

## **POLITICAL NOTES**

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### **Good Governance**

Government should consider generating and saving of more funds, reduce its administrative costs and non-developmental expenditure.

Government should stop levying indirect taxes or raising the cost of fuel and energy.

The ministers and governors should refrain from self-projection and image building.

Differences of opinion should be valued and accepted. Unity should be sought in diversity of views and perspectives, and tolerance practiced. Doing away with the status quo demands a drastic change of mental psyche of the whole nation. Only governments that proceed on these lines can best achieve change of national psyche. The Qur'an says: "Verily never will Allah change the condition of people until they change it themselves, with their own soul".

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We must have a government, which is in place with the consent of the governed.

The aim of all governments since the creation of Pakistan has been to perpetuate themselves, and to enlarge and consolidate their privileges and power-base at the cost of public welfare and good governance.

Democracy and human rights, illegitimate aspirations that move people round the world, are increasingly being advocated for propagating a universal and homogeneous model of governance.

Internal factors ranging from feudalism, tribalism and religious bigotry to inequality and poverty have together created a

socio-political environment where the State has no interest in social development.

There was hope that after achieving independence, the society would be based on social justice, and the disadvantaged would find equal opportunities in education, employment and other social, cultural, economic and politic fields of life. The dream has clearly not been realized.

'Good governance' and 'equitable distribution of wealth should be arranged.

Every ruler is responsible before God for the welfare of the people. He should be accessible to the people, take personal interest in their problems and promote their prosperity.

General Musharraf as an individual has no right to take decisions unilaterally on vital national issues while ignoring the elected representations from the federation and the federating units and the Constitution. This amounts to jeopardizing the integrity and unity of the country. Constitution of the National Finance Commission (NFC) by him unilaterally was not in accordance with the Constitution and is detrimental to the interests of the people. He has imposed his own formula of NFC Award despite reservations of NWFP and Sindh.

Authoritarian rule and dictatorship would only harm the country's integrity.

Pakistan is a house divided against itself and its government distracted by serious troubles at home. It must set its internal politics right and affairs in order.

The system of governance from top to bottom is raven with contradictions. The practice seldom conforms to the form. The conformity is more personal than institutional.

The only way from coming out of the present political social and economic embroil is to return to a truly representative political government and the end to the military hold over power.

The US air raid on Bajour Agency has clearly indicated that the rulers had mortgaged the sovereignty of the country.

### **State Policies**

The true concept of State lies in its being a positive and purposive State in economic and social transformation, engaged in economic and social transformation. As opposed to this the key issues of public policy are being taken out of the political arena and treated as essentially technical.

State policies in Pakistan have built an elite structure based on domination of certain classes over the society. Recently disillusionment has set in about the capacity of the State to be an agent for liberating the masses and the poor people from tradition religious and cultural ethos, to promote egalitarian policies, to provide autonomy to the provinces and provide protection against a variety of vested interests.

A doctrinaire shift has taken place from prosperity as a goal of development to stability as a goal. Stability has become a goal. Stability has become the watchword of development rather than raising the standard of living for all.

The State is becoming an enemy of the poor. Famine and poverty were always concerns of an enlightened State.

Sports, religion, media all have become spectacular act of benumbing the population, preventing an awareness of political consciousness and dialogue. The purposive State committed to transformation has given way to a techno-bureaucratic order wedded to status quo and repression.

Internal factors ranging from feudalism, tribalism and religious bigotry to inequality and poverty have together created a socio-political environment where the State has no interest in social development.

### **Civil Bureaucracy**

Government servants should adopt a modest bearing towards the public, show an ostentatious lifestyle and live as ordinary people. They should not be arbitrary, and act within law.

The bureaucracy has lost all sense of national purpose, not to speak of accountability, and has become adhocish and has lost all grips on the prevailing situation.

Misuse of public funds is done through the bloated bureaucracy of over 4 million employees of the federal, provincial and local governments. A large bureaucracy means an excess of red tape. This delays the official decisions and results in too many meetings. Delay in the process breeds corruption and money has to be paid to speed up the process. The administration around the world, on the other hand, was getting modernized and thinned down.

Top government functionaries are inaccessible to the people in the normal course.

People generally join the civil services with the sole aim of becoming rich through corruption.

### **Military Bureaucracy**

The future of Pakistani politics and the State depends on one central issue. The army should assume a purely professional role, and the governance of the country should be carried out by the people of Pakistan through the truly elected representatives.

We spend around 6 per cent of our GNP on defense. The world average is around 2 per cent.

The budget of 2003 gives total tax revenue of Rs. 460 billion. Debt servicing: Rs. 290 billion. Defense: Rs. 140 billion. Tax revenue: Rs.24 billion. All that the country is left with for jobs, education and health are crumbs.

### **Accountability of Rulers**

Every ruler is responsible before God for the welfare of the people. He should be accessible to the people, take personal interest in their problems and promote their prosperity.

### **Judiciary**

A judge should persevere in examining the pros and cons of matters that come before him. He should be willing to rectify his own errors of judgment.

### **Constitution**

Our Constitution grants discretionary powers to the President and the Prime Minister in making a number of appointments in the prize jobs of service chiefs, judges of superior courts, Chief Election Commissioner, provincial governors and ambassadors. This discretion has resulted in breeding nepotism and favouritism. Provision must be made in the Constitution banishing all discretionary powers from the highest to the lowest level in administration.

No constitutional arrangement would benefit the people unless extremism is curbed and peace is made with India.

The Constitution of 1973 exists no more in effect. Lost is the ability of the people to govern themselves, to see their aspirations reflected in their government to hope for a better future for their next generation.

The 1973 Constitution has suffered numerous controversial amendments and long spells of extra-constitutional rule.

### **Parliament and Assemblies**

Appointments of superior judiciary and the Election Commission should be done by the Parliament instead of the Prime Minister or the President.

The people's representatives must have the authority to appoint or dismiss the Chiefs of the armed forces

The Prime Minister should regularly attend the proceedings of the National Assembly at least once a week

The present national and provincial assemblies, on the whole, are a product of manipulation and rigging by General Musharraf and his coterie of salable politicians siding with him against the will and interests of the people and, if the next general elections are held in the right manner, none of these turncoats will be elected to the assemblies. They stand discredited in the eyes of the people and are deemed as traitors to the nation because of their anti-people activities.

The present parliament is in disarray; neither its members wish to work nor do the president nor the prime minister want them to work. The parliament in Pakistan has always tended to act in subordination to the Chief Executive. The cabinet considers itself answerable not to the parliament but to the president. The Chief Ministers of the provinces are not elected by the assemblies but chosen by the President.

### **Democratic Process**

There is no alternative to letting the democratic process continue, and finding solutions within the system.

Qaid-e-Azam had spelt out the concept of democracy very clearly and in unambiguous terms. You have to have a political philosophy on a vision if you are in the game of leading a nation.

Public opinion can play an important role in resolving international disputes (as with India), and in particular in making peaceful-co-existence a reality

Democracy stands for building a strong, humane and just, mutually tolerant and hence deeply unifying social and political order.

The essence of democratic politics is that people come out into their own and not wait endlessly for the State or the political

parties to make things better for them. Democracy envisages a society free of exploitation, oppression and indignities.

Inherent in a true democracy is the notion of a large and extensive infrastructure of people's organization at all levels, especially at the ground level.

In the long run, the democratic process by the grassroots movement will give rise to a different democratic process than the narrow electoral political process that is normally identified with democracy.

