

# The perils of great expectations and

IN PAKISTAN, THE QUESTION OF "WHO LOST East Pakistan?" is one that is often posed around this time of the year and the Indian role duly highlighted. Whatever the merits of this narrative it should not detract attention away from some of the inherent flaws that led to the separation of the two wings. If for no other reason than to ensure that we do not repeat the mistakes. In the given scenario separation may not be relevant but aspects of mis-governance should not be ignored. An obvious issue is the danger of ignoring major political forces and the popular sentiment. The Awami League having won the majority of seats in the 1970 elections should have been allowed to form the government. Not doing so and resorting instead to a military option was to gravely compound the initial error.

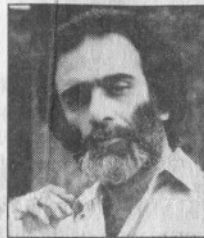
There are also other aspects of this tragic chapter of our history that we need to learn from. We see again, for instance, the rise of the notion of growth taking precedence over distribution or equity and the implied operation of some form of the trickle-down theory. Concern expressed over the high incidence of poverty today is met with impressive figures of a 6 percent plus annual growth rate and foreign exchange reserves that have crossed the \$12 billion mark. But, let us remind ourselves that under General Ayub Khan, too, we emerged in the '60s as a model of sorts with growth rates touching 7 percent. While there

was a huge amount of asset creation, wealth was concentrated in the hands of the proverbial 22 families. According to one estimate the purchasing power of industrial labour declined during the decade by nearly one-third. A major problem of this growth pattern with potentially far-reaching consequences was the discrepancy in investment and development between East Pakistan and West Pakistan. The widespread feeling among East Pakistanis that they were not being given a fair share in the country's resources was a major factor in the build-up towards 1971.

According to a Planning Commission document of July 1970 the average income gap between the two wings had actually widened over time. The figures indicated that in 1959-60 the per capita income in West Pakistan was 32 percent higher than in the East. Over the next decade the rate of growth of income in West Pakistan was 6.2 percent whereas in East Pakistan it was significantly lower at 4.2 percent. As a result by 1969-70 the income gap had doubled in percentage terms. It is possible that these figures were used to over-state the case in some ways but the case itself is fairly clear. We might reflect on this as we consider the contrasting figures of growth and poverty today as well as the alienation of the Baloch from the ambitious development projects taking shape in their province.

Another key feature of that tragic episode was

VIEW



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# d growth without equity

the conviction within the military particularly and the elite generally that that the issue could be settled militarily and in short order. Two related factors played an important role here: very little consideration was given to the possibility of intervention by India. This, despite the experience of 1965 and a number of fairly clear indications from the setting up of a Bangladesh government-in-exile in India in April and the signing of a Peace and Friendship Treaty with the Soviet Union to the tour of Western capitals by Indira Gandhi in November to neutralise opposition to India's plans.

On the other hand the possible role of the United States in getting Pakistan out of the crisis was over-determined. One probable reason was General Yahya Khan's part in facilitating Kissinger's secret trip to China in 1971 at a sensitive time when the US was working towards its historic opening towards that country. The Nixon-Kissinger duo was duly grateful. This inevitably generated a great deal of complacency in the top military leadership led by General Yahya Khan. Virtually till the very end there was widespread belief in these circles that the Enterprise-led US naval force was making its way towards the Bay of Bengal to lend critical support to Pakistan's beleaguered military forces. Even if one accepts the view that the naval movement was meant as a warning to India to give up any designs it may have of

attacking West Pakistan the fact remains that the military leadership badly over-estimated the nature and quantum of US intervention with regard to the situation in East Pakistan.

Equally, the leadership over-estimated what China was willing or able to do in support of Pakistan. While China's public expressions of support for Pakistan were unambiguous there was little reason to believe that it might be persuaded to intervene in the conflict in a decisive manner. Again, it may be relevant in the current scenario to keep this in mind even as China is seen as Pakistan's all-weather friend or 'strategic partner' as Prime Minister Shaukat Aziz chose to put it at the start of his recent visit to that country. We might have to wait for an elaboration of what such a strategic partnership between the two countries entails. But, in order not to be misled or disappointed yet again, our leadership should recognise that China as a rapidly-advancing global power will have strategic concerns in the region and beyond that will not always converge with those of Pakistan. So, a history of good relations strengthened over time should not lead to irrational expectations that simply will not be met.

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...ay, and enjoin... and forbid indecency, and vie one with another in good works. They are of the righteous.

Surah Aal-i-Imraan - 3, Verse -

OTHER VIEW

# The unwelcome Pakistani

**Fakir Ayazuddin**

**W**hat fun. The redoubtable Maulana Fazlurrahman, leader of the Opposition, has been manhandled (?) on a trip to Paris. It seems the French Constabulary also accused his sponsor of inviting a known terrorist to France. Finally our *mullahs* are facing the suffering that the rest of us have known for a long time now.

Pakistanis are no longer welcome in any country of the world. As far as the EU is concerned, we are not issued visas unless a sponsor invites us to visit. A Pakistani going to Paris for a holiday is a thing of the past. To visit the Louvre, gaze at the Mona Lisa — not if you are a Pakistani. The Colosseum in Rome — only in books and magazines for you, if you are a Pakistani.

Oh, and it's not all one-way. The EU and the state department have travel advisories telling their citizens to avoid Pakistan, so their poor citizens will have to go elsewhere for a good holiday missing the delights on offer here. Their citizens will never know the wonders that exist in our great country, they will only read of the poverty without firsthand knowledge, unless they are stout hearted and are prepared to ignore their government's advice... very difficult for the average citizen.

We need to take a serious look at the workings of our foreign office and the way that our tourism department is projecting our country. On both counts, Pakistan has been brought to pariah status by the other countries. It is a disgrace because I, for one, am proud to be a Pakistani, and am bewildered by the treatment being meted out to our citizens by foreign embassies. The standing in line in scorching sun, the questioning. Surely our government should do something about it, but does it have the will. Our wretched FO, complete with their three piece suits and Oxford accents cannot be bothered with the treatment handed out to us ordinary citizens. Our FO staff actually thinks they are of a different nationality, and therefore are not

really concerned.

Mr. President, your famous accountability should take a close look at the performance of these two departments, because in both instances it is the nation's pride that is at stake, and being sullied. The Arab states call us the "*miskeen* Pakistanis". Can we get any lower?

We cannot expect any relief from our newly elected MNAs and Senators, because they are all part of the VVIP culture, and know not the rigours or humility of lining up for a visa. The entire top echelon of the FO deserves a sound shaking up, and should be made to do the rounds at various embassies to see the treatment that we, the citizens, receive. It is the prime responsibility of the government to protect its citizens in other countries. The US government is well known for bringing its entire might to bear on any government in defense of even one of their nationals. The president will himself pick up the phone to send a clear message. Doubly shameful for us is the fact that no Indian national is treated in the same manner as a Pakistani. This is a very serious matter and shows the ineptitude and callous indifference of our FO.

An important gauge of success or failure of a government is how other governments treat its citizens. Mr. President, today our government has succeeded in putting our people so far down that it would need superhuman effort to bring us respect of any kind internationally. This is an issue that should be addressed by the president, and not left to the fuddy dummies in the FO, who will invariably explain that it is the Pakistanis themselves who have brought about this condition.

To have a Pakistani as head of a UN body is all very well, but if it is not translated into a higher respect for our 'green passport' then all the effort is wasted. It is such a pity that we, belonging to such a great country, have to suffer such indignities that could be addressed if our government made up its mind to do so.

The writer is a Karachi-based businessman