

Sociopolitical Complexity and National Interest Some Thoughts and Ideas

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ABSTRACT

The world has become increasingly complex particularly over the last 60 years after the Second World War. In the context of increasing globalization, actions of individuals, organizations, and states are intricately linked. Electronic and print media have been playing an important role towards developing new attitudes and behaviours of individuals across the globe. This is a big business of capitalistic economic system of the world led by the US and UK and is making a great mark on the history of the world.

It needs a lot of effort to understand the socio-political intricacies around the world. It must be noted that you can not understand part without knowing whole and on the same token; you can not understand Pakistan without knowing the world. Contextually, this complexity of global relations makes it difficult for us to move forward as a nation. This paper will explore that complexity with a Pakistani frame and will attempt to draw certain actionable messages for the people of Pakistan.

It is noted that media should be duly concerned with the 'effect' of any communication in any form on people and the country. In my view, this must be the main concern of Pakistani media. Most if not all the Pakistani media (mostly unknowingly) end up creating negative euphoria that hurts Pakistan and its people. This complexity of social systems demands careful analysis and actions for the sustainable progress of society.

In the context of globalization, it is important to note that you can not understand actions of individuals and governments without their reference to the world. One can interpret an event with in the frame of several perspectives i.e. local, regional, national, and global. The national perspective seems to be the most logical frame within which every communication must be analyzed. This strategy will promote national interest and help people to grow and prosper.

Key words: Pakistan, politics, history, complexity, change, deception, national interest, globalization, South Asia

Introduction

The world continues to change rapidly and has transformed significantly over the last 60 years after Second World War. This massive change is hard to comprehend and difficult to adjust with; the sources of this change, its objectives and possible effects on Pakistan are the focal points of this paper.

The emotions, with which this paper is written, are not presently 'fashionable' to draw favour from general readers. People in Pakistan do not have a habit of thinking themselves; rather they swallow whatever is given to them through media

and education. Nearly four-fifths of the books in English are published from either USA or UK and most of the books in our universities libraries are in English. Logically, the thinking of our readers are likely to be pro US or UK. We do not have our own books written within our own nationalistic perspectives. This remains a dilemma for Pakistani intelligentsia. A book, 'The Madrassah Challenge' by Christine Fair (2009) depicts religious education in Pakistan from the perspective of a westerner and has attempted to show that these religious schools inculcate radicalization. Similarly, Fareed Zakaria in his main title story of the prestigious magazine 'Newsweek' on radical Islam (2009) said: "The fact is that radical Islam has gained a powerful foothold in the Muslim imagination". Similar depictions are presented in several other publications (Ali 2009, Kleinman 2009, Yasmeeen 2006, Abuza 2005, Belokrenitsky 2004). Such depictions about Islam and Pakistan create frustration and disbelief among Pakistanis and Muslims.

Media in Pakistan, as everywhere in the world, represent those who own and control it. The 'wrong' are made to perceive as 'right' and vice versa. Accordingly people end up hurting themselves, unknowingly. Public in general consumes mass media messages moment to moment through television (particularly in urban areas) and they tend to act according to the subjectively promoted perceptions about issues and problems this country is facing. It has become fashionable to talk negative about Pakistan, its culture, its government, political leaders, and every thing related with Pakistan. In short, Pakistanis have developed negative culture in the country. It hurts Pakistan and Pakistanis.

While usually talking negative about Pakistan, People, under the active influence of media, unknowingly, hurt the interests of Pakistan and that of their own. This is due to the international influence and control on our own media. The common sense of the people of Pakistan is constructed in their own disfavour; and they unfortunately act against their own national interests (deceptively or unknowingly). The common sense may be operationally defined as a 'logic constructed by those who create, control, and disseminate knowledge'. When knowledge production and dissemination is controlled by the western countries or 'interests', the psyche and attitudes of our people make them feel and act in the favour of western interests. This is a dilemma this country is facing presently. Accordingly, our media must become more responsible to its own people, rather than to their foreign sponsors.