The virtue of democracy is that it can be directly experienced, is relatively transparent and can be subjected to tests of accountability. It is democracy that provides the new consensus in all societies, singly and globally. It is the democratic aspiration that poses the most realistic challenge of any time; how to make any of the system – constitutional, political, social or economic – respond to both the basic needs and the basic rights of a people.

Only with the help of the democratic temper can society moderate its excesses, remove itself from militarist ambitions and once again seek the role of serving society.

The agenda of democracy is not just one of access to political power in the narrow sense of the term. It includes growing economic and social concerns and unresolved problems. It includes cultural and ethnic issues, problems of community living, of physical environment and resource conflicts of major choices of technology and management. It includes the mental and emotional states, mindsets, and arenas of consciousness and prejudice, wholesome versus fragile egos, sensitivities and amnesias – states of awakening and states of slumber over major issues and anxieties of human beings as also as political beings.

There is no secure future for the democratic polity without ensuring an alternative model of, and perspective for, planning and development. We should shift towards an ecologically sustainable system of production that also generates sizeable employment and purchasing power in the process, providing the economy with a fresh impetus as well as a more humane and just base., restoring to it its inner dynamism and self-reliance, entailing a fresh conceptualization of the whole model of both development and governance. It will call for a major step towards a politically dynamic, socially sensitive, decentralized and technologically and administratively open system of governance and nation building

that is served by an equally open and transparent information order and channel of communication.

Clean, positive, progressive and truly democratic politics is what is required for Pakistan.

The basic question for the entire people is the creation of a democratic society.

Democracy, rule of law, justice, honesty, merit, consultation, education, science and technology and strong state institutions were needed for meaningful progress.

We should create unity on two issues: the revival of democracy and ending of American alliance.

In a democratic set up you have to go back to the electorate every four or five years. Experience has shown that even the poor cannot be befouled by slogans like "shining India" or "prosperous Pakistan" if their lot has not been improved.

### **Despotic Regime**

A terrorist regime believes that it may destroy part of the community in order to control the whole social order.

### **Elections**

. A caretaker government of national consensus should be set up to hold fresh elections in 2006. A non-partisan government should be formed to hold the next general elections.

The State, the politicians and the civil society should come together to evolve an electoral system that could establish public credibility and trust and guarantee fair, free and transparent elections. At present, public distrust in the electoral exercise has only distanced the electorate from voting, alienation reflected in the ever-decreasing turnout.

Elections have been ends in themselves, instruments of the status quo and self-perpetuation rather than of change for the better.

The key operational issue is the relationship between elections and democracy. Increasingly the whole democratic space is being taken up by the compulsion of the electoral process, in fact the compulsion of the party in power that wants perpetual power. In such a view of democracy, there is no role for people as such except as voters to be counted, or forced to be counted, in a certain direction.

## **Political Process**

The west took almost three centuries to get rid of the anti-people and anti-progressive totalitarian regimes through a constitutional struggle.

An understanding should be reached between all political forces opposed to fascism. We should put in patient work for bringing revolutionary consciousness in the masses.

The basic question for the entire people is the creation of a democratic society

Bringing together all who stand for for democracy, progress, radical change, and lead them into action against what is reactionary and obsolete, is the *sin quo non* of politics.

Ensuring the country's economic and social stability is of primary importance for any political advancement.

Any new social movement should be different from earlier attempts at social change or from the nature of party politics that we have had. It should be based on representation of people of all classes in power structure on the basis of merit.

Criminalization of politics has led to the highjacking of the State by criminal elements. This is rooted in the desperate need to stay in office.

What is needed for recovery of politics is decentralization both in governance of the country and in decision making.. This is the only way to ensure the integrity of a country and the well-being of its people, as well as the full participation of diverse communities and regions in the national endeavour.

What is really needed is a process channelizing the great spurt of consciousness among the people enabling grassroots organizations and non-governmental bodies to take charge of community affairs, unburdening the bureaucracy of unnecessary accretions to its duties and responsibilities, and enabling the poor and the disabled to mend matters.

Pseudo politics that has taken charge of our lives for so long should be replaced with true politics, through a timely and well-tuned sense of intervention in the historical process.

There is an urgent need of redefining the very nature of the political process by bringing to the center of the polity the problems of the most marginalized strata of the population. Such a grassroots style of politics necessitates decentralization both in the governance of the country and in decision-making. This is the only way to ensure the integrity of the country and the well-being of

the people as well as the full participation of diverse communities and regions in the national endeavour.

There is lack of leadership that can draw on his inner balance and sanity for creating a balanced and sane future for the people. The prevailing confusion among the political and intellectual elite has made it practically suspend the political process and erode its institutional base, and has consequently allowed various forces (among them religious and sectarian) to prosper.

The political system that is essentially designed to be multi-centred, multi-ethnic and multi-caste' has been thrown out of gear. In the process, the State itself has become at once more centralized and more oppressive, especially vis-a-vis the deprived, the weak, the marginalized (both traditionally marginalized and the newly marginalized) and the victimized sections of society.

In order to free a country from dependence on foreign monopoly-capital it is necessary to forge an alliance of the genuinely national democratic forces.

We live in the times of danger and uncertainty, but they are also the most creative of any time in the history of mankind. It is a revolutionary world in what we all live in.

Political work requires that we first determine and declare that:

(b) A clear message will be delivered to its people that there will be no corruption in politics.

(c) The establishment will be made effective, fruitful and pro-people.

(d) Improvement will be done in every field of life.

(e) Increase in production will be made first priority in government planning.

(f) The electoral process will be made free, fair and transparent so as to truly reflect the will of the people.

The individual interest has to be replaced by the ideal of the good of humanity at large. Equity and justice should prevail over oppression and exploitation. Man's desire to dominate others must end and everyone must live in peace and harmony.

We live in the times of danger and uncertainty, but they are also the most creative of any time in the history of mankind. It is a revolutionary world in what we all live in.

## **Political Parties and Politicians**

Instead for a hunt for ideal ruler, we should consider how to organize political institutions that prevent the rulers from abusing their powers.

Issues directly related to the masses should first be determined and then taken up collectively by the political parties.

Political parties should work in close coordination with the peasant's and worker's organizations.

A collective struggle should be made by likeminded political parties in the form of a political movement to build a new and healthy approach to politics

Political leaders should do away with their false egos and self-interests.

"Visionary leaders" and "agents of change are required at all levels of society. The present is a golden opportunity for change. The leaders of public opinion should share amongst themselves their visions, values, strategies and plan of action.

The future of the society depends upon empowering and enfranchising the still disabled and disenfranchised social groups and regions, by disinheriting the already fattened and opulent super classes, by relocating jobs and opportunities and the privileges and prerequisites that go with them, and by restructuring institutions so that significant sources of life support systems such as land entitlements, access to natural endowments and common property resources become available to the deprived and the poor. None of this can be done without major acts of determination on the part of a new and rejuvenated leadership that displays not just vision but also a grip over the administrative and implementing structure of institutions all the way from the base to the apex.

What we have is mismanagement, wrong planning, apathy, corruption, loot and plunder. No government has tried to change the system. What we have is "politics of power", and no one is concerned with the problems of the people. Opportunist politicians have made the people indifferent to politics

The way political parties are organized and function, alienates the populace from political process. Lack of democracy in political parties mostly controlled by a single person had made them personal fiefdoms of the elite, capitalists, feudal lords or religious leaders.

