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Mobilizing People's power

Dedicated to Democratic Ideals, a progressive and politically stable Pakistan, and strong US-Pakistan relations.

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Two Trumps and Two Americas

Touqir Hussain

Trump's election has been a rare if not a unique phenomenon. But in one sense it was logically coherent with the history making changes that are taking place in the world in which both the international and domestic orders have been under challenge reflecting and affecting much instability specially in the Islamic world.

The West is under threat from this instability in the form of refugees and terrorism. And it is also under challenge, on one hand from rival rising powers constraining the West's ability to dominate the world as before, and on the other by globalisation that has created social discontent and income inequality leaving the lower classes behind.

So the class consciousness has reached the Western shores — first in Europe and now in the US where the white and the uneducated among the lower classes have felt victimised and excluded at the hands of forces they do not understand prompting them to look for scapegoats. In times like this when foreign countries and foreigners are taking away your factories, jobs and personal security there has been rise of xenophobia, especially Muslim phobia, inciting a sentiment of whites only at home and America first abroad.

It is the economic anxiety caused by global and domestic forces on one hand and threat to security from terrorism from the Islamic world on the other that Trump successfully tapped into. And he also nourished the nostalgia for the original white identity of America and a yearning for some strongman who could be tough with the terrorists and the countries that were taking advantage of the US.

But these perceptions have not engulfed the whole country nor is Trump phenomenon all about white supremacy and racism though he did incite as well as benefited from it.

Trump himself most likely did not share his supporters' mindset that he knew was based largely on bias and ignorance but appropriated their opinions as his own. He said what his base wanted to hear and made them believe that these were his own views thus creating an illusion he spoke for them. He said it "as it is", people thought, and that made him look honest and authentic.

It was a very clever strategy. But Trump could not have done it without Bernie Sanders, who led an intellectual movement to highlight the crisis in the elite led American democracy, and the earlier Occupy Wall Street movement against the one per cent. No wonder many of the educated white, women, blacks and Latinos including some traditional Democratic Party voters also ended up supporting Trump.

Different people thus voted for Trump for different reasons but one theme was common. They were all supporting him to overthrow a system that they felt had let them down. They thought they were launching a revolution or at least a reform movement. Trump fomented their belief that politicians and politics had failed them. It enhanced his image as a nonpolitician and by extension sunk Hillary's who was successfully demonised by his supporters as part of the elite based system. This is what the chants of "lock her up" were all about.

Yet it is a measure of how divided this country has become that rarely in American history has one seen a President elect being the object of so much adulation among his supporters and such intense dislike among his opponents. His supporters put their faith in his call to arms against an unfair system and his opponents looked at him as an affront to some of the core values of US democracy and norms of human decency.

Important thing is how is he going to deliver on his promises? His focus will be on domestic issues specially on economy on which his solutions are those favoured by the corporate and conservative America for decades. The billionaires he has chosen for his cabinet will take care of that. It is their governance philosophy he will bring to his office. And his foreign policy also may come to focus on economy as indicted by his choice of the Secretary of State whose main task perhaps may well turn out to be economic diplomacy.

That means Trump and his billionaire cabinet colleagues are not going to break any china by starting trade wars or repudiating existing trade deals. Global disorder is not good for the US economy nor is instability good for profit. And he may not after all throw out millions of Mexicans. It will cause an economic chaos in America.

He will try to deliver on his promises not necessarily by addressing the issues he spoke about in the campaign. He knows the solutions favoured by his base are not going to work. He cannot bring the manufacturing jobs back but he can perhaps create new jobs in infra structure. And that might be good enough for his supporters.

As for the foreign policy he will be tough on Iran and very pro Israel like the hardline faction of the Republican Party. And will have zero tolerance toward terrorism. He will drive a hard bargain in negotiations with other countries and give no quarter to America's enemies like the IS. But he will be flexible on broader strategic issues making deals wherever he can to advance US national interests.

He has made sure to appoint people to the cabinet positions who share his world view. He is therefore likely to leave the institutions to handle much of the foreign policy. He will remain in charge of the rhetoric but the policy will rest with the institutions. The rhetoric and reality of the foreign policy under Trump will thus collide as he would continue to say weird things. But that is only to keep his base intact whose support he needs for reelection. It was a magic if not sorcery that he won and he does not want to break the spell. In any case, as a narcissist he has an irrepressible urge to speak and seek attention. He will thus continue to live as a candidate.

