

A NATIONAL ANTI-CORRUPTION PLAN

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Member of the Press,

The people of Pakistan are losing trust in the governments they elect. One of the core reasons for this is that the word corruption is exploited for political purposes. For many in Pakistan corruption is seen as a convenient tool to eliminate political rivals. Those who are corrupt seek refuge in political protection. Those who are not corrupt are humiliated and degraded to fulfill a political agenda. Many in the country are confused as to who is corrupt and who is not. This is breeding cynicism. Cynicism breeds frustration and chaos. All of us gathered here need to dedicate ourselves to the twin principles that:

- a) Firstly, corruption must be punished where it exists.
- b) Secondly, corruption charges cannot be used as vehicle for a political agenda.

I speak to you from the heart. As a peoples leader. As the symbol of democracy against a hated military regime, an elected Prime Minister who twice was the victim of the most vicious propaganda by fascist elements bent upon tarnishing, undermining and overthrowing the peoples choice. And, having overthrown the peoples choice, manipulating elections to usher in the corrupt elements of the old Zia-ist order. The ISI case before the Supreme Court is open evidence of how money was distributed to deny the electoral victory to the PPP in 1990.

The secrets of the 1997 scandal will pour out too. Already we know the Intelligence Bureau was given Rs. 170 million in a supplementary grant to manipulate the said process to deny the people a Government of their choice. The interim Chief Minister of Sarhad has already stated that the elections were rigged and the interim Governor of Punjab has also, in his letter of resignation, hinted at the same. Popular leader are not going to abandon the people and run away. Popular leaders have stayed behind and fought the charges in 1977 and in 1990 and will do so again in 1997. But what is the cost of the propaganda war to the people of Pakistan. The sacking of Benazir Government has led:

1. To the sell out of the Kashmiri people who have been struggling for self-determination.
2. An increase of debt to GDP ration by \$ 2 billion at exorbitantly high interest rates between 16 per cent -20 % The State Bank of Pakistan states debt rose by 16.6 % in one year. (see DAWN on SBP Report)
3. A fifty per cent cut in growth rate.
4. An increase of 3 * in deficit (PPP was taking to 4 % in June 1997 but under Nawaz Sharif deficit stood at 7 *.

5. A massive drop in Revenue. PPP collected more with less taxes than Nawaz regime collected with more taxes.
6. Cut in education expenditure was nearly * % of GDP (cut from 2.51% of GDP to 12.19%)
7. Cut of 60% in health expenditure.
8. Cuts in population and environment budget.
9. Scrapping of Ghazi Barotha, Karachi Mass Transit, Lahore Airport, Peshawar Package and Keti Bander projects to name a few.
10. Massive drop in Foreign Direct Investment.
11. Sacking of thousands of public sector employees.

So the citizens had to pay the price for Palace intrigues.

The citizens have paid indirectly \$ 10 million to finance the game of political vendetta. And they have paid much more in increases in taxes, inflation, unemployment and debt.

This must stop. And to stop propaganda wars in the name of corruption while weeding out corrupt political elements we need to have a national Anti-Corruption Plan.

Corruption charges have toppled four successive governments in less than ten years. Corruption allegations have robbed our people of their just rewards for honest work. Corruption has created a shadow economy of unparalleled proportions. Corruption is undermining the rule of law. Corruption is eating away at the very fabric of our society like a cancer which cannot be satiated.

Everyone here is aware that I and my family are under intense partisan scrutiny on this issue. Not a day goes by that some new and sensationalized accusation is not made against my character and my integrity. While this venue is neither the time nor the place to address this most unfortunate turn of events, let me say before proceeding that I remain firm in my positions.

I have served the people faithfully. Neither my family nor I committed any crimes. Neither I nor my family have defrauded, stolen from nor absconded with any moneys illegally obtained, either while in high office or out. Neither I nor my family have served to help launder drug money, or could even entertain such a preposterous notion.

And lastly, neither I nor my family have acted in any manner which is in any way corrupt or against the laws of Pakistan, for which we hold our highest respect and is our sworn duty to uphold.

Let me set the record straight: No evidence, not now or in the past, has ever been produced which proves that I or my family have entertained to corrupt our positions of public trust. It is clearer to me and the people of Pakistan with each passing day that my detractors and those now in power are making ever more desperate statements and outrageous claims to support the dismissal of the peoples previous government. And, as in the past, my day will come in court where I and my family will respond to any and all specific charges brought against me, my reputation, my character and my integrity.

Let us be clear. Partisan differences are a necessary and healthy component of a vibrant democracy. But this current political witch-hunting goes beyond accepted norms of political behaviors in any democratic system. Partisan genocide leads only to authoritarianism and dictatorship. And, let me also be clear on this point: I challenge these accusers to come forward with their evidence and charges, to bear the light of day and stop

hiding behind the facade of innuendo, sensationalism, and base character assassination. If you have a case against me, as you say with great fanfare to the people of Pakistan and the international community, bring this case forward to a court of law, in full light of day.

And, by way of warning, I draw upon the words of William Penn the Elder, spoken in the British Parliament in the year 1741: "...that to accuse and prove are very different, and that reproaches unsupported by evidence affect only the character of him that utters them." [William Penn the Elder, 1741]

That being said, I am here today not to publicly defend myself against those who would seek to defile my character. No, history itself will be my defense. For, I can and will defend myself and my family at the appropriate time.