## **Collective Action**

The imperative of the time is to promote and expand joint actions of all political and public organizations and movements, irrespective of present differences of views and opinions.

### **Progress and Development**

Progress and development cannot be achieved for the self, or one's own country, unless the progress and development apply to all.

Trade in manufactures and raw materials, and exchange of scientific, technological and production know-how is in the interest of all countries, big and small.

The scientific and technological revolution inevitably aggravates the economic, social and political antagonisms rending the capitalist system apart as a whole, and paves the way to radical social change.

### **Development of Civil Society**

The real damage to a society occurs when entire generations of youth are mis-educated, e.g., to believe that personal success comes not through merit and hard work but through favouritism, bribery and fraud.

Any progressive social programme should treat popular welfare not merely as a sum of national values but as a combination of material and cultural conditions conducive to the all-round development of man, and the manifestations of his creative abilities. A social programme of such scope can only be carried out by an economically developed country, which continually expands its industry, and agriculture, increasingly applies the achievement of the scientific and technological revolution, and rapidly builds its material and technical bases.

A society, which abolishes the exploiting classes and the conditions that give rise to them, possesses vast vitality. Indestructible moral and ideological unity, unbreakable fortitude in coping with any difficulties and trials, and a tremendous potential for development and self-perfection.

We should give full attention to our both countries and the people abounding them, and work equally hard to build the two societies of the subcontinent through right intellectual and ideological approach.

Enable those millions who still believe in nationalism, democracy, humanism and plural identities to come into their own

and build a strong, united, humane and just, mutually tolerant and hence deeply unifying social and political order.

The full dynamics of civil society are based on autonomy, pluralization, national and local development regimes, indeginization of education and belief systems, and new and varied experiments from the grassroots.

Traditional societies too had problems but these were never solved for good, nor were attempts made to do so. State of tension and disequilibrium were brought under control but the problems continued to exist. There was no genuine peace or even harmony in traditional civil society.

Housing and education policies in particular have actually created a form of apartheid. The *ashrafia* (elite) are in full control of all levels of State apparatus, and overall social development is not part of their agenda. An unequal society based on injustice cannot expect meaningful social development.

Class exploitation and national oppression go together in a bourgeois dominated polity.

The dominant trend in world opinion today is dedication to new ideals – the ideals of peace, national and social freedom, justice, the brotherhood of man.

The essence of democratic politics is that people come out into their own and not wait endlessly for the State or the political parties to make things better for them.

Democracy envisages a society free of exploitation, oppression and indignities  
Ensuring the country's economic and social stability is of primary importance for any political advancement.

Economic and technical issues that have arisen in the wake of decades of mal-development and skewed priorities cannot any longer be left to experts and technicians, planners and planning bodies. Problems of poverty and distribution, disparities and inequities are at bottom political problems and need to be both viewed as basically political problems and ones in which large numbers of people at different levels of social existence need to play diverse roles. The social urge towards equity has to be conceived as a political urge. So too the cultural craving for diversity and pluralism so that equity does not degenerate into equality and becomes a basis for social justice, politically conceived. It is necessary to think of development as a

fundamentally political task. So that while the agenda of democracy must reach out to include economic and technical tasks, thinking on economics and technology have to be regarded in political terms.

The paramount aims of all our endeavours should be rapid economic expansion and steady growth of national wealth, making possible the continual rise of the people's living standards. Trade in manufactures and raw materials, and exchange of scientific, technological and production know-how is in the interest of all countries, big and small.

## **Economy**

Without democratization of society, strong economy alone cannot lead to social development.

Our current rulers' basic philosophy about growth and equity is still that change will come from above and consistent growth will create a large number of jobs and poverty will be reduced automatically. No fundamental change has taken place in our approach, nor there is any shift in our priorities.

Our planners and economic managers are again ignoring the basic issues and the problems our country is afflicted with. They lack the capacity to see socio-economic development in its totality. To them economy merely means statistics, econometrics and macro management. Development is too multifaceted an object to be left to economic management alone.

Pakistan's human capital profile has deteriorated over the last decade. Our 70 per cent population is subsisting on the margins, half of our rural families are landless, 30 per cent urban population is living in slums without basic services.

There is the need for inequality reduction measures and rendering the tax regime progressive as in the present system only 55,000 persons declare an annual income of Rs. 2,50,000 while 80 per cent revenue income is generated through indirect taxes.

Then there are no efforts or even references at any government level for reallocation of resources from non-productive heads of expenditure to social sectors. We live in a country where the cost of ruling the State has reached almost 90 per cent of the income. Defense, debt servicing, losses of public sector corporations, intelligence agencies and civil administration consume most of this money. Hardly anything is left for providing basic services to the people.

Growth alone is not insufficient for poverty reduction nor it will automatically tackle the employment problem. Our policy makers refuse to admit that our economic policies continue to result in pervasive class and regional inequality.

In the early 60s, our dependence on foreign loans had just begun. Now in the 90s about 50 per cent of our revenue income was being allocated to debt servicing (both foreign and domestic). The practice of negotiating loans without critically exercising their need still continues.

The important question is how long can we continue to remain tied to the economic paradigm that has consistently failed us?

If our planners have some sense of history, instead of foisting economic and political development from the top, they should have first focused their attention on social sectors, specially universal primary education, adult literacy, skill development, basic health cover, sanitation, rural water supply, housing and population control. In urban areas where a large number of people live in unauthorized settlements, they should have given property rights enabling them to create mortgage able assets. But under foreign influence they ignored these sociological aspects altogether. At the same time they failed to realize that without meaningful land reforms and our agriculture organized on sound footing, industry alone could not take us far.

None of our policy makers are talking about poor governance, which has resulted in institutional exhaustion and dysfunctional government machinery. They ignore the fact that whatever little resources are allocated for health, education and physical infrastructure, are not fully utilized and the major part is siphoned off in kickbacks and corruption. There is inefficiency galore. They fail to see that the whole planning and development paradigm is deeply flawed. It excludes people from the decision-making process. There is neither any accountability nor transparency. It is an admitted fact that hardly 20 per cent benefits of the development outlay finally reach the target groups.

Industrial and Agricultural Development

As much as 40 per cent of the total arable land in Pakistan remains uncultivated mainly because of lack of irrigation due to faulty methods.

## **Scientific and Technological Development**

The scientific and technological revolution inevitably aggravates the economic, social and political antagonisms rending the capitalist system apart as a whole, and paves the way to radical social change.

## **Education**

The decay of the primary education sector is the fundamental cause of the failure of our universities to achieve their goals. The importance of primary education is still not recognized. The focus of attention, debate and funds has shifted to higher education.

Our education must aim for both mental and intellectual growth and groom thinking-children. The key to meeting the challenges of today and tomorrow is to make relentless endeavours and to pursue studies with focused commitment, innovation and creativity. The educational institutions should make concentrated efforts to ignite in the students a ceaseless quest for knowledge and groom them intellectually, psychologically and socially. The educational training at the institutions must enable students to adapt to the fast changing world.

The teachers must understand that their job is not merely to fill the minds of their students with information, but also provide them the vision and the ability to process the same.

Together we must make education a process not only to empower people to stand on their feet and take control of their own lives, but also contribute to nation-building eventually.

The young generation in the present age of science must be exposed to intellectual pursuits, research and creativity. At the same time, grooming of a child must take into account all qualities of head and heart.

