

**MUSHARAF, TALIBAN AND  
IMPLEMENTATION OF SHARIAH BILL IN  
NWFP (KHYBER PAKHTUNKHWA)**

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By Professor Khurshid Ahmad

General Pervez Musharraf left for the US and three European states in an awful manner. Internally, he opened two fronts, simultaneously. With sort of commando action, he made repeated attacks on the political process that he claims was his own creation. He left no stone un-turned in ridiculing the parliament. At time he labeled its members to be “un-civilized”. Then to keep it under strict military control he imperiously announced the necessity of NSC and his staying in uniform. He badly hurt the contractual relationship between the federation and the provinces that was based on the constitution. He used the district governance system to support his rule in the center. In an interview to the Indian ND TV he expressed regret for: “the shape of parliament and democracy that emerged in Pakistan after elections”. He (reportedly) said that the country failed to bring a workable democracy. About his own referendum, he admitted: “it was a mistake”.

**(Nawai Waqt, Lahore, June 14, 2003)**

Targeting the passage of Shariah Bill in NWFP he opened the second front, apparently against MMA, but in fact against Islam and its system of law, culture and civilization. The reforms being introduced in the province were given the name of “Talibanization”, and the provincial government and the assembly were threatened to be dissolved.

Other than these two internal fronts, he considered it necessary to give some clear signals about the Pakistan foreign policy that provided a glimpse of his future plans. These signals carry special meaning due to the fact that such expressions are intended to prepare the nation for the calamities for which the show of Camp David was being staged. It is worth noting that Musharraf’s companions declared spending a day in the Presidential Camp on President Bush’s invitation there as a diplomatic honor to the General. But the far-sighted discerning people see in it great dangers - the same that have today gripped the Arabs and particularly, the Palestinians. This all had started in 1978, when Anwar Sadat and Yasir Arafat were similarly “honored” in Camp David. Sadat accepted Israel and was punished by his own people. Yaser Arafat has become a symbol of admonition, that the one, who was welcome guest at Camp David yesterday, is worthless and discarded stuff even not acceptable to be seen today.

The signals quite apparent in General’s statement are:

- (i) review of policy towards Israel;
- (ii) keeping aside the principle stand on Kashmir and talk about ten, twelve solutions;
- (iii) finding some share for Pakistan in the humiliation that the US forces face in Iraq;
- (iv) confrontation against the so-called Islamic extremism,
- (v) Taking with him in this important visit, the Finance Minister (and not the foreign minister), who has recently visited the sensitive installations in Kahuta, and who,

according to informed circles wishes to bring the Pakistan nuclear capability under the umbrella of American nuclear strategy. Similarly, and surprisingly, Mr. Sharifuddin Pirzada joined his entourage, who happens to be the author of LFO, and who has been advisor to military rulers and considered an expert of providing them certificates of legitimacy.

The incursions of the self-appointed army Chief on the internal and external fronts, who claims to be the state head as well, point to a situation that is dangerous and eye-opener. Therefore, before we take up the real issues we wish to place before the nation the principle position with full force and clarity: that an individual holds no authority to take position without seeking consent of the nation and a proper decision from the parliament.

### Who is authorized to make Policy Decision?

Let the General visit these countries as he pleases. But he has no right to accept and state in the name of the Pakistani nation and the Islamic Republic of Pakistan, any change in policy, or enter any agreement in these matters without seeking proper sanction of the parliament and the nation. US and the European countries should also realize that an individual couldn't bind a whole nation to follow his personal priorities. The country law and the constitution provide no legitimacy to the General's rule. He is not only a self-appointed President, rather has himself extended his tenure as army chief. The constitution of Pakistan makes no provision to authorize the President to frame internal and external policies. Within the constitutional framework, he is not part of the Cabinet. Even the LFO itself, which is controversial, is at best a constitutional proposal, and is not a part of the constitution, assigns the authority of policy decisions in internal and foreign affairs and to enter into agreements, to the cabinet and not the President.

