

---

# SCORPION MUSHARRAF BITES THE WEST THAT FEEDS HIM

Posted by adeeb - 2007/11/19 19:38

---

Free Pakistan Movement Demands Freedom for IMRAN KHAN and the Enslaved Pakistani Nation

By JEMIMA KHAN

(When I told my children that their father, Imran Khan, had been illegally arrested in Lahore, Pakistan, I tried to make light of it, joking that to get anywhere in Pakistani politics, a stint inside is mandatory. Then I heard that he had been unlawfully charged with 'state terrorism' and that if convicted by illegal PCO judges/justices or unlawful military Martial Law courts, he faces the death penalty or life imprisonment.

It was harder to muster up a laugh, even for their benefit. The latest news is that he was shifted, in handcuffs, to a high-security jail in Dera Ghazi Khan, Punjab, Pakistan. His crime? Criticising General Pervez Musharraf and attempting to address a peaceful student protest rally at Punjab University in Lahore. For that he was first illegally beaten according to reports and then unlawfully carted off to Kot Lakhpat jail of Lahore. His supporters were also illegally beaten, unlawfully arrested and several have broken bones.

The following day, Imran's three sisters attended a women's rally in Lahore to protest against his illegal detention and the unlawful imposition of illegal Army Martial Law. They too were illegally arrested. Imran's elderly aunt (God help the jailers) and several female cousins were also unlawfully arrested. Many of them have small children at home and husbands who are already in illegal jails. I watched footage of the women that I lived with for five years being dragged by the police across the ground screaming.

Other friends of mine recently, illegally arrested include my children's teacher, a housewife and a journalist, not to mention the hundreds from Imran's political party, the Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (Justice Movement - PTI).

An estimated 25,000 innocent people are now in jails. In fact, the jails are so full, they are illegally holding people in police stations. Unlike my ex-husband, Imran Khan, the majority of those being unlawfully held are not politicians. They are judges, lawyers, journalists, human rights activists, as well as teachers, students, shopkeepers and housewives - anyone who has protested or criticized the government, which these days is hardly an exclusive club.

There are reports of illegal torture and unlawful beatings within the jails. And those that have been illegally arrested have not been allowed access to lawyers or visitors.

This has become a personal vendetta for Musharraf, with his harshest detractors being repaid with the toughest penalties.

Musharraf's response to his critics abroad is that these steps were necessary in order to fight the extremism that threatens Pakistan's democracy. So, to fight terrorism, he has terrorised an entire nation.

To tackle extremists, he has illegally arrested all the progressive, liberal and conservative people Pakistan has to offer, including Pakistan Supreme Court Chief Justice Mr. Iftikhar Muhammad Chaudhry, two former presidents, thousands of lawyers, several newspaper editors, senior journalists, opposition politicians and a UN special rapporteur.

He has illegally imposed illegal military Martial Law and unlawfully suspended the Constitution, ostensibly to protect democracy; illegally gagged the media to protect liberty; and presumably sacked and unlawfully jailed the judges to protect the judiciary.

Meanwhile, in the words of Asma Jahangir, Pakistan's (jailed) leading human rights lawyer, Musharraf is busy offering "negotiations and ceasefires to the terrorists". The Army is also too busy in illegally rounding up the progressives, liberals and conservatives. That's why it will once again fail to defend Pakistan.

No one is taken in by Musharraf's justifications for declaring an illegal State of Emergency - the Pakistan Army's favourite and oft used euphemism for a complete break with the Constitution. Most realise that his actions were aimed at countering the anticipated judgment of the Supreme Court against his election as President while still Chief of the Army.

Musharraf is still wrongly viewed by the West as an important ally in the "War of Terror". But, despite billions of pounds worth of Western aid to Islamabad, real terrorists have not been captured, militants are resurgent and the PMLQ-MQM extremist elements in Pakistan are more active than ever.

The reality is that Musharraf needs the PMLQ-MQM extremists. Their existence and the fear they inspire has guaranteed the illegal support from the West he needs to stay in power illegally - his real goal. And the PMLQ-MQM extremists need Musharraf, an unpopular military dictator, to give them something to rally against.

Understandably, the greatest fear of the West has always been that, left to itself, the country would fall into the hands of

---

religious extremists, resulting in the doomsday scenario of nukes in the hands of Pakistani militants - a fear or scam that con-artist Musharraf has consistently and cunningly used to his advantage, even on yesterday morning's Today programme on Radio 4 of UK.

Despite his claims, judging by history, the most likely outcome of a free and fair election in Pakistan would be a progressive, democratic government.

Backing Musharraf on the basis that he is the only viable alternative to the extremists may have turned out to be a self-fulfilling prophecy. Only he and the extremists remain free. And the very people the West needs to converse with to avoid that doomsday scenario are in jail.

In a country that is no stranger to ruthless dictators, Musharraf now looks set to become its most repressive ever. In retrospect, the signs were always there.

When the General first came to power (by a military coup), I was taken in by his declared intention to clean up Pakistani politics and to hold corrupt politicians accountable. These are the same PMLQ-MQM-PPP- PMLN politicians he is now trying to do deals with. Two successive prime ministers had been dismissed on corruption charges (twice each) and everyone living there at that time was fed up.

Regrettably, Imran and I even supported Musharraf's ridiculous heads-I-win-tails-you-lose referendum devised to give him a pseudo-mandate to stay in power.

I remember I was summoned to meet him a week before the elections, in 2004, to convey a message to Imran who was away campaigning in his constituency. I was asked to arrive after midnight and was sneaked into his residence after being searched for recording devices. The self-appointed President outlined the results of the impending elections, reeling off the exact number of seats the various parties would win.

It turned out he was spot on, and not, I suspect, because of any great political foresight. Musharraf also guaranteed Imran's fledgling party a significant number of seats and a ministry of his choice if he joined forces with his coalition of government-friendly parties. Imran refused. He had already become disillusioned by Musharraf.

The General may have picked up the lingo of democracy but he feels more comfortable with the idea that "might is right". There's a reason why the Pakistan Constitution does not allow anyone in uniform to become President; inevitably he reverts to what he does best. What Musharraf is doing spells death for his own political career and perhaps also for the country. But you get the impression he just can't help himself.

It reminds me of the fable of the scorpion and the frog. The frog gives the scorpion, who cannot swim, a lift across the river on his back. When they are half way across the scorpion stings him. "Why did you do that?" asks the frog. "Now we will both die."

The answer? "I am a scorpion; it's my nature."

=====