The study of philosophy should be to open the hearts and minds closed by dogmatic thinking. A people wedded to dogma would remain confused. Reality was ever changing and demanded new solutions to new problems. To live in real times is to change from moment to moment. Creativity is opposite to repetition, and all creation is free activity. The Qur'an stressed the unity of *iman* (faith) and *amal* (practice).

The government, whose responsibility is to ensure universal primary education, has virtually abdicated its role.

Workers and their children should be trained about labour rights and human rights.

## **Consensus on Basic National Issues**

Pakistan should follow the path of national reconciliation and dialogue. All the major players of society namely politicians, bureaucracy, judiciary, army business and industrial elite and other representatives of civil society should sit together and first apologize to the nation for their past mistakes, as all are equally responsible for the mess the nation is in, then develop a consensus on the basic issue confronting the nation today.

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## **Mass Awareness**

Mass education will mean taking the people out of darkness; it would mean  
Improving the people.

What is really needed is a process channelizing the great spirit of awakening and consciousness among our people, enabling grassroots organizations and non-governmental bodies to take charge of community affairs, unburdening the bureaucracy of unnecessary accretions to its duties and responsibilities, and enabling the poor and the disabled to mend matters for themselves.

We should put in patient work for bringing revolutionary consciousness in the masses.

## **Provincial Autonomy**

Important political problems that account for so much discontent and instability in the system are federal relation with the Provinces, impartiality of the judiciary and the administration, the holding of free and fair elections, reform of the police and law and order apparatus at the grassroots of society, and autonomy of the media.

## **Ethnicity and Provincialism**

Ethnicity cannot be made into an end in itself, a necessary basis of self-determination. Under certain conditions it will enhance freedom, autonomy, self-governance and people's role in deciding their destinies. But under a separate set of conditions, it can generate a lot of strife and instability, subject the people to incessant pressure from opposite ends, make their lives highly volatile and ultimately carve out yet another centralized State structure – something they had set out to fight against.

### **Erosion of Institutions**

It is the erosion of institutions (which are the prerequisites of human freedom) that has rendered the State more and more repressive and forced the aggrieved sections of society to adopt more and more defiant postures, both involving rising scales of violence. The constitutional mandate of safeguarding and promoting people's rights entails institutional concomitants of a federal decentralized structure of representation on the one hand, and the administrative and accountability structures of governance on the other, and in respect of the operational institutions of party system and the electoral process.

### **Empowering the People**

The right to rule should be restored to whom it firstly belong – the people.

Issues directly related to the masses should first be determined and then taken up collectively by the political parties.

All peoples should be ensured the right to a free life worthy of them.

We should develop voluntarism i.e, people looking after themselves, of organizing things by themselves rather than looking to the State or looking to a capitalist for help and assistance.

Not to recognize the emerging and festive aspirations of the mass of the

people, not to accredit their real representatives with legitimate standing, not to reconcile interests and provide a just solution to them, not to respond to genuine and in fact minimum claims and demands would be flying against the face of reality. There is a limit beyond which deliberately allowing aspirant voices to be converted into violent outbursts and then suppressing them as law and order problems cannot work. A socio-political view has to be taken and it can only be taken by transforming the prevailing

institutional structure of power and authority. It is not just prudent and politic but in the interests of everyone, including those of even the powers that be, to bow to the rising current of people's assertions.

Maybe the age of uncertainty will see people coming into their own, handling things on their own, relying less and less on rulers and more and more on themselves.

Complete disregard of democratic politics, of party politics, of institutionalized politics leads to incapacitation of the people and their increasing depolarization.

Class exploitation and national oppression go together in a bourgeois dominated society.

The people are the "real wealth" of the country. Investment in their welfare would allow them to progress and enhance their taxable capacity.

### **Pakistani Identity**

We have failed so far to create a Pakistani identity in relation to cultural and political perspectives – a Pakistani ethos.

### **The Environmental Issue**

The environmental issue is very central to the whole socio-economic problem. As we increasingly modernize, we are encroaching upon the resource base of the poor by cutting down our forests, depleting our water resources, taking away common lands of the poor etc.

### **The Process of Dialogue**

The world is moving towards a sincere desire to build peace through dialogue.

One of the immediate tasks before us is to restore the language of open discourse, a genuine dialogue between a plurality of standpoints and cultural streams, and a sense of unity based precisely on this plurality.

It is necessary to open creative spaces where, modernization, negotiation and dialogue have a place.

### **Decentralization**

The real kernel of decentralization lies in the interplay between the institutions of the State and the structures of civil society. The worst forms of exploitation and repression are to be

found at the grassroots., often between adjacent social classes and communities. It is only by conceiving de-centralization in political, social and economic terms that the hold of the entrenched interests and their intimate nexus can be fought against. Strengthening institution of democracy entails all these aspects.

### **Unemployment**

Urban and rural unemployment can only be undone through further expansion of industry in the public sector and cooperative advancement in agriculture.

### **Corruption**

The real source of corruption is bestowing authority on people without installing a sense of responsibility in them, and without making them accountable for their actions.

Corruption, injustice, non-recognition of merit and absence of rule of law are eating Pakistan to the core.

### **International Relations**

Principles of relations between States should include sovereign equality, refraining from threat to use of force, inviolability of frontiers, territorial integrity, peaceful resolution of disputes, non-interference in internal affairs, respect for human rights and fundamental freedoms, equal rights and self-determination of peoples, cooperating among states, and fulfillment in good faith of obligations under international law.

Public opinion can play an important role in resolving international disputes (as with India), and in particular in making peaceful co-existence a reality.

We should give full attention to our both countries and the people abounding them, and work equally hard to build the two societies of the subcontinent through right intellectual and ideological approach.

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### **Historical Process**

History is the supreme and impartial judge of all social theories. It gives an unambiguous answer to the question of whom the future belongs to. Even the most complicated and grievous past can be overcome if the peace-loving forces display energy and goodwill, and concert their efforts. The example of Europe shows that.

Today we stand at the most serious crossroads of history: religious bigotry that passes in the name of spiritual resurgence, ill-conceived chauvinism that passes in the name of nationalism, and surrender to global corporal capitalism and American Imperialism that passes in the name of progress and modernization.

### **Capitalist Order**

The prime logic of the world capitalist order and the global corporate structure is to undermine the autonomy of all States, and concentrate all power in the imperial core.

Democracy and human rights, legitimate aspirations that move people round the world, are increasingly being advocated for propagating a universal and homogeneous model of governance, thereby opening up new frontiers for both world capitalism and the so-called 'new world order.'

### **World Perspective**

The world disapproves the political, religious and military elements that dominate our national policies and behaviour.

### **Asia**

Present-day Asia is a dynamic continent undergoing profound changes not only in the economic and political spheres, but in the "way of thinking" as well. National and religious prejudices are gradually becoming a thing of the past., although at times its impact is still felt

### **Ideological Approach**

Unless there is a determined return to an ideological crystallization of both party political and civic formations outside parties, moving once again towards rebuilding a social democratic polity, and resuming the unfinished task of nation-building that brings together all levels and diverse streams of the political process, communalism threatens to corrode the nation as a whole.

The whole task of reconstructing the democratic basis of the polity and restoring the cultural roots of civil society that presently lies shattered.

A self-seeking elite maneuvers its way through a selected use of information and the mass media. Hence the importance of policy and ideological debates and abstract discourses on key issues.

We must transcend the limitations imposed by our outdated ideological fixations and conflicts and, in order to galvanize a true counterforce against the fascist onslaught, the national parties, the governing structures the machinery for enforcing not just law but the rule of law, will need to come out of their cloistered shells and join the 'peoples movement'.

