great western security structure which protects it.

It is futile to expect that the

him verbally that he had only two years to transform his power base from the establishment to the people, if he wanted to survive.

Should he fail to do that, "they would nudge him overboard", I had said. I was mortally shocked to hear his reply, "What you want me to do I do not have the power to do." I narrate this merely to highlight the feeble position of the man at the top, be it a Pakistani general or an American president, relative to the huge power of the system they preside over.

Consider, for instance, the Palestinian question. When we consider the options before an American president to resolve it, we have to keep in mind that when John F. Kennedy had declared Israel to be an "outpost of western civilisation", he was merely echoing the imperial necessity.

To create a Jewish state in the heartland of Arab nations was promised by Britain in 1919 through what came to be known as the Balfour declaration. It was a strategic decision for the security of the imperial nations of the world following their decision to detach Arab lands from the defeated Ottoman Empire.

The conditions for the western world have worsened since then. An equitable settlement of the Palestine question is an impossible morsel for the United States, to swallow voluntarily as the need for a domineering state of Israel continues to exist for their long term security needs.

Since the Palestinian question is one of the major causes of the Muslim world's dislike of the US, the antagonism is not likely to reduce. In the foreseeable future, no US government may have the capability to deviate from its goals and listen to the advice of the president of Pakistan.

The conclusion is obvious. It is impossible for the US and the West to deliver what the president of Pakistan is publicly demanding of them and so the other prong of the strategy pertaining to the Muslim world also cannot be fulfilled.

The present situation is not forever and a time will come when the weak, downtrodden and less privileged of the poor nations will become socially and politically strong. They will collaborate among themselves and deny the developed nations imperial loot and plunder which hopefully shall end the imperial era based on contemporary industry and finance.