The candidate and the President Trump will thus deal with two Americas — the Trump country and the larger America. All four will live side by side as an interesting foursome. And if Trump manages to do some good for America and also keep loyalty of his base he will have largely succeeded for himself and the country.

Touqir Hussain, a former Pakistani Ambassador, is an Adjunct Professor at Georgetown University and SAIS Johns Hopkins University. He is a Founding and Charter Member of INDUS -- Mobilizing People's Power.



December 2016 - Athar Javaid, President, INDUS-Mobilizing People's Power, in conversation with Syed Hassan Akbar Program, Director, Jinnah Institute.



December 2016 - Athar Javaid, President, INDUS-Mobilizing People's Power, meeting with journalists in Islamabad.

Real-life Issues

Farhan Bokhari

THE media hype surrounding recent appointments to top slots in the army and the ISI, ironically coincided with the state-owned PIA practically grounding its ATR planes for checks following the crash of the ill-fated flight PK-661 from Chitral to Islamabad.

The coincidence of these two events was a powerful reminder of a national obsession with routine changes in the armed forces, while real-life issues that will define Pakistan's future remain partially or fully neglected. It also points towards Pakistan's failure to appreciate the downward drift in the country's outlook with ultimate consequences for national security, notwithstanding Prime Minister Nawaz Sharif's government repeatedly predicting a coming economic 'take off'.

The trouble surrounding the national flag carrier is just one of the many examples of the rapid decay in Pakistan's public-sector companies after becoming larger-than-life white elephants. The failure under successive regimes to stem the rot while Pakistan's leaders repeatedly promised to leave no stone unturned in defending the country's security must count among the biggest ironies in the nation's history.

Exactly what will decide the fate of Pakistan's security? Is it just halting of the advance by militants who at one time practically ruled parts of the country and whose influence still persists, or is it more centrally the fate of Pakistan's mainstream population? Tragically, those compelling questions have never been robustly addressed by successive regimes which ought to have been the first step towards a long overdue national revival. Ultimately, Pakistan's huge security challenges have only become increasingly acute with the passage of time. The fundamental flaw in tackling those challenges has been the failure to appreciate exactly how Pakistan's best interests need to be protected, beyond fighting the fight in a military style.

And while the headlines continue to be grabbed by exactly what brought down the ill-fated flight PK-661, the multiple maladies that have brought down PIA and turned it in to a white elephant need to be aggressively examined. Whether it's the case of PIA's two hotels in Paris and New York which should have been sold long ago to rescue its core business, or why the boilers in ATRs collapsed long ago leaving passengers without hot drinks, the list goes on and on. A similar set of issues stands at the heart of other failed or failing state institutions such as Wapda or the Pakistan Steel Mills or Pakistan Railways. Their history of balance sheets along with the general state of affairs in any one of these institutions is an indication that the government has no business to be in business.

Meanwhile, key services for the people which ought to be at the centre of the state's responsibilities, notably education and healthcare, remain neglected. And there's also a dark side to the security gains, so proudly pronounced by Pakistan's leaders as evidence of success. While militant sanctuaries were clearly attacked in army campaigns especially in the past two years, policing in urban and rural areas all across Pakistan presents yawning gaps that have been left unattended. The clear politicisation of Pakistan's police and the loss of independence of decision-makers across the board have turned a once reasonably functioning institution in to a series of fiefdoms controlled by local influentials.

Meanwhile, the findings of the inquiry commission of the well-respected Justice Qazi Faez Isa probing the Aug 8 terrorist attack in Quetta, marks a powerful reminder of where lies the rot. Contradictions between words and deeds such as Interior Minister Chaudhary Nisar Ali Khan's reported meeting with a head of a banned outfit, says much about Pakistan's direction. Unless key functionaries from top level leaders to those in the field learn to become law-abiding, no amount of work otherwise to enforce the law will bring sustainable change across Pakistan.

And last but not the least, in sharp contrast to frequent claims of Pakistan heading towards economic rehabilitation, the reality on the ground presents a compelling case to the contrary. The collapse in Pakistan's agricultural incomes notably in the past two years and a decline in exports marks a twin whammy for economic growth.

The evidence from the ground clearly suggests that the majority of the population which relies on

agriculture and industry is nowhere even remotely close to seeing the spin-offs from a recovery often bragged about in official claims. These contradictions have tragically coincided with little evidence of the ruling structure becoming more focused in aggressively tackling the mother of all economic ills, namely widespread tax evasion across Pakistan.