The dominant trend in world opinion today is dedication to new ideals – the ideals of peace, national and social freedom, justice, the brotherhood of man..

The divine plan is that a man should be given absolute freedom to think and act. The responsibility of all prophets and Muslims is only to convey the message

The purpose of Islamic teachings is to create balance and equilibrium in human life. It aims at temperance and moderation in thought and behaviour both in individual and collective life.

Today we are a nation steeped in dogma and merrily wallowing in ignorance.

### **Islamic Ideology**

Psychologists today give much importance to the spiritual journey of persons. Spirituality in the Islamic sense is ultimately to live and act accordingly to God's will, to love him with one's whole being; thinking and acting correctly and experiencing God directly.

A Muslim is a person who surrenders to Allah thus, is a servant of God. The greater *jihad* is the struggle of the purification of the heart, it is an internal and spiritual struggle.

The Qur'an has been revealed as guidance and has to be attentively and carefully read with rapt attention.

The Qur'an was revealed to establish a socio-economic order in the light of that guidance which fully recognized the dignity of all human beings.

Islam is a way of life, is a round the clock affair. It encompasses all activities

of man. A true test of the Muslims comes in the practical application of Divine law in everyday life.

Islam reforms and transforms a cruel, unjust, ignorant and disintegrated society into a united, just and enlightened one.

The metamorphosis of '*Deen*' (faith) into *Mazhab* (religion), a word that does not occur in the Qur'an, has led human beings astray into a world of contrived ideas and concepts that totally negate the true spirit of faith. Every Muslim must possess a copy of the Qur'an and be his own priest.

The total stock of mullah's wisdom is derived from the centuries old Dars-e-Nizami which would not allow any revision, research or *ijtihad* regarding their precepts and prejudices. The mullah's are a product of the Muslim monarchy. They fail to see that in the early years of Islam in Arabia, the Holy Prophet faced overwhelming opposition with extreme caution, patience and a rational assessment of all odds. Migration to Madina in 622 AD and Hudaibia Peace Agreement in 628AD were part of the same calculated, rational and mature approach which continued right up to the capture of Mecca in 630 AD when it was replaced with amnesty and magnanimity. Such a balance is missing from mullah's fossilized thinking.

The general attributes of the present Muslim society in Pakistan are: Parliament without sovereignty, administration and judicial systems without rule of law, citizens without rights, press without freedom, universities without excellence, dogma without research, personalized style without merit and tall claims without credibility.

Undue emphasis on '*muqaddar*' (fate) acts as opium for accepting their miserable plight without questioning. People accept these sufferings, as God's will while failing to find fault with the anti-people conduct of the elitist rulers. The docile silence of the people is the biggest strength of oppressive regimes.

The Muslim societies have been reduced to lethargic crowds. They are being exploited with impunity by their perfidious ruling elite comprising of monarchs, army dictators, feudal lords, tribal chiefs, mullahs, pirs etc. The exploiters keep the masses illiterate immersed in trivial polemics of the past without an understanding of the present or a vision of the future.

Falsehood and gimmickry in the name of Islam have distorted national thinking.

Moral courage is the one essential vital quality for those who seek to change the world.

“Do everything in the name of God”. A Muslim lives with this spirit in the different moments of daily life.

Get rid of any sense of your own ability. Hand over yourself completely to God.

### **Religion and Politics**

It is not religion but your relationship with the people that will save you. There is no distinction between a good Muslim or a good Christian – just be good to people. Know what Allah wants you to do, and do it the best way you can. Love one another as children of God. All people are born ‘Muslims’.

The mass base of religious appeal is being deliberately cultivated by such politicians as are interested in incapacitating the people and communalizing them by mass manipulation. Religion is being commercialized. It is all a part of the larger project of depoliticising politics.

We must affirm our regard for the basic religiosity in man and the religious roots of our search for a sense of common destiny. However, we should be aware of the irony of communalism in the guise of sectarianism.

There should be no scope for groups, associations or parties based on ‘religious interests’ in the organizing of the State or the democratic political process.

The only feasible and authentic model of politics possible is that of the creative encounter of religious, linguistic and ethnic groups. We should restore the language of open discourse, a genuine dialogue between a plurality of standpoints and cultural streams, and a sense of unity based precisely on this plurality.

There is the need to rethink the whole approach to the relationship between religion and politics. There should be no scope for groups, associations or parties based on ‘religious’ interests in the organization of the State, or the democratic political process.

### **Dams and Water management**

The next parliament should take a decision on dams and other important national issues of great importance.

According to the World Bank there are many priorities for development in addition to water sector.

No one could be against building water reservoirs and hydel-power projects.

Large dams were not the solution for the country's water problems. There are other practical and cheaper options to resolve the issues of power generation and availability of the required water for irrigation and other purposes like conservation of water methods.

75 per cent of the water is misused or over-used in the farming areas. The result is the shortage of water on the one side, particularly for the tail-enders, and water logging and salinity on the other side.

### **Balochistan**

The problem in Balochistan is a political problem, which needed political solution. The only way to resolve the crisis is to establish supremacy of law, a true federal democratic structure where elected representatives of the people made decisions rather than an individual.

The propaganda being carried on by the army government about Balochistan is, in fact, a ploy to distract people's attention from the realm issues. The problem was a political one relating to the sovereign rights of the Baloch people over their resources. The government is denying the people of Balochistan their right to manage their provinces economy by themselves and make decisions independently through their elected representatives.

The government should stop the military operation immediately, create a congenial atmosphere and take confidence-building measures.

### **Communalism and Sectarianism**

It is in a situation of growing instability, erosion of institutions and a deep crisis of leadership that communal parties find fertile ground.

### **Humanitarian Approach**

The individual interest has to be replaced by the ideal of good of humanity at large. Equity and justice should prevail over oppression and exploitation. Man's desire to dominate others must end and everyone must live in peace and harmony.

Let everyone make his/her contribution to the attainment of mankind's cherished aspirations and goals to live in peace, freedom and social progress.

At no point in the history of ideas has there emerged a truly integrated vision that could steer humanity to a coherent future that could be pursued realistically, and could mobilize a combination of hope and determination.

### **Vested Interests**

Housing and education policies, in particular have actually created a form of apartheid. The *ashrafia* (elite) are in full control of all levels of State apparatus, and overall social development is not part of their agenda. An unequal society based on injustice, cannot expect meaningful social development.

### **Misleading the Youth**

The real damage to a society occurs when entire generations of youth are miseducated, e.g. to believe that personal success comes not through merit and hard work but through favouritism, bribery and fraud.

### **Miscellaneous**

Moral courage is the one essential vital quality for those who seek to change the world.

### **Savings by the Government**

By canceling the orders for purchase of surveillance aircrafts and abandoning the shifting of the G.H.Q. to Islamabad, the government will be able to save more than ten billion dollars. Government should consider generation of more funds and saving from reduction of its administration costs and non-developmental expenditure.

### **Government Taxes**

Government should stop levying indirect taxes or raising the cost of fuel and energy.

### **Peoples Interest**

The individual interest has to be replaced by the ideal of the good of humanity at large. Equity and justice should prevail over

oppression and exploitation. Man's desire to dominate others must end and every one must live in peace and harmony.

### **Land reforms**

Land reforms should be initiated not only for social justice to the oppressed poor peasants but to generate rural development, increase farm output and halt rural to urban migration. A substantial exportable surplus in agricultural is a good source of foreign exchange earnings.