Let we also point here at the constitutional flaw, that in matters of such basic importance, there is no condition of validation by the two houses of the parliament. In most countries the final authority of policy-making and ratification of international agreements rest with the Parliament, which fulfills this responsibility after open discussion. A basic cause of the troubles and difficulties that Pakistan face today is this manner of the rule of a single person. That must come to end now, or we shall never have democracy. The President's inroads have apparently disturbed even the Prime Minister, but he seems not openly working to restore the people's rights, the supremacy of the parliament and to ensure his due position as premier. When asked in an interview with the Daily Nation about the "ten-twelve" solutions of Kashmir, review of the policy concerning Israel and Pakistan's nuclear capability, he had to reveal the truth in the words:

"God may forgive. Zafarullah Jamali will be the last person to make such decisions. No government should decide these issues without taking the whole nation and the parliament into confidence"

**(Nawai Waqt, June 18, 2003)**

So the first thing we wish to make quite clear is to seek a decision on the correct and appropriate manner and procedure about policy-making, international agreements and pledges to be given to the world powers. Both the treasury benches and the opposition should give this matter prime importance and let there be immediate consensus on a protocol in this regard, that is made part of the constitution without any delay. Thus every ruler will be bound by a regulation and the nation and its parliament will be held responsible for every important decision.

### Correct Interpretation of Islam

General Perez Mascara, while addressing the so-called Lawyer's Convention in Lahore, and later at the inauguration of the Pak-Japan Friendship Tunnel Chat, subsequently in his interviews to the Indian channel ND TV and BBC, and while speaking to the Pakistanis in London, chose to attack particularly what he termed the "Islamic Extremism" and the "Islam of Taliban". He bitterly criticized rather ridiculed beards, the local dress - shalwar qamees - hijab (veil) and the public resentment against the use of women for advertisements. He labeled it "out molded Islam", and then spoke of his self-styled liberal, progressive and modern Islam, making the oft-spoken statement that Iqbal and Quaid-e-Azam were against theocracy and they wanted progressive Islam. Expressing his anger and rage against the NWFP Shariah Bill being made part of the law, he went to the extent to say that if the process of Talibanization continues, he will not hesitate to dissolve the assembly. We wish to have a look at these same uttering's of the General Sahib.

The first thing we submit to the General, and also to the intellectuals and writers who think and are writing on similar lines is that you are not revealing anything new. The day the Western Imperialism has subdued the Muslim world; a group in Muslim societies has been making such remarks ostensibly for its love for modernity and progressiveness. Ummah's conscience at large never accepted this liberalism and blind following of the West and termed this as mere imitation and subservience to imperialist lords. This thinking has never enjoyed general acceptance. Only a small minority and not the Ummah ever accorded it any regard. Iqbal, who is so often quoted by the General, has shattered to pieces all such thinking. And, the Quaid-e-Azam, of whose Islam he mentions, was, inspite of his Western education and expertise in law, of the view of Islam that carried the consensus of the Ummah. Of which a fundamental principle is, that Islam is not limited to private life, but guides in all spheres of human activity. And that covers the principles and values, the fundamental institutions, the specific appearance, the living, the attire, the food and such all-encompassing regulations. Its characteristic is the unity of the meta-physical and mundane, and the integration of religion and politics. Islam is neither of the "Mullah", nor of Taliban. It is also not the innovation of the "Mister" or any General. Islam is the religion (Deen) of Allah, which is designed by and protected in the Quran. It has only one clean and pure normative model - the exalted Prophet and Leader (Quaid), Muhammad (Sall Allah o alaihe wa Sallam). Only the Qur'an and Prophetic Sunnah provide the basic source of Islam for every age and any region.

No doubt Islam has its own wisdom of revolution, but what the Qur'an and Sunnah have settled is final. No one is permitted to add or delete from it a bit.

We will speak about Taliban later. The real issue is only that Islam is acceptable that is proved from the Qur'an and Sunnah. Muslims perceive as their target only that Islam and its model that has been given by Muhammad (Sallah Allah o alaihe wa Sallam). Not the one to which Bush agrees, or which the Western politicians and intellectuals regard progressive and liberal. The U.S. target today is the Islam of the Qur'an and Sunnah, which is termed at time, as "out-dated", called "Jihadi Deen" and dubbed as extremism, labeled sometimes as "fundamentalism", or called with contempt "Islam of Taliban" or of the "Mullah". These are all the tactics of appeasing the Western masters. Islam is ONLY one. Our models are neither the Islam of Taliban and Iran, nor that of Saudi Arabia and Sudan. The true source of guidance for us is the Qur'an and Sunnah. To the extent that Taliban, Iran, Saudi Arabia, Sudan or rest of the Muslim World and Movements act upon the Qur'an and Sunnah, is credible. Where they have deviated, warrants correction and that is not our target. We need to clearly understand that the objective of the Ummah and all of us is to seek the pleasure of Allah. We need no certification by Bush or Blair, nor target their praise and compliments. The criteria is one - the command and guidance of Allah and His Prophet (Sall Allah o alaihe wa Sallam), because what is sanctioned by Allah, is Islam for us (as outlined in the Qur'an):