Once, a student of sociology asked, "how do we find truth from a stream of falsehood"; the answer was that "whatever was good for collective life or what promotes national interest was right". In this frame, the truth remains relative and whatever promotes collective good becomes truth.

On February 2, 1835, Lord Macaulay, while addressing the British Parliament said: "I propose that that we replace her (India's) old and ancient education system, her culture, for it the Indians think that all that foreign and English is good and greater than their own, they will lose their self esteem, their culture and they will become what we want them, a truly dominated nation."¹ In the context of this colonial

¹ British Archives, London, UK, 1835

legacy, Pakistanis mostly talk negative about their own country, its leaders and governments, and its culture. This was the message that Lord Macaulay gave nearly two centuries ago; unfortunately, the legacy continues.

The West dominated the world by its cunning approach about governance. It used all the cruelty to deal with people from different cultures across the globe. Samuel P. Huntington (the author of the book: 'The Clash of Civilizations) said: "The West won the world not by the superiority of its ideas or values or religion but rather by its superiority in applying organized violence. Westerners often forget this fact, non-Westerners never do." This admission indicates how we should deal with the present international system based on injustice and violence.

The English colonialists exploited the sub-continent materially and culturally. They had torn India on ethnic lines for their interests. The problems Pakistan faced today are the indirect result of imperial rule by the British and then due to the new world order imposed by the US after the Second World War.

The prevailing negativity about Pakistan has to subside and will ultimately decline and die. This country has survived for 62 years, will survive in future; and ultimately the world will accept Pakistan as a great nation. It may be noted that 'time' changes people more intensely than 'reason'. Emotions or sentiments are a bigger force than reason, rationality, or intelligence. Accordingly, Pakistanis must be emotional and positive about the nation, the country, and its culture.

The cause for Pakistan is a cause for its 160 million people. In a broader view, the cause for Pakistan is also a cause for the poor in the region and in the Muslim world.

The focus of these thoughts is the issues this country is facing. Personal compliments and possible discredits are deliberately avoided. The intelligentsia, the wise, the worthy, the powerful, opinion makers, and the media people are expected to consume these thoughts and notions. Ultimately, these images may help improve collective thinking and promote collective interest. Fragmentation of society remains a major tool in the hands of the colonialists (the international system) to control developing countries and their governments, including Pakistan.

The object of attention, in this paper, are the thoughts; not the person who wrote or conceived them. It is not however claimed that the author has no political affiliation at all; factually, the main influence on the author is that of 'reason' within the frame of nationalistic interest. The natural power of personal feelings comes from the socio-economic class the author belongs to: the lower middle class. In short, the thoughts revolve around improving the material conditions of poor Pakistanis and that of the state of Pakistan.

Creation of Pakistan

The socio-political forces of the times created many new countries after the Second World War; Pakistan was one of them. These new countries were part of the new world order that was being created at that time (before 1947).

Pakistan was to play an important role to organize and manage South Asia and the regional Muslim countries including the oil rich Gulf countries. Pakistan along with other South Asian countries provided cheap labour to the Gulf countries. This was the economic role of Pakistan for the planned economic growth of the world.

The second role envisaged for Pakistan was to act as security apparatus for the emerging world order. Pakistan joined security organizations like SEATO (South Asian Treaty Organization) and CENTO (Central Treaty Organization) in early 1950s, right after its founding in 1947. This security role of Pakistan continued throughout its 60 years' history. During the last 50 years or so, Pakistan has provided nearly one-half of the total armed forces required for the world peace missions around the world, although its population remained less than three percent of the world's population.

Pakistan's security role, after the collapse of Soviet Union during the late 1980s, subsided and the need for its very existence was questioned. It was intermittently labeled as a failed or rogue state and the intention was to dismember or kill this country. According to the USA, Pakistan is the trouble and hinders its hegemonic designs.

Pakistani nation, its youth particularly, the political leaders, its armed forces, and successive governments deserve a full credit for continuing survival of this country. East Pakistan got separated and became Bangladesh in 1971; it was part of the same strategy to maintain the world order and manage this part of the world to continue serving the interests of the world system.