Land reforms efforts in this region began in 1930 when the oppressed *Haris* formed the *Sind Hari Committee* to agitate for their rights. The Indian Muslim League met in 1937 and resolved, "Radical and reforms were required to eliminate the existing socio-economic inequality cause by feudalism. The Muslim League government in Sind appointed a Tenancy Legislation Committee (TLC) in 1943, to consider tenancy rights for the *haris*. The TLC submitted its Report in 1945, granting conditional tenancy rights to *haris*. G. M. Syed opposed it and suggested unconditional tenancy rights to *haris* and resumption of all big estates by the State. The Government quietly filed the TLC Report.

An Agrarian Committee (AC) was appointed in April 1949, which submitted its Report in July 1949. It recommended liquidation of *jagirdaris* in toto and *zamindaris* above the ceiling of 150/300/450 acres irrigated / unirrigated / *barani*, and levying tax on farm incomes at par with non-farm incomes.

Feudalism in east Pakistan had been abolished in early 1951 and the balance of power had shifted from the feudal lord to the peasant class This had caused panic amongst the feudal lords of West Pakistan. The PML disintegrated and lost power around 1957 due mainly to its heavy dependence on the landlords. General Ayub, who took over in October 1958, appointed a "Land Reforms Commission" for West Pakistan. The Commission submitted its report in January 1959. It recommended abolition of *jagirdaris* without and *zamindaris* with compensation: proprietary rights to all tenants: resumption of *zamindars'* lands in excess of prescribed ceiling and its redistribution to landless tillers. It fixed the ceiling at 500/1000 acres of irrigated/unirrigated lands, plus orchards and *shikargahs* for each landlord. He/she was also allowed to gift a certain amount of land among family and friends.

After the sad debacle of East Pakistan in December 1971, Z. A. Bhutto took over the reins. He introduced land reforms in 1972. He

set the ceiling of 150/300 acres of irrigated/unirrigated land for each landlord. He introduced another reform in January 1977 by reducing the ceiling to 100/200 acres and imposing income tax on big farmers. But in the meanwhile, General Zia-ul-Haq took over on July 5, 1977 and halted Bhutto's 1977 reforms.

According to a 1981 study by Dr. Mahmood H. Khan, the landlords illegally re-accumulated 2000-3000 acres irrigated land, in excess of the ceiling of 500 acres fixed in the 1959 reforms. They managed to raise the fixed ceiling of 100 acres up to 930-1120 acres in the 1972/77 reforms. As per Dr. Rahmab Sobhan's 1993 study, only three percent farm land was resumed and distributed to only 2 percent of the country's poor peasants in the three land reforms.

The geopolitical position of Pakistan demands urgent abolition of feudalism. By doing so, we shall expand agriculture, revive industry and boost our collapsing economy. The present regime is in the best position to liquidate feudalism.

We must have a sound economic base and a genuine democracy in the country. Any delay or hesitation or lack of courage to liquidate feudalism would be disastrous.

### **Political Discussions**

The political situation, as it is developing these days, demands that advice be sought by the present regime from those political parties that have not been part of the governments during the past. These parties can be depended upon for tendering sound advice because they do not have vested interests of their own. At least they cannot be blamed for high level corruption and mismanagement of state affairs.

What seems to be happening at the moment is that the Muslim League stalwart are maneuvering and intriguing to stage a comeback by pressurizing the Chief Executive to restore the assemblies. If it so happens, it will amount to placing the exploited masses again in the hands of the same exploiters. The exploitative political leaders and the religious elite, by distorting Qaid-e-Azam's guidelines and the Islamic teachings, are misinterpreting the democratic principles of democracy. In fact they do not believe in democratic principles of governance. Such attempts to lead astray the government from its true methods of governance will necessarily result in undermining people's authority and rights.

Now that the military regime has done away with the authority of the corrupt politicians, it is the duty of General Parvez Musharif to pursue his agenda to its end for the absolute benefit of the oppressed masses. Instead of thinking about restoring the assembly, a civil setup of talented politicians and technocrats (who are not difficult to find) should be arranged, and given the necessary powers to effect land reforms and electoral reforms and hold transparent and fair elections to the assemblies, and then quit.

The following steps are suggested towards this end:

(1) Clean politicians, and specialists in the various fields, should be consulted about the ways and means of planning the interim arrangements, and of restoring democratic governance.

(2) Genuine political activists, to whichever political party they may belong, who have been exploited by political leaders to the hilt and are now financially broke and without jobs, should be provided the necessary assistance. They are facing dire problems of education, health, housing and employment. They should be induced to useful and productive political activities in the future in the national interest.

(3) Appointment of ex-army personnel in various departments on contract basis should be discontinued. Instead, they should be posted in the villages to assist the small farmers and tenants in their difficulties so that the coercive power of big landlords and feudal is broken. Such personnel, wherever needed, should be taken from educated and capable young civilians who are facing serious unemployment. The army personnel should be confined to monitoring duties.

(4) Government should appoint administrators from amongst the civilians in big cities and districts, with the help of clean political parties, to assist the elections authorities first, in holding the local bodies elections and, later on, to cooperate in the administration of local bodies.

(5) Heavy amounts being spent on renovation or extension of government and corporation buildings, such as railways, should be suspended for the time being as the country is confronted with serious financial strain.

### **Unity of Masses**

Unity of the masses and rise of consciousness in them are the real power against all injustices and inequalities.

Only with the rise of the people honesty, truth, and material realities will be able to survive.

The tactics of the upper classes are to rob the people of their consciousness snatching all the opportunities that provide them with the real facts and knowledge.

Most unscientific and unreasonable attitude and behaviour are developed among the masses by giving sensational and emotional color to ideology and events in order to render the people helpless and puppets in the hands of the few.

Equal opportunities should be provided to everybody to make their faculties prosperous, to get knowledge, to participate in political discussions, and to form political organizations of the masses. Equality means equality of economic and social status, equality of intellectual and physical work.

All the distinctions on financial strength should be eliminated.

90% of the people are hardworking in our society and they vote for a system which is only beneficial for one percent people; they should only vote for a system that is only beneficial for them. Due to defective system and the bureaucratic force the votes are being used against the interests of the voters. We can overcome all our deficiencies by our own hard work, by mass education and disciplined organization.

Politicians should pinpoint the faults and weaknesses of our political systems, and launch a struggle against these.

All honest politicians should unite and wage a tireless struggle.

People of Pakistan have been fed for too long on slogans and emotionalism.

Political institutions should be well developed and established in Pakistan, such as: political parties, research and learning.

Democracy is impossible without economic equality and economic justice.

Friendship should be effected with every country on the basis of equality and freedom of thought.

Changing one's psychology, one's frame of mind, is essential in order to change oneself and the society.

Unity and fraternity of people brings about the union of hearts of erstwhile enemies and warring elements.

One is required, if need be, to spend his all, to be suffering, hunger and hardship gladly in order to spread the rule of the Law of God on earth. This law is expounded through His messenger.

The transgressors of the law are really at the root of all disorder.

Our duty as a good human being is to enjoin what is right and prevent what is wrong.

Till the seventh century of the Christian era, the principle of tolerance of religious belief was utterly unknown to the world.

Our ultimate objective should be to institute a "Parliament of Man, the Federation of the World." and move towards it.

### **Model of Governance**

Which Model of governance? (Syed Mohibullah Shah)

Poor countries are poor not because they lack resources but because they are ruled by indigent laws and institutions of governance that are incapable of addressing challenges and opportunities of the world they operate in.

