**Protecting soft power**

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Since April 9, 2022, when the former Prime Minister Imran Khan and Chairman of the PTI party was ousted through vote of a no-confidence motion, the country has been facing political instability which has rapidly worsened the economic crisis.

In his various public rallies, addresses, and interactions with the foreign media, the ex-Premier Khan showed his contradictory statements. Sometimes, he appreciated the Pakistan Army and sometimes, censured it, while targeting former army chief, Gen. Qamar Javed Bajwa, stating: “A major international conspiracy was carried out against his regime’s removal through America’s threatening diplomatic cypher. Afterwards, he said that no conspiracy was made by the US, while Gen. Bajwa was responsible for his regime’s removal.

In this respect, Special Assistant to the Prime Minister on Interior and Legal Affairs Attaullah Tarar allegedly remarked on May 21, this year that PTI Chairman Imran Khan was begging a US Congresswoman to help and protect him, after instigating his people to attack the defence installations on May 9, 2023.

[Elton John’s Glastonbury triumph attracts 7.3 million TV viewers](https://www.nation.com.pk/27-Jun-2023/elton-john-s-glastonbury-triumph-attracts-7-3-million-tv-viewers)

Defence Minister Khawaja Asif of the PML-N had allegedly stated on March 24, this year: “PTI Chairman Imran Khan who blamed the United States for conspiracy against his government is now seeking its help now…Shireen Mazari has written a letter to the United States to help the country which was being accused of conspiracy against Pakistan or conspiracy against Imran Khan’s government…Imran Khan is a desperate man.”

In this context, Pakistan’s renowned anchor and analyst Talat Hussain wrote on May 17, 2023, and June 5, 2023: “Imran is knocking on every foreign mission door to seek political help, painting Pakistan as a collapsing country and peddling the fiction of a desperate army facing internal upheaval…Pakistan’s current military leadership is the centerpiece of national problems and without them changing their policies…democracy’s future in Pakistan is hopeless.”

Talat Hussain further said: “Senior diplomatic circles in Islamabad in recent interactions with me have unfurled some aspects of this closely guarded campaign by the PTI under the personal supervision of Imran Khan. This internal canvassing with foreign missions eggs these countries on to put pressure on the Establishment to provide relief and space to Imran Khan. Part of this lobbying also peddles a doomsday scenario for the country in case Imran is disqualified.”

[Mitsotakis’s conservatives clinch landslide Greece election win](https://www.nation.com.pk/27-Jun-2023/mitsotakis-s-conservatives-clinch-landslide-greece-election-win)

He added: “Imran Khan’s attacks on the army chief, General Asim Munir, and his intelligence heads are now in top gear. He is breaking all speed limits and is motoring on paths that take this fight beyond personalities. The new form of assault includes an open campaign for sanctions. A tweet by Sajjad Burki, Imran’s focal person in the US, has posted a video with Congressman Greg Casar, that he and the host, Tariq Majeed, are seen pleading to speak about the human rights situation in Pakistan, where the Congressman is most eager to do!”

In the recent past, some media entities pointed out a report that as part of the lobbies, PTI hired a Washington-based firm Praia Consultants LLC to improve relations with the US decision-makers after accusing Gen. Bajwa of toppling his government.

PTI has also rejected the government’s accusations that it instigated the party’s workers to attack civil and military installations. As regards the May 9 tragedy, renowned lawyer Aitzaz Ahsan remarked that Interior Minister Rana Sanaullah was behind the attack on Corps Commander’s residence, while PTI leader Dr. Yasmin Rashid was asking the protesters not to target his residence.

[Ukraine forces recapture new Russian-occupied settlement](https://www.nation.com.pk/27-Jun-2023/ukraine-forces-recapture-new-russian-occupied-settlement)

Analysts question how protesters reached the gate of the army’s General Headquarters in Rawalpindi, while after a deadly terrorist attack on the army’s GHQ on October 11, 2009, there could be tight security. About the assault at Corps Commander’s residence in Lahore, analysts opine that there is also tight security as to how protesters entered the house.

PTI Chairman Khan demanded the Supreme Court-led independent investigation of the May 9 events. But, without any investigation, the ruling alliance of the PDM leaders, especially PM Shehbaz Sharif stated that these assaults were preplanned. Under the pretext, they do not want to restart dialogue with the PTI about the date of the elections.

And more than ten thousand workers and suspects as well as key PTI leaders have been arrested countrywide. Rana Sanaullah said that pro-Khan protesters and suspects arrested for attacks on army installations have been handed to military authorities, who would face trial under the Pakistan Army Act and Official Secret Act—those who targeted public installations, their cases will be conducted in civil courts.

[Obama: Row in India over former US President’s remarks on Muslim rights](https://www.nation.com.pk/27-Jun-2023/obama-row-in-india-over-former-us-president-s-remarks-on-muslim-rights)

Besides, PDM leaders are also pursuing contradictory and conflicting statements. In the background of the May 2 incidents, Khawaja Asif remarked that the government is considering disqualifying Imran Khan or banning the PTI. Former Prime Minister of PML-N Shahid Khaqan Abbasi categorically said: “He is not in favour of ‘minus formula, does not want to ban of PTI”, stressing “let the voters decide about the fate of the PTI. Foreign Minister Bilawal Bhutto Zardari and the Chairman of the Pakistan Peoples Party (PPP) also expressed similar thoughts.

Criticising the Federal Finance Minister Ishaq Dar’s contradictory statements about the IMF, former Federal Finance Minister Miftah Ismail-leader of the PML-N pointed out: “Pakistan is on the verge of default”. Even several of the PDM leaders also censured Ishaq Dar regarding Budget 2023-2024.

However, no political party must distort particularly the Army’s image in such a way that the general masses should forget the sacrifices and services of the armed forces.

[Japan’s annual total of deaths hits record 1.56 million in 2022](https://www.nation.com.pk/27-Jun-2023/japan-s-annual-total-of-deaths-hits-record-1-56-million-in-2022)

At present, Pakistan is coping with multiple crises and problems. Therefore, all the political parties, especially PDM and PTI must sign a charter of democracy in connection with the general elections and create selfless unity to pull the countries out of these crises.