Governance in the New World

Global system is becoming increasingly complex and the governance of individual countries has become a challenge. This is a test of governments to work with the complex international system and Pakistan has to face this challenge intelligently. This challenge however is complex and dynamic. Its shape, size, and morphology change due to external and internal forces. The government and people must understand this complexity and thereby adjust our governance accordingly.

Human societies provide comfort to people while governments remain a restraining force; thereby societies are cherished and governments are generally resented by people. Morality, virtue, and personal conscience used to be the main tools of controlling human behaviour; but not any more. We see the declining role of morality and virtue to govern societies. The emerging technologies have provided new ways to regularize the behaviour of human beings around the world, especially in metropolitan areas.

The complexity of the world system has brought many ills to most people all around the globe. The principle of nature tells us that simpler a system, the lesser are the chances of problems. As the world system has become increasingly complex, the greater are the chance of it being disordered. This disorder induced

by complexity is the main challenge for the humanity at large and particularly for Pakistan, at this moment of its history.

Globalization is a new form of high tech colonialism. It connects most parts of the world in an exploitative relationship. "Globalization is part-promise, part-reality, and part-imagination" (Ahmed 2003:48). In the given world order, Muslims face a special disadvantage and Pakistan being a Muslim country is a victim of globalization. "Muslims and Muslim countries are faced with a tremendous and frightening challenge. Globalization in the form that it takes now is a threat against us and our religion" (Muhamad 2001:24). Acknowledging the complexity of the situation existing in the world, Dr Mahatir, a great Muslim public scholar said: "I must admit that it is very difficult for me to be optimistic. I find few Muslims understand reality. They live in a make believe world where weakness is regarded as strength, where failures are regarded as successes" (Muhamad 2001:44). The complexity of the world system has been noted by a Chinese scholar: "warfare ... has only re-invaded society in a more complex, more extensive, more concealed, and more subtle manner ... using all means.... (Liang and Wang 2002 quoted in Reed 2002). Due to growing complications in the world system, new theories about complexity are emerging (Alberts and Czervinski 1997, Byrne 1997, Brand 1998, Rischard 1998, Nielsen 2001, Eyllighen 2007) and show its significance to explain present day relations within and across countries.

The present day politicians and government officials are detached from the problems people face. If they don't know the ground realities, how could they govern the people for progress and prosperity? The rulers in Pakistan are usually imposed by the world system and they remain aloof to the needs of people. As a result, the rulers become alien and people resent them and their socio-political role.

Unbridled Individualism

Individualism has become quite pervasive in urban areas of Pakistan and the world. In dollar terms, the GDP of the world has grown significantly. Individual wants have multiplied for large segments of populations around the world but the economic opportunities remained constrained and available only to limited proportion of people. As a result socio-economic inequalities have increased to unacceptable levels.

The rise in human needs and wants has fragmented Pakistani society greatly. On account of that there is a great deficit of nationhood and nationalism. The erosion of unity among people weakens the state and it could not duly protect the interests of the country. The disunity is a great challenge for Pakistan and the country suffers more from its internal weaknesses (social and political fragmentation) than from external threats.

Pakistani society is not very mature to sustain the pressures of growing individual needs and wants hyped by the media. It can move forward more aggressively with the traditional tools and collectivism. The poor can prosper better through unity and cooperation as they have limited resources. Their collaboration builds synergy and power. As and when we have systems that are mature enough to meet the

growing needs of individuals (individualism), then and only then we should let the individualism creep into our lives and our social systems. We have to be efficient in the use of our meager resources; and collectivism can contribute towards that significantly through sharing of resources. Pluralism and respecting internal differences can play an important role in this regard.

Individualism is impregnable to vice and criminality. The societies in developing countries like Pakistan can not afford criminality. Bribery, corruption, and nepotism are the major vices (partly an indirect result of premature promotion of individualism) of the recent governments in Pakistan and also in many countries around the world. The vice and criminality kills social efficiency and Pakistani society is marred by rampant corruption. This is a serious issue and Pakistan needs a nationalist leadership/government which could supply moral virtue to its functionaries, politicians, and public. It should arrest vice and promote virtue.