"The religion before Allah is Islam (Submission to His Will). Nor did the People of Book dissent there from except through envy of each other, after knowledge had come to them; but if any deny the signs of Allah, and then Allah is swift in calling to account". **(3:19)**

"If anyone desires a religion other than Islam, never will it be accepted of him; and in the Hereafter he will be in the ranks of who are in loss". **(3:85)**

"O! You who believe, enter into Islam whole-heartedly (accept it in totality), and follow not the footsteps of the Evil One (Satan), for he is to you an avowed enemy". **(2:208)**

### Mis-interpreting Iqbal and the Quaid

There is nothing like "theocracy" in Islam. But to target in the name of condemning theocracy Islamic way of life, its law, its social values, political commands, economic regulations and the cultural limits and targets, and to say that religion was a private affair, is no simple deviation; it is open rebellion. And to bring Iqbal and Quaid in support is the worst type of intellectual dishonesty. Beverly Nicolson, in his "*Verdict on India*" (pub. 1944) notes about his interview with Quaid-e-Azam, while asking about the objectives of the Pakistan Movement and the relationship of state and religion:

**B.N.:** When you say the Muslims are a Nation, are you thinking in terms of religion?

**Quaid:** Partly, but by no means exclusively. You must remember that Islam is not merely a religious doctrine but a realistic and practical Code of Conduct. I am thinking in terms of *life*, of everything important in life. I am thinking in terms of our history, our heroes, our art, our architecture, our music, our laws, our jurisprudence. In all these things our outlook is not only fundamentally different but often radically antagonistic to the Hindus. We are different *beings*. There is nothing in life, which links us together. Our names, our clothes, our foods - they are all different; our attitude to animals - we challenge each other at every point of the compass. Take one example, the eternal question of the cow. We eat the cow, the Hindus worship it.

That was the reason why Quaid-e-Azam so clearly stated about the objective behind the call for creating Pakistan: "The Muslims demand Pakistan, so that they can govern according to the dictates of their way of life, their traditions and the Islamic laws".

With greater emphasis, the same views were expressed by the Quaid-e-Azam on the occasion of Milad-e-Nabi (**Jan: 25, 1948**), when he addressed the Karachi Bar Association. He clearly used the word *Shariah* and said that the principles and laws given to humanity thirteen hundred years back were as much applicable and necessary for man today as thirteen hundred years ago.

It is the question of Islam; not of the whims and habits of a certain group or section. To show the bugbear of Taliban in an attempt to escape from Islamic Shariah will enjoy little respect.

Speaking of Allama Iqbal, we need only to submit that his whole philosophy and his enormous poetic work sought the unity of the religion and the worldly affairs. He devoted all his efforts to realize the end goal that Muslims follow the example of the Prophet (Sall Allah o alaihe wa Sallam) in every aspect of individual and collective life. For the preachers of 'progressive' and 'liberal' Islam, he only has strong criticism and stern warnings:

Whether Iqbal, Quaid-e-Azam or the Muslim Ummah of Indo-Pakistan sub-continent, none struggled for the type of Islam that was to be acceptable to Bush and Blair. What General Pervaiz calls out-molded and non-practical, is the Eternal and Infallible Guidance that comes from the fountainhead of the Book of Allah and the Sunnah and model of His holy Prophet (Sall Allah o alaihe wa Sallam). Muslims regard only that to be credible and acceptable. The imperialist forces have attempted at 'reforming' Islam even in the past, and they are playing the same game today. Those who worked as their agents failed utterly then, and will face the same fate today – Insha Allah.

## Lamentation of Talibanization

About the Taliban, we want to clearly state that their emergence and hold in Afghanistan was the result of peculiar conditions. The Pakistani rulers, the Pak army leadership, and the Saudi Arabian and American politicians, were all on their back. "The Islam of Taliban" did not come to existence on September 11, 2001. Taliban were managing their collective system in a special manner, the way they understood and conceived it. Some of its aspects were refulgent and splendid. In other areas their system was lacking and defective.

