**Pakistani purveyors of Trumpian “Truths” Part I**

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President Trump and the USA election, has shown us among many other things, the power and effectiveness of lies and unsubstantiated fabrications, which when repeated over and over again by leaders, transform into a “partisan” version of the “truth”!

In Pakistan a similar strategy of outright lies and untruths is being adopted by the political opposition against PM Imran, specifically by Maryam Safdar and Bilawal Zardari.

So what strengthens this type of narrative and makes it effective?

In my opinion, three things.

Firstly, in the cacophony of narratives and counter narratives, the one which is most disagreeable, negative, outrageous, stands out. This is the unfortunate part of what’s “newsy”.

Such negative pronouncements are then actively promoted by PMLN and PPP supporters across their networks.

Secondly, conventional media then picks up these highly questionable outbursts as talking points in their news items, TV talk shows and editorials, to gain readers / viewers’ attention and improve ratings.

In this potentially inflammable strategy lies great danger. It pollutes and polarizes our political and social environment, subdues and hides the good work that’s happening and finally has the very real and dangerous possibility of transforming into mass scale violence, civil unrest, entirely fuelled by complete lies, falsehoods and half-truths

Not only partisan PPP and PMLN news media picks them up to promote these falsehoods, but objective or pro PTI people and anchors also do so in their attempt to counter these falsehoods and allegations. Partly driven by the fear of losing ratings since others are discussing it. And then we have the sensationalist anchors who thrive on pandering this kind of sensational nonsense to gullible viewers!

This further adds even more fuel to the raging forest fire of lies, fabrications and falsehoods.

Finally, Social Media, the “Wild West” of information, picks them up and as we all know, spreads them faster across the universe than any other medium of communication.

Several very senior PDM insiders from the PMLN and PPP, have shared with me their grave concerns about these falsehoods emanating from Nawaz Sharif, Maryam and Bilawal in which they are targeting the Army in general and specifically COAS Gen. Bajwa and DG ISI Lt. Gen. Faiz Hameed.

An insider said that this deliberate building of false narratives is an agreed and formal strategy and plan between Maryam and Bilawal to blacken PM Imran, his government, the Pakistan Army, COAS, Gen. Bajwa and Lt. Gen. Faiz Hamid, DG ISI.

They’ve expressed great anguish at how PMLN & PPP have surrendered their leadership to these two individuals.

When I asked them why, the answers were that Maryam’s and Bilawal’s incidence of birth, their family name, their wealth and the support of a highly corrupt coterie of advisers who’s entire political future rests on supporting, advising and manipulating them like puppets, are the key factors.

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So how does one address such a situation?

For starters sift fact from fiction. Know what is true and what is mere slander and falsehood. Here’s a list.

1. Nawaz Sharif has been convicted for crimes of corruption and money laundering. 7 Judges of the Supreme Court found him guilty. That is a fact.

2. He is deliberately attempting to sow the seeds of doubt, sedition, rebellion, amongst the rank and file of the Pakistan Army against its current leadership. That is a fact.

3. His public pronouncements while PM, in an attempt to offer proof of his money trails, were lies. He had and to date has failed to provide evidence of how he acquired assets overseas. That is a fact.

4. He has never publicly condemned the actions of Kulbashan Yadav or held India responsible for terrorist acts in Pakistan. That is a fact.

5. He has never criticized Narendra Modi for his poison laden statements against Pakistan, Indian Muslims, the Pakistan Army and his actions in changing the status of Indian occupied Kashmir. That is a fact.

6. His criticism of Gen. Bajwa, Lt. Gen. Faiz and the Army has been received very positively and extensively propagated in India and Indian media. That is a fact.

7. Nawaz Sharif would never have made it into politics but for Gen. Zia and Governor Jilani. That is a fact!

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