The source of moral virtue gleans from God and Pakistan can use the moral good of Islamic religion to impart useful values to its inhabitants. Islam provides virtue in all walks of life; people in general are religious and religious values can be inculcated among ordinary people to love their country and themselves as a nation. Love for the country comes from national pride rather than reason. Ignoring the importance of national pride at this stage of Pakistan's socio-political history will be disastrous for people and the state. In this context, the constitution of people's morality is more important than the constitution of government. Accordingly, the government and individuals must endeavour to impart virtue among ordinary citizens of Pakistan.

In the current scenario of fragmented society in Pakistan, people's attitudes are more important than that of government. The globalization has enabled foreign cultures and interests to reach individuals directly through Internet, satellite television, mobile phones, and other means of communication. The global forces are inculcating individualism for serving their interests; that are detrimental to the interests of Pakistanis as a nation.

Inequality

Socio-economic, racial, political, and other inequalities are the root cause of most problems in the world. However, thee inequalities generate vibrations for relatively rapid growth of human societies. Humans are equal by nature; the nature has produced distinctions like male vs female, children vs elderly, and Black vs White. Social, economic, and political differences are the products of people, societies, and governments. Inequality is a path to misery for human kind. It is known that in the early ages, there were no Kings and no governments; and as a consequence, there were no wars. It is shame for the present world system that it has brought misery, confusion, and tension to a large segment of mankind. It has brought material progress but available only to a fraction of the population in the world.

Inequality is a proxy of poverty, which is the mother of all ills. The present world order based on unbridled capitalism supported by politics of the elite is the mother

of inequality/poverty. As a general rule, 20 percent of the world's population consumes 80 percent of the resources while 80 percent of the world's population consumes only 20 percent of the resources. This socio-economic inequality is the root cause of all the problems individual societies are facing. The governments seem to be powerless in front of capitalistic forces; seemingly the governments around the world are the clients of the world system. New York is the capital of 'capital' (money) and Washington is the capital of capitals (political power centres); they both work hand in glove for the continuing disadvantage of poor nations.

The present system of governance in the world make some people think that they were born to reign and others to obey. The former category of people soon gets cheeky and develops disliking for the ordinary people. They get poisoned by the social significance they get from their public offices. Such feelings detach them from public and make them act against the interests of ordinary populace.

Pakistan-USA Relations

Pakistan has long been linked with the USA and has benefited to some extent. Some people assert that Pakistan will flourish from its continuing connection with the US. It is greatly fallacious. According to US's view, Pakistan has served the interests of the world system and is no more needed (as a country in its present shape). The US now wants another dismemberment of Pakistan for serving the emerging interests of the proposed new world order. The notorious CIA maps of the world showed new regional map showing disfigured and pruned Pakistan.

For the first couple of decades after independence, Pakistan was an infant country and needed nourishment, which was provided by the US and the world system led by her. After that Pakistan became strong and healthy and it fought three wars with India: two large scale wars in 1965 and 1971. The third war of 1998 over Kargil was limited one. The very first war on Kashmir in 1948 was to generate and intensify animosities between the newly independent nations (India and Pakistan). As we all remember, the US's help was expected during 1965 and 1971 wars but it never came. Actually, the US maneuvered Pakistan and India to go to wars. Pakistan fought another proxy war for the USA in Afghanistan against Soviet Union in the 1980s. It got another experience of short war in Kargil in 1998. Moreover, Pakistan provided war machinery to many countries (Saudi Arabia, Jordan, continental Africa and other countries) around the world. All these experiences made this country and its army very strong.

The experience of untrustworthy relationship with the USA pushed Pakistan to develop nuclear and missile technology during the last three decades. Pakistan has displayed its nuclear power through several successful nuclear tests during the last 10 years. It has gained enough capability to meet external threats coming from any country.

Pakistan has established strong armed forces and that is why our borders remained secure even when the Indians pitched their army against Pakistani forces for several months in the year 2001-02. As Pakistan is strong enough to face any

external threat, the enemy is attempting to create internal disorder by inducing political instability, internal strife, and fragmentation of society.