Afghanistan is a tribal society, and Taliban are part of that fabric, which is characterized by Pashtun *turah* (code), laws, traditions and regulations. No doubt this Afghan system had derived notably from the Islamic Shariah, yet the social perception of Taliban was basically dependent on the Pashtoon customs and norms, and Islam was in it as much as it was assimilated. In fact, a part of their policies was based on their indigenous traditions, which are not relevant to Pakistan or other Muslim communities in the world. Therefore, the reforms that are being introduced in the NWFP cannot be brushed aside under the Taliban caricature.

No matter what anybody says about Taliban today, the fact remains that Taliban brought the peace and justice to Afghanistan, which was in the grip of bloody civil war, and where loot and plunder was the order of the day. The Warlords had turned the life miserable. All that area, which was controlled by the Taliban, had become the cradle of justice and peace and where warlords were effectively controlled. Then, in a matter of few years, they cleansed Afghanistan from the curse of growing opium that helped the whole world. This was admitted even by America itself.

It is true that their policies in regard to economic growth, mass education - particularly of women - and towards other nationalities were defective. The religious leadership and the world Islamic Movements, while encouraged their good deeds, timely pointed at their weaknesses and they had started moving towards better education system, progress and accommodation for the rest.

What we need to see is that those who censure their conduct today were finding no fault with them before 9/11; yet see no good in them today. Taliban came to power when the so-called liberal political party ruled Pakistan - People's Party. They supported them fully. The army leadership was for them, and America too was in support. Till May 2001, the US was busy establishing deep political, diplomatic and economic ties with the Taliban. They got it in the neck, when they refused to become American hand tools. They also refused to hand over to America without any proof and evidence, the person or the group that they had protected as guests.

For Pakistan, Taliban were allies and companions. They never betrayed Pakistan. Only the military rulers of Pakistan took a U-turn to appease America. They provided their land and their shoulders



to America, only to destroy their friends and brothers. The US Northern Commands reports that the US air force made more than 57 thousand sorties against the Afghan people, by using either Pakistan's air space or ground facilities. So we were equal partners in this cruel campaign and mischief. Those who were friends and allies were turned as enemies.

The Islam of Taliban neither dawned on September 11, nor was anywhere before that. Everybody knows how much Pakistan was in harmonious agreement with them. It is also no more a secret; to what extent America participated and developed intimacy with them. Score of books have been written over the past two years. *"Forbidden Truth: US-Taliban Secret Oil Diplomacy"*, the work of two French journalists, which was the best-seller in France as well as in the US, and of which the English edition was published from US and UK in 2002, makes important documentary evidence. No doubt, these books provide a mix of facts and fictions, and indications and fabrications. What however, is hard to deny is, how, for their own gains, relations were built and friendship sought with Taliban before nine-eleven? Then, no one was bothered by the "Taliban brand of Islam". Then, the political support, the realization of economic gains and the abundance of economic aid offers, were all very much justified.

As far as we are concerned, our written and printed statements are there to prove that we admired Taliban for their good deeds, but painstakingly pointed at their faults. We never overlooked their shortcomings. Today they are the wronged and aggrieved party, and we therefore, have sympathy with them. We believe it is not simply timidity but immorality to abstain from saying for them a kind word, only because it so pleases America. The political and military leadership of Pakistan should feel ashamed, rather than look down upon Taliban in their period of trial and oppression.

### Enforcement of Islam in NWFP

Regarding the electoral success of Muttahida Majlis-e-Amal in NWFP, and the attempts of the provincial government to enforce Islam, one thing is quite clear. The MMA has come to power democratically and with over-whelming support of the masses. It did not enter the corridor of power through some back door. The presidency of General Pervaiz Musharraf carries no constitutional or moral legitimacy. He is a self-appointed president. In similar manner, he made himself the Chief of Staff for the second term. For the sham referendum of 2002, he has not only expressed feeling ashamed, but agrees that it was a mistake. Yet he is not ready to accept the logical consequences of that mistake. The MMA provided him every chance to get elected constitutionally, provided only that he retrieves the illegal and un-constitutional authorities held and amendments made. But he evades this constitutional and lawful approach. He insists to stay in power by miss-using the military strength and authority. Contrary to this, the MMA in NWFP followed pure legal and democratic ways. It has come to power through the popular vote. That is why Prime Minister Zafarullah Jamali Sahib, had to admit and state: "People gave them (MMA)



vote, and they have the right to rule". But General Musharraf's stentorian and thunderous statements make a different tone. He threatens to dissolve an elected assembly only because that body considers his whimsical progressive Islam a deviation from the true religion. And that this MMA government wishes to act according to the popular mandate it got. Why he is doing all this? Seems he is mistaken that God Almighty has appointed him for this task. He is only reviving the long dead and rotten concept of the "divine right of kings".