The classic question of governance is whether we put in place of laws and institutions that would sanctify rulers as a breed above the rest, and operate the system for promoting their special interests, or devise a system of governance that works for the country as a whole. In the case of the former, the rulers were to be generally exempt from the application of ordinary laws of the state. In the latter case, all politics and governance had to be conducted under the rule of law, and everybody, including the head of the government, would be subject to the same laws as everyone else. Such good governance leads to the establishment of a balanced, harmonious, multiethnic, multicultural and prosperous society.

The country's politics should reform itself in order to produce powerful democratic institutions, including a parliament capable of enforcing the will of the people. It should produce a model of governance that simultaneously delivers on conflicting agendas by acknowledging an agreed forum where conflicts of interest could be peacefully resolved to produce harmonious national development.

The government and the opposition need to have a third party in their deliberations – independent and respectable members of civil society – as moderators to assist their dialogue towards a non-partisan and fair model of governance, which

respects the will of the people, is accountable to the rule of law and resolves conflicts of interests in a universally acknowledged peaceful and democratic manner.

### Owning the State (Aisha Siddiqa)

Independence day celebrations in Pakistan of the magnitude that one sees today date back to the days of General Ziaul Haq. Such events involve the upcoming young middle class in the country which feels comfortable partnering with the state apparatus due to the doors opened up, heading up to a better financial future. One is not even sure that these rejoicing people spare a thought for the millions of underprivileged people living in this country.

The common man is not educated and is perceived as incompetent to judge. Not all people have the physical or moral strength to constantly question the state. In any case the middle class anywhere in the world is the easiest to co-opt – and also the foremost to challenge a prevalent ideology. The middle class is keen to be co-opted. This is the segment of population which is educated, has acquired the techniques to progress, is comfortable with modern technology and means of information and is thrilled by the possibility of gaining greater wealth. This segment is also least concerned about the fate of the common man. An authoritarian state is wonderful for the middle class. Such a state system reduces the amount of competition and increases opportunities for those who learn the art of exploitation. Only those are the natural beneficiaries of economic redistribution who are acceptable to the ruling regime. For all others, there are the laws of the state which ensure that the people do not rise.

The middle class is very expressively patriotic and has a deep sense of ownership of the state. They are least concerned about what happens to the millions of poor who do not benefit from the state at all. The fear of not wanting to be part of the dispossessed keeps the middle class attached to the state apparatus.

There are people in Pakistan who have not been beneficiaries of economic re-distribution for a very long time. Moreover, the political apparatus and system are not even designed to ensure upward mobility. For many years now, the entire ruling elite, assisted by the middle class, has made it

impossible for the poor to find opportunities or to get a sense of partnership with the state.

There is a risk that religious extremism might represent those who are otherwise denied ownership of the state. Year after year of breakdown of governance and subversion of politics can only produce dissatisfaction with what the state represents. So, the middle class might as well stop and think about what its sense of ownership means for the future of Pakistan's state and society.

Living through history (Shamshad Ahmad)

Lawlessness and anarchy flourish only in societies where common purposes lose out to an individual's personal will and where the will of the "willful ruler" is the basis of the rule of law.

Since their independence, the people of Pakistan have had no role in determining the course of history or the direction of their country's political, economic and social policies. They have been exploited in the name of ideology and external threats with no attention paid to their own basic needs or their socio-economic well-being. Their legitimate problems and genuine needs remain totally unaddressed.

We have failed to make Pakistan a truly democratic and progressive state, stable politically and strong economically, imbued with Islamic values and a moderate outlook. We prefer chaos and confusion. We don't even believe in a value system.

Pakistan is now going through one of the most serious crises of its history. Its national edifice is being weakened methodically by keeping it engaged on multiple external and domestic fronts.

Supremacy of the constitution and the rule of law are the basic requisites of any civilized society

Decades of political instability resulting from protracted military rule, institutional paralysis, poor governance and general aversion to the rule of law have not only crippled our society at its roots but also distorted Pakistan's external image.

Pakistan which in any case is heading is heading for a big change. The people have woken up. Are we doomed for ever to live under military rule? Don't the people of Pakistan have any urge to change their destiny?

Catching up with the change? (Zafarullah Khan)

The world is never in one particular state. Every moment its state is changing and its Creator moulds it in a new form, every

now and then, which is different from all its previous forms. In the universe there is no inertia but only motion. There is a perpetual movement and a constant flow. Every movement is new and every moment brings in a new world. Modern science bears testimony to this fact. Only men of insight can understand it. So only the unwise remain static and are happy with the present. They do not catch up with the time. Through this mechanism nature separates the 'useless'. And the mankind is put to trial. To meet this change we have to struggle very hard.

The survival of the humankind lies in constantly holding high values. The communities that are devoid of high morals and manners perish.

The truth is power and falsehood is weakness Justice is strength and injustice is frailty. Only those people survive who could develop in them the strength and for live by virtue of good deeds.

In this world only those people survive who have capability to live, and have an urge to serve mankind and dispense justice. It means that we have to be very careful and watchful in respect of our every thought and action.

In order to catch up with change, Islam has given us the concept of *Ijtihad* – reinterpretation of Islamic law in changed circumstances. It has given the concept of belief in common prevalent good (*Marooף*) Abiding by its basic principles, it has commanded us to respond to every new challenge by means of *Ijtihad*. The Quran has to be explained and reinterpreted in every age. If we do not find guidance in the Quran on any specific matter in our age, then we are instructed to use our intellect. Hence it is obligatory on us to acquire contemporary knowledge and accept the common good practices. The principles of "*Ijtihad*" and "*Marooף*" are tools to catch up with the change. We have become relics of the past by closing the door of *Ijtihad* and by stopping to believe in *Marooף*.

Islam and secularism (Dr. S Saeed Ahmad)

The role of religious scholars is to work for transforming the individuals from illiteracy, ignorance immorality, extremism, terrorism, conservatism into civilized, enlightened, peace-loving and God fearing human beings. If people are educated and enlightened, those at the helm of affairs would automatically rise

from the same enlightened people. Thus, society would progress because of justice, morality and rule of law.

*Meesaq-e-Madinah* was not a government documents but an arrangement for peaceful and harmonious coexistence among the communities.

The ulema and the scholars should stay away from the notion of capturing power.

If we separate religion from the state, that would be the end of despotism and it would liberate religion as well as human beings. The Islamic religion has been high jacked for 14 centuries by the heads of the state.

Time for change is now (I.A. Rehman)

Much more essential is the need to change the system of governance and to do this soon enough. The present system has brutalized the ruler and the ruled both and has concentrated all power and all resources in the hands of a few at the central command.

There is no option other than the establishment of an independent governmental setup more essentially to regain the moral authority that has over the years been mindlessly squandered. The time for change is now.

The parliament of man (Gwynne Dyer)

Nothing has yet been done to make international society democratic. There is already a world administration of sorts, in the form of the United Nations, but it is all in the hands of governments, so none of the global institutions ever acts against the will of the powerful. And nowhere, in the layers of bureaucrats and diplomats is there any direct representation of ordinary people.

The perils of extremism (Touqir Hussain)

Extremism essentially reflects our long but unsuccessful struggle to find a national purpose and identity and an open and stable political process that promotes tolerance and liberal habits of the mind and supports justice for all. This failure has caused a sense of despair especially among the weak and the vulnerable, a mindset most conducive to falling prey to illusions and emotions and to searching for transcendental solutions.

