



A Pakistani solution **By** **Ahmed Quraishi**

Despite the many hints and calls for a coup of some sort, the Pakistani military shouldn't intervene now when the politicians are doing a great job of discrediting every last one of themselves. This process must be completed unhindered before a future intervention, which looks inevitable at some point considering the national downward spiral.

Pakistan's existing political elite does not resemble anything the other countries have. Our elite has mastered the art of blackmail and won't hesitate to use the so-called trump cards — the Sindh card, the Punjab card, foreign cards etc — to protect its own interests and perks under the garb of defending democracy. Let the Pakistanis test the full worth of whatever remains of this elite so we won't have distractions — or political martyrs — when the time comes for change.

But when that time arrives, the people of Pakistan know exactly what they want. They want their most organized and patriotic institution, the military, to align itself with talented, creative and hardworking Pakistanis, from the lower and middle classes, and introduce total change. The establishment will have to make a strategic decision to ditch the feudal-political class. This unholy alliance has become a threat for Pakistan, for the military and for the wellbeing of Pakistanis at large.

In the twenty-first century, Pakistan needs to lay down the foundations of a fresh political system that would speed up the moulding of a new breed of Pakistani citizens, and ensure that Pakistan blossoms in the new century into prosperity and power, and secures its legitimate economic and strategic space. A full-fledged democratic system in Pakistan can wait. We should not have illusions that a free-for-all system can deliver at this stage of national rot.

Ours is a failed and unworkable political system that cannot be salvaged regardless of the number of times we hold general elections. The notion that democracy would correct itself is untrue in our case where the system started off on the wrong footing. This system is bleeding Pakistan to death, one year at a time. If it continues like this, the Pakistani version of democracy will prove to be the nation's undoing, much in the same way that democracy brought Russia to its knees before Mr Vladimir Putin and the Russian establishment intervened to stop the rot.

Pakistan's future cannot be put to vote at this point in time. Pakistan needs a handpicked civilian government with a robust 'to-do' list, backed by the enforcement power of the military. This setup can then go about the task of introducing the most far-reaching set of changes Pakistan has seen since 1947. Some of the proposed changes include localising politics.

This can be done by introducing new administrative [not linguistic] provinces, run directly by elected governors and local parliaments. Let these smaller units get busy in generating revenue locally, maximizing business opportunities, building roads, schools, shopping malls and theatres.

We can import some ideas from China on how to encourage the population to get busy in moneymaking and improving lifestyles. The federal government could help with money, talent and facilitation. Such measures will destroy language-based divisive politics. Other measures can include proscribing language, ethnic and sectarian-based political parties.

The Pakistani State alone would represent its citizens and no politician or party should self-appoint itself to represent any Pakistani language or culture. You either represent the nation or you don't.

To introduce a new political culture, the so-called 'rally culture' must be ended by designating open-air grounds, or freedom squares, near or at the periphery of cities and towns where rallies and processions can relocate. We can introduce social safety nets for the weakest segments of Pakistanis.

We can bring modernity to the remotest parts of Pakistan through devolution of power and direct involvement of a strong federal government overseeing the process of social and political change.

The federal Pakistani government will have to be recast to introduce creative solutions to local problems. Our problem is that our US and British-educated ruling elite look to the text books of their adopted cultural homelands for answers to Pakistan's internal problems.

This time, let's do what the Chinese have done. They learned from everyone but devised and applied Chinese solutions to Chinese problems. The only thing they imported is technology and creativity.

The writer works for Geo TV. Email: aq@ahmedquraishi.com

Ahmed Quraishi, "A Pakistani solution," *The News*. 27-09-2010.

Keywords: Political science, Political parties, Military-Pakistan, Politicians, Democracy, Power, Elections, Politics, China, United States, Pakistan