Building Dismal Picture of Pakistan

Pakistan has survived the vagaries of time during the last 62 years of its checkered history. It has learnt lessons to move forward as a nation. It went through five international wars (four with India and the fifth in Afghanistan against Russia); Pakistan has learnt a great deal from these wars and has now emerged as a confident and strong nation. Someone may argue that Pakistan did not gain much from these wars and yet some others may argue that it has actually lost. Even if we accept this argument, we can safely argue that Pakistan has matured on account of these conflicts and has gained confidence to survive as a nation. As they say, 'failure is a predictor of success'; we are now ready to rise and move forward as a confident nation.

International and national media at the behest of capitalistic control are trying to build a dismal picture about Pakistan. Labels like 'failed' or 'rogue' state are being used for Pakistan by international media. Serious attempts are being made to induce political instability and creating civil unrest in the country. Such attempts are continuing for the last several years and they substantially have failed so far. The aim is to make people tired with the government in Islamabad by producing crises around food, and other necessities of life.

Pakistan was created with the politics of two-nation theory and now that theory is being dumped under the carpet. Several types of communication materials are being created and are used to generate good and bad feelings between the people of the two neighbouring countries -- India and Pakistan. Such strategies may not be based on ill will and there might be a genuine effort to bring peace between the two countries. However, there are serious reservations about these hype creating programs. With increasing frequency, pleasantries and ill will messages are being exchanged between the two countries and it may have the contents of conspiracy. We must be cautioned and careful.

Building Modern Image of India

Modern and prosperous images were being built for India, and in contrast, a gory and gloomy picture is being created for Pakistan. Seminars about the partition of India, exchange of movies, the airing of specifically purposeful movies (on different occasions), and specific statements by politicians are aimed to bridge social and psychological gap between the two countries. This seems to be a grand conspiracy to kill Pakistan.

The international system is developing new linkages with India and raising its image as an aggressive nation with a potential of becoming one of the superpowers and/or a regional power. Such a forceful and positive image of India is aimed to promote good will of India in Pakistan and around the world. When this positive image building of India is coupled with dismal image of Pakistan, the intentions of

the world system get revealed. According to the wishes of the leaders of the world system, Pakistan may possibly be forced to make a confederation with India. This argument receives support from the fact that media have been talking about the possibility of Pakistan's disintegration and nefarious confederation with India. However, that will never happen, according to the assessment of the author.

The question arises, why the international system does not want Pakistan on the map of the world anymore? Pakistan is an enterprising nation and its people are hard working. The people of Pakistan have martial attributes and the country has survived for the last 62 years against all odds. Pakistan is a nuclear and missile power country and this is not acceptable to the masters of the present international system. By conspiring confederation of Pakistan with India, the world system could get rid of the only Muslim nuclear nation tactfully.

An argument is sometimes advanced against spending money on nuclear technology. This is as fallacious as anything. Every country has its own strengths and weakness and each country uses this package of assets and limitations (just like any business organization) to advance its interests. Pakistan can prosper with its great assets of large enterprising nation, nuclear technology and well-developed military machine. The armed forces of Pakistan are well known around the world and if Pakistan loses this asset; the chances of Pakistan's prosperity are likely to dwindle. Moreover, since the development of nuclear technology, the atom bomb of Pakistan has deterred a large scale war with India.

In short, Pakistan stands a good chance to progress as a strong nation. We need to inculcate confidence among our people and national institutions. Pakistan needs cohesion among people, the government, the military, socio-political leaders, and media. Intelligentsia of Pakistan must be put to a good use for nation building. The pride of people in their national identity is a great tool for Pakistan's survival in the near future. Our culture, our history, our religion, and our identity, all put together, can make us 'an invincible nation'. Let it be noted that all of us owe to this country. If we don't do some 'good' to Pakistan, we should feel guilty for not doing it. Voltaire once said: "Every man is guilty of all the good he did not do." Accordingly, all of us should do our bit for the good of people around and for the world at large. Long Live Pakistan.

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