The challenges confronting Pakistan are multifaceted but the contradiction at the centre of Pakistan's sorry outlook is just one. The country's ruling structure must lead by example, defining security through tackling issues that mainstream Pakistanis confront in their daily lives. Otherwise, the ground regained from militants will be in danger of being lost with the passage of time.

The writer is an Islamabad-based journalist.

Published in [Dawn](#), December 27th, 2016.



INDUS Newsletter



OUR FOCUS

Youth Leadership Development

Creating campus-based, strictly nonpolitical Student Government Associations that offer Executive, Legislative & Judiciary functions experience within the campus environment. Elected student representatives, as Members of Parliament, Senators and judges manage all aspects of student affairs, in conjunction with campus administration.

Pakistan Civil Liberties Union

Civil liberties are personal guarantees and freedoms that the government cannot abridge, either by law or by judicial interpretation. However in today's Pakistan, rising violence, intolerance, weak rule of law, endemic corruption, lack of social and economic justice, and religious freedom, social exclusion of the vulnerable and the marginalized are a common phenomenon that the people of Pakistan face on a daily basis. Pakistan Civil Liberties Union – PCLU is a watchdog organization intended to combat all the above issues at every cross section of our society.

Community Integration & Civic Promotion

When successful, the processes of community integration and civic promotion begin with the individual and, alongside support from Federal, State, and municipal programs, advance collectively, often through socialization with informal groups and professional and cultural associations. However, due to regional, organizational, and programmatic differences, the catalytic potential of civil society organizations is underutilized. Partnerships with local,

regional, and national civil society organizations will advance community integration, promote the concept of citizenship, and highlight pathways to achieve the "American Dream."

Policy Research – As It Happens

Campus-based political and social sciences research. Graduate Student and Faculty focusing on policy issues for possible social, cultural, and political reform, followed by advocacy action and awareness creation by the same researchers for the purposes of legislative reform as appropriate.

Cultivating Early Awareness

Aimed at increasing youngsters' awareness of rights and responsibilities of citizenship, and building a national bond at a very impressionable age, leading to real benefits to the nation in evolving future leadership.

MEDIA REVIEW

Pakistani-American doctor wins Nato Scientific Achievement Award 2016

The Science and Technology Organization (STO), the largest NATO organisation for defence science and technology, awarded the "Scientific Achievement Award 2016" to Dr Rashid A. Chotani, a Pakistani-American, who was part of a task group researching medical countermeasures against biological agents. [[Dawn](#)]

CPEC: Pakistan's Newest Holy Cow Could Also Become Its Millstone

Shabir Choudary

The author believes that to criticize CPEC is to invite accusations of being "anti-Pakistan" or a "foreign agent," creating a difficult environment for impartial analysis. He argues that CPEC may have negative impacts on the people of Gilgit-Baltistan and for Pakistani sovereignty over Gwadar Port. [[South Asia Monitor](#)]

Army Can Never Be Solution To Kashmir Problem – Analysis

Nishant Rajeev

"Any future policy needs to incorporate not only the use of military force but also diplomacy, dialogue and development. The government must work towards regaining the trust of the people by bringing economic progress and opening avenues of dialogue with the relevant stakeholders. [...] Without a coherent long-term solution, which most governments don't seem to have up till now, we can never hope to see a stable Kashmir." [[Eurasia Review](#)]

Pakistan, for an American audience

Raza Rumi

A popular U.S. television network recently screened "Jinnah," the film. The author interviews Dr. Akbar Ahmed, the man behind the film in the 1990s and currently the Ibn Khaldun Chair for Islamic Studies at American University in Washington D.C. [[The Friday Times](#)]

Muslim students in Garden Grove respond to hate mail

Anh Do

Administrators at Orange Crescent School decided to share anti-Muslim hate mail they received with their students. The students responded by writing 230 letters of their own expressing kindness and hope for mutual respect. [[Los Angeles Times](#)]

India's caste system is alive and kicking – and maiming and killing

Mari Marcel Thekaekara

"Oppression and violence are still an everyday reality" for members of India's lowest caste, writes the author. "In India, justice for the poor and powerless is the exception rather than the rule. [...] We can and must begin a campaign against casteism. Only then, when the medieval practice of untouchability and caste is honestly a thing of the past, can we truly celebrate India's freedom." [[The Guardian](#)]

As always, thank you for reading, and thank you for your efforts. If you have questions or comments, or desire to participate in any way, please don't hesitate to contact us at induspk.usa@gmail.com.

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