The west for its own reasons refuses to give credence to a moderate and true interpretation of Islam as it would weaken the rationale for the war on terrorism which is much more than a campaign against terrorism.

Only political liberalization will help strengthen liberal and secular forces that can be allies in defeating religious extremism.

If the Muslim world wants to challenge the unjust international system it can do so only by acquiring knowledge and effecting social reform and political liberalization by embracing, not shirking, modernization and by taking a strong moral position against extremism. The Muslim world needs to searching for its own strength rather than define itself in opposition to the West.

Independent press a pillar of democracy

An independent and active press is an important pillar of democracy. It empowers people, exposes corruption, encourages transparency and promotes participation in the political process. Without it, society as a whole suffers. Without a free and vibrant press, a nation cannot find its voice and become a flourishing democracy.

Future belongs to the masses (Ameer Bhutto)

All our leaders, civilian, military and others, habitually regard themselves above the law and treat the Constitution as if it is there to serve only their needs. They abrogate, suspend, amend and generally run amok over the Basic Law with reckless abandon.

Important institutions of state and society were never allowed to take root and mature in Pakistan.

In the melee of self-serving opportunism and lust for power, the plight of the masses has been overlooked.

The fate of the nation rests ultimately in the hands of the people. The time has come for the people to be the masters of their own fate. The problem, however, is that they seem to have forgotten just how powerful they are. When a people unite, even superpowers and much dreaded armies get out of the way. Our leaders lack the backbone to take a stand on principles because that entails hardship, struggle and sacrifice. The future belongs to the masses and they must realize that they need not be bound by the vestiges of a failed past.

Elite consensus under strain (Tasneem Siddiqui)

Initially, there was a nexus between the bureaucracy, military and the feudal politicians. Handpicked industrialists and businessmen later joined the club. =Professional classes, the mullas and newspaper barons were the last ones to be co-opted. This oligarchy included almost all vested interests.

The social sectors were relegated to the lowest priority and most of the resources were diverted to non-productive uses. In our first budget, over 60 per cent on income was allocated to defiance.

Having assumed all powers, the generals and senior bureaucrats started hobnobbing with the Pentagon and volunteered their services in the Cold War and became an American satellite. This relationship has continued ever since in one shape or another. Internally, this oligarchy created an atmosphere of intimidation, harassment and coercion. On the economic front, they adopted a policy which concentrated all economic power in a few hands. It has become an economy of an Elitist State in which the military regimes have colluded with other elite groups to monopolize the state's resources. Those who have remained in power are the same people and groups with changing names. Their policies have remained unchanged.

Leaving aside the middle classes, which are about 20 per cent of the population, there are 75 per cent people who are surviving not because of the state, but in spite of the state. They are yearning for change. They are bitter and angry and are waiting for a chance to show their strength. They only need social organization and leadership.

The civil society, though still weak, is slowly realizing the importance of its role in making the government accountable. This trend is likely to increase. The country seems to be reaching out to the future.

### Islam and the Constitution (Anwar Syed)

Given the currently prevalent corruption of morals, if the concentration of authority and power that characterized the pious caliphate were to be re-enacted in Pakistan, an unmitigated and frightful tyranny would result and make all of us utterly miserable.

Many people will want more than piety. They will look to Islamisation to bring them democracy, equality, social justice, and access to the basic amenities of life. They will expect to narrow the gap between the rich and the poor, discourage accumulation

and concentration of wealth, stop ostentatious spending of surpluses in the "way of the Lord" meaning for public purposes. This is a meaning of Islamisation that the founder of Pakistan, Mr. M.A. Jinnah had in mind.

So much of money, so little work (KUnwar Idrees)

Over seven years, the expenditure on the staff and household of the president has risen from Rs. 75 million in 1999 to 309 million now, and on the prime minister from Rs. 98 million to Rs. 367 million. On the national assembly it has risen from Rs. 250 million to 1,006 million and on the Senate from Rs. 111 million to Rs. 577 million. Finally, the horde of ministers, advisers and special assistants now cost Rs. 155 million which previously was just Rs. 24 million seven year ago.

The increasing trend in the costs of the provincial administrations is more or less of the same order.

A member of the national assembly costs almost 3 million rupees a year and a senator twice as much.

Universality of Islam (Sidrah Unis)

Islam has continued to maintain its universal nature by laying down only those broader principles in the Quran which being fundamental in nature cannot go obsolete with time.

The basic principle of Islam is that all human beings must, both individually and collectively, submit to the will of Allah.

Islam wishes to bring in its fold all people, regardless of social status or colour of the skin and further aims to unite all of mankind; it seeks to remove all differences of caste and creed created by various man-made social systems and customs.

True respect comes from integrity not authority. (Ayaz Amir)

Democracy

According to Aristotle "The real challenge of politics was to balance the power of wealth and the power of numbers in a state". Plato and Marx proposed system which if implemented properly would arguably make us all happier and richer. Plato's view of an ideal state meant giving every man his due.

Today, at least in the western world, there appears to be political consensus that democracy makes for more stable societies than the views propounded by Plato and Marx. Political parties, freedom of speech, a free judiciary and human rights are all

elements which are meant to balance the power of the wealthy with the rights of the general population.

The difficult problem is the balancing of the military's economic interests with the political interests of the country. When the scales are tipped in the military's favour the country has suffered.

Experience suggests that political and social realities can only be modified. Struggles can be political or armed.

Let us treasure our main political parties as national institutions because they still have open membership and do not discriminate on the basis of race, religion or sex. It might be imperfect but our political process exists. Let us participate and develop it rather than give up on it.

Pakistan military has militarized society.

What the government ought to be doing is building schools, hospitals and roads and providing justice and good governance in the conflict ridden areas.

Politics awareness is the understanding that politics should be a noble craft given to the pursuit of the public good. It implies that those individuals can distinguish right from wrong, and that they will vote for candidates dedicated to the pursuit of public good. It also relates to one's ability to see through the politician's doubletalk and discern his real objectives. For the most part Pakistani politics is dirty, that the main purpose of those who practice it is self-aggrandizement, that they will not do what they promise and not say what they intend. They cannot be trusted.

Systematic change requires sustained and organized action, which in turn requires instigators, organizers and managers. They come from the ranks of the counter-elite standing in opposition to the ruling elite (guardians of the status quo). In Pakistan the feudal lords, generals, higher bureaucrats, the 'robber barons' of commerce and industry compose the ruling elite.

No other politician has attempted to mobilize the masses and given them reason to get involved. Politics in Pakistan is a contest for power between rival elite formations. Electoral politics in Pakistan means competition for the voluntary, forced or seduced allegiance of roughly 20 per cent of the adult population (the proportion that normally votes). Participation of the common man is neither sought nor offered.

Democracy can only be strengthened by dismantling the feudal system. There is a pressing need for introducing equal

opportunities and affirmative action programmes to empower the people in the rural areas. Thus alone they will be in a position to defeat the old institutions like *jagirdari* and *gaddi nasheeni*.

Until and unless genuine representatives of the people are encouraged to enter the assemblies, and until the public has a role in a leadership that can identify with the people and understand their problems, the woes of peasants and labourers will remain unmitigated.

Ideally, one would like to see a new generation of leaders take over the mantle of political parties every few years or so.

With Musharraf at the top, a handpicked administration and pliant judiciary, a media blackout and our notorious intelligence agencies at work, the forthcoming elections are unlikely to be fair and free.