So, there is the General on one side, who is nothing more than un-elected and self-styled president. On the other is the elected provincial assembly and a leadership, which attempts through that assembly, in accordance with the constitutional provisions, to realize the objective of Pakistan Movement and to give practical shape to the promises and pledges made by Iqbal and the Quaid, employ democratic and educational means to enforce Shariah. The nation has both the models before it. No one can raise dust and blind the nation or the world community.

The NWFP government is not only facing political pressure and deprivation from economic and financial resources, but is the target of a propaganda war from day one. No mention is made of its positive and constructive works.

The foremost measures taken from day one by the NWFP government are aimed at austerity and self-reliance. A number of the ministers did not avail the facility of official residence. They opened their houses and offices for common men. No change occurred in their living style. For the first time in the country's history, the chief minister and the senior minister cut their monthly pay by Rs. 2000. Other ministers followed and decided to get Rs. 1000 less. As against this, ministers in the federal, the Punjab and Sindh governments did not hesitate to opt for considerable raises, new vehicles and posh houses at the expense of the poor taxpayers. NWFP adopted Urdu as official language and practically introduced it in daily business. Crime rate is half, compare to other provinces and law and order is better than the rest of the country. The price of flour has been brought down. In the public sector hospitals, immediate relief and free treatment is being provided at least in the emergency wards. Education has been given top priority in the budget. It is the only province that earmarked 29 percent of its revenue receipts for annual development plan, whereas it is 19 percent, 13.5 percent and about 6 percent in the Punjab, Sindh and federal level, respectively. Woman education has been given special preference. In the health sector again, special arrangements have been made for the women folk.

The NWFP budget is also unique in the sense that new vision has been given that three streams shall replace the usual two-way division of administrative and development outlay in future. That is, the administrative, social and development budgets. This is in accordance with the early Islamic concept and traditions. When Hadrat Umar Farooq formally instituted *Bait al-Mal* it constituted of two parts (i) *Amwal al-Muslimeen*, and (ii) *Amwal al-Sadaqah*. Attempt has been made to make this vision part of the provincial budget.

The critics have conveniently overlooked all these aspects of the Shariah enforcement. A few secondary things - have been taken to raise hue and cry against the 'MMA's perception' of Islam. General Pervaiz himself in order to intensify the campaign is talking about two Islam's - the extremist and the liberal Islam. Sitting in America and Europe, he was loudly lamenting to crush the extremist Islam and support the liberal one. Thus only for making personal gains, he is bringing bad name to Islam and Pakistan. Fact is, the law and order situation is worse in Karachi, where according to the latest issue of *Herald* (Karachi), fifty cars are lifted daily under the patronage of the police itself. The day MQM entered government and Ishtaratul Ibad came to power, "bhatta" business started again. Killings and corpses bundled in sacks are once again terrorizing and scaring the common man.

*Herald* further reports that according to the justice department, numbers of cases are registered daily, against the police. Between March 20, 2001 and March 19, 2002, 328 such complaints were registered. In the following year (**March 2002 to March 2003**), the number of such cases against police rose to 480. *Time* (magazine) report even if considered exaggerating there is no doubt that Karachi has once again becoming an unsafe city. In Balochistan and Punjab, 'sectarian' killings are increasing. Missiles twice hit the gas pipeline in just one month that resulted in multimillions loss. In Prime Minister's own constituency, the DIG Police was killed in open daylight. Men in police custody are killed in Quetta. All this brings no alarm to General Sahib. But he is greatly upset when he is told that the Pepsi boards displaying women models have been covered with sheets. This is the sense of proportion of the mature ruling leadership of Pakistan.

It seems the Shariah Bill that the NWFP assembly has passed, has not even been studied by the General and his pen-armed guerrillas, because it has no Taliban "ghost" in it. The Bill was presented in the assembly strictly in accordance with the constitutional provisions. The assembly has passed it unanimously. The secular parties came with 21 amendments. These were however taken back later. Then all parties joined to approve the Bill. Not a single vote came in opposition. Have a look at the law. It speaks about education, women's rights, and rights of the minorities, access to justice and targets set to clean up the socio-economic life by eliminating mischief, disparities and exploitation. The framework provides to undertake all these tasks within the limits of the law and through the law enforcement agencies. All planning and legislation is indicated to be done with mutual consultation. Three Commissions are being instituted to make recommendations that will guide future legislation in the assembly. Priority is accorded in the whole process to ensure participation, training of general public and to bring change through educational revolution.

