

## **Imran Khan and Pakistani Politics**

*(An old unpublished article on the scourge of coalition politics)*

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It is said that there comes a time of political hibernation in every activist's life. Mine came a little too early. Though I had a brief rendezvous with Imran Khan in the late nineties when he visited my house with all his team, I was sold on his mesmerizing personality. Over the years I watched him mature with his ideological resolve. Recently I joined PTI for pro-active participation on his mission to rid the country from evil that is eating its very foundations. And I was just getting a high on my involvement with PTI when one fine day I received a sarcastic remark from a friend about the controversial talk between Imran Khan and Altaf Husain. Those words still echo in my mind "Now tell me, how is your party different from any other political party?" I was dumb founded.

I am still finding it very hard to reconcile with the fact that IK actually talked to AH, this was in my opinion, the least expected. I thought it was a complete U turn on principles. It does not matter who called who but a lot of diehard fans of IK were shocked! Even I, an ardent supporter of IK, am trying very hard, but find it very difficult to convince myself that it is for the greater good and therefore it's OK to bury the hatchet. The 'change' Pakistan really deserves is not possible, unless one is in power, and the only way to get in power (in Pakistan), it is apparent, is either a regular, legal political process (read coalition politics) or extra-legal process like takeovers and coup etc. (This, I guess is the ugliest side of South Asian Politics.)

What really created a total surprise was that in every major public speech over the period of a decade IK used quite a harsh language and remarks for the exiled leader AH. If I am not mistaken, many a times words used for common criminals were used. Then there were sarcastic jokes about 'corpse in a gunny bag' as the trade mark of his party all over the media.....and one fine day both these leaders were exchanging pleasantries?...It makes me wonder, so this is politics? Really?

I think in this long period of 'principled stand' IK inspired, in thousands if not in millions, liberal, moderate educated citizens of Pakistan to join PTI. They were inspired by his bold personality and his sincerity. They felt that finally here is an upright, brave, and honest Pakistani leader, who can save this country from the predicted doom. He was the only leader who rejected back door entry to the throne. He was the only leader in the country who was not afraid to call a spade a spade. He also travelled to UK to pursue some court case against AH and his workers after the May 12<sup>th</sup> carnage in Karachi, which was allegedly work of his party.

If this is what politics and its pressures can do to a brilliant leader, can we the people really expect the much needed revolutionery change? My doubts overtake my hopes. Not surprisingly a lot of the people and PTI workers refuse to react to such a compromise on principles and consider this as trivial or take it as positive step, as a 'political maturity' but there are a lot who feel that they have been betrayed. And while a huge majority that was was rising up for a change, sick of the existing parasite politics, looking for a new dawn now feels that it is going to be more of the same (mess) in Pakistan. I sincerely pray that it is not like That.

I can only think of two kinds of leaders. One is a typical turn coat, cut throat political leader whose main objective is the pursuit of power and the other is a principled leader with a clear vision whose goal is the betterment his people. I see the Allama Iqbal, Allama Mashriqi, Jinnah and many others as a great leaders, I even see Abdul Sattar Edhi in a leadership position as he has also devoted his entire life to a purposeful mission. These leaders do not make compromises. I feel that even the slightest actions of a true leader reflects his vision, although some genuine mistakes on the way are permissible as the leaders are only humans. So the actions or any damage control of the leaders have to be watched in that conjunction. Perhaps I am a bit narrow and a limited in my definition but I revered IK with the latter group rather than the former, and my expectations were a bit too high. But I am also very clear in my mind that my first and foremost allegiance is to my country and the down trodden masses, and only after that I would seek a leader to take us through. Somehow to me a 'social worker' seems like a better option than a 'political worker'.

The inherent dirty politics and continuous breakdown, humiliation and misery only throws to doubt the adopted western concepts of democracy and sovereignty. But do we have any other solution of governance? The masses appear to be incapable to carve out a true destination for themselves. I pray to God, that this country, this Nation deserves better.