It is a pity that such a constructive work is dubbed as "extremism" and "Talibanization". If it is not malafide intention, then there is no doubt about poor knowledge and misunderstanding. Such a course does not lead a nation to progress. We invite the whole nation and members of the ruling

party (PML-Q) to study the Bill with open mind. Let everybody take part in this exercise employing intellect and honesty. That is what will pay the country and the nation.

### National Security Demands

Towards the end, we wish to bring on record the feelings of the sincere and wise elements of the nation. Inclusion of Sharifuddin Pirzada in the General's entourage to participate in parleys in Camp David raises concerns that LFO was now extended beyond Islamabad and linked with Washington. On the surface, America plays proud about democracy. Taking it to every corner of the world is the declared goal of American imperialist program. But history stands witness, that notwithstanding lip service for democratic rule, US has always used kings, dictators and military rulers for actualizing its objectives. The most recent example is the intimate relationship with General Musharraf. Remember the days when Clinton even refused to meet him. When he came to Pakistan, it was not a "visit"; it was rather "stop over". A condition imposed was that the general would not meet him in uniform. That even meeting in civilian dress will neither be photographed, nor ever displayed on TV. Self-interest and expediency changed the whole scene. The General is now dear friend, and one deserving to be hugged in Camp David. The democratic role played by the Turkish parliament tasted bitter to the US leadership. Rumsfeld, the US Defence Secretary said: "Turkish army did not come to our expectation". So much for the American love for democracy.

It seems that America is about to sanction "democracy in uniform". But let the General and President Bush know that final decisions will be made by the Pakistani nation. Matters will not be sorted out in Camp David or in London. Pakistanis long for true democracy in the country. They wish to give the military due respect and the position it deserves, which is essential for the country's defense. Military role in politics should stop now, or else, we are afraid, it will become more and more controversial. The wrong decisions of the military leadership will ultimately result in a wide gap between the nation and the forces, which will bring good to none. The role played by the military rulers in the history of Pakistan has never been inspiring. Today, we are compelled to express with pain and sorrow that while only the rulers who ascended to power through military, used to be the target of public wrath in the past, the un-easiness and concerns are getting aimed at the army as institution now. This is highly alarming. In this background the General's mindset and ambitions, as reflected in his pre-visit statements were disturbing both for the country and the armed forces. Look, what message he was conveying:

- The parliament and the democracy that came to being through the last elections were regretful;
- The country has failed to have a workable democratic system;
- Referendum was a mistake;
- Politicians are immature and incapable;

- I am basically a military man, and play politics in the military manner;
- I shall remain in uniform till the politicians get mature;
- Kashmir issue has ten-twelve solutions;
- The way Assembly behaves compels to think of its dissolution;
- If the country needs, I shall wear ten caps;
- If there is Talibanization, I shall dissolve the assembly;
- Let the nation be ready. For peace, compromises have to be made.

These are a few examples, but enough to read the General's mind. In the metaphorical expression of the Qur'an, he is acting like the unfortunate old lady that spins the yarn with great pains, but then she cuts it to threads:

*"And be not like a woman who breaks into un-twisted strands the yarn which she has spun quite strong".* **(16-92)**

We pray it is not so. But all we see and hear is troublesome for everybody. Members of the parliament should better think about these concerns and potentials to realize which way we are moving. Has not the time come for all the political forces to prepare some workable plan to preserve the constitution and encourage true democratic norms in the country? Let them stop giving a helping hand to military adventurists. Democracy will never flourish under the tutelage of the Generals. Democratic stability will come only through the Constitution and strengthening of basic institutions. If the politicians will work as tools in the hands of the General simply to avail some privileges and ministerial slots, and if the judges find no such articles in the constitution that bar in-service military personnel to become the president, there is then no future for democracy. The ruling party and the judiciary have utterly disappointed the nation. Yet, it is not the question of one party or some institution. At stake are: the freedom of 140 million people, their democratic and basic human rights and their future. History bears witness that rights are only restored through struggle and by making sacrifices. Freedom is secured only when every individual is ready to lay at stake all he has, for himself and his nation.

If we mean to secure and preserve our freedom and wish our rights are protected against the excesses of our own "friends", then we will have to take the path of faith, steadfastness, sacrifice and continuous struggle.

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