I am here to discuss the Nation's business. And in the nation's business, our failure to address corruption has caused great pain throughout the country.

Our nation faces a crisis of corruption so deep, so pervasive and so tragic in its proportions, that until we seek to address it at its root, to cut-out this cancer afflicting the body of our nation, we, the people of Pakistan, shall remain forever crippled.

It is from my hope for a Pakistan which is honorable; from my hope for a Pakistan which ensures that each and every person can reach his and her full potential; from my hope for a Pakistan which provides fairly for all our citizens; and from my hope for a Pakistan which enters the 21st Century as a maturing and stable multi-party democracy intent to be guided by the rule of law, that I propose -- no demand -- a national effort to address our crisis of corruption.

We have real and pressing problems to address. Yet, our debates begin to mirror even the more incestuous irrelevance of ancient Rome in her final hours.

I look back to 1988 and the Restoration of Democracy, remembering all the faces of hope who came here in the early days of democracy's victory over military dictatorship seeking to use their new power to make a difference in the land, to stir the passions of our people, awakening in them a sense of possibility.

And now, sadly, how far have we come from those lofty days? I look at our political landscape. There too many entrenched interests, now more intent on ensuring a steady flow of federal resources into their pockets than any sincere interest in the betterment of our nation. Billions not paid back. Laws made to launder black money.

Now is the time to unveil our darkest secrets. Now is such a time, and I will be the first to take these steps. Let us all be honest with our own conscience, let us all hold ourselves to the highest ideals of virtue, humility and service which high office requires.

Are our elected representatives doing all we can to improve the lives of our fellow citizens? Are we spending our precious life's energy -- energy which all too quickly evaporates -- in seeking positive and bold solutions to the pressing and epic problems of our nation? Or, are those gathered in Islamabad, benefactors and holders of the public's trust, here merely for their own self-interest?

It is time that all of us, and most especially myself, look at our accomplishments, or lack thereof. And, should we have forgotten along the way that this great nation, the Islamic Republic of Pakistan, was founded on the ideals and principles of Islam, let me quote from the Holy Qura'an and its guidance on corruption: "And, O my people! Give full measure and weight fairly, and defraud not men their things, and do not act corruptly in the land, making mischief." [Chapter 11, verse 85]

For the sake of our discussions, allow me to ponder the meaning of corruption, its roots and causes, and its effects.

Corruption comes from, ultimately, a failure of respect for your nation and a lack of humility before Allah. Weakness. It comes from a weakness, of desire and longing to be more than the merits of your abilities will allow.

Darkness. It comes from the darkness in our souls, that which knows and responds to greed. Indolence. It comes from a desire to gain from others without your own pain, toil and sweat . Fear. In the end, corruption is fear, fear that one is not worthy enough, will not live long enough, does not have enough. It is fear.

The more that our society places value on material wealth as a source of happiness, and excessive material wealth as a source of immortality, the more easily are people prey to the dark values of deception and greed.

Most tragically, our national preoccupation with materialism, rampant materialism, is jading our children's values. We are our children's teachers. They will do as we do.

Today, Pakistan is ranked by the international community along with such rogue regimes as Nigeria, Bolivia, Columbia and Russia, all lands commonly known where bribery has become a prerequisite for business, not the exception.

Increasingly, the international lending community, large multi-national corporations and investors view Pakistan as a land to avoid, not invest in, as our institutions are deemed beyond repair. Unless we are perceived to be a nation with honorable values, a nation which respects the rule of law and which respects above all else the virtues of hard work and honesty, we will be by-passed, ignored and ultimately overrun by this new global economic engine.

Our task then is to right the wrong which resides inside our own house. Colleagues, I ask each of you to tell me, publicly or otherwise, what you have been doing to stamp-out corruption in your own districts, in your own offices, in your own families. No one has yet been able to take on this issue, in a real and meaningful way, for if we are all truly honest, it appears as if we are all fearful of what might come to pass.

Our fathers and mothers did not create Pakistan so that a select few could rule like imperial lords over an increasingly down-trodden mass.

Our fathers and mothers created Pakistan so our people could be free.

Free to pursue their deeply held religious beliefs. Free to raise a family, provide for their children, give to those whom they love. Free to aspire to their highest dreams.

Now is the time for us to treasure those ideals. It is incumbent upon the leadership of any nation to lead by example. I have tried in my previous governments to be a beacon of light to those less fortunate, those upon whose backs, sweat and toil the grand machine of government is built, and for whom we serve.

And it is to serve those across the land, to whom we owe our highest respect, with their trust, that the Pakistan Peoples Party proposes today a new national plan to expose and excise corruption from our society and from our governance.

A NATIONAL ANTI-CORRUPTION PLAN

1. FULL PUBLIC DISCLOSURE

First, we must create accountability, transparency and trust in our fledgling democratic institutions. To do this, the PPP demands that all those who gain the public's trust and are elected to office must make all their financial holdings public before Chief Election Commissioner. Each year that we are in office, we must file a full report that must be fully available to any in the press or public who desire to see it.

My previous government started this practice. Unfortunately the present regime stopped it. We must start again.

Many other, successful and prosperous nations, have long ago found that public accountability requires public scrutiny. All government servants must not only make an annual disclosure of assets and liabilities but this must be available to the Press and public upon demand from the Establishment Division.

We call upon all parties to join with us and make this the law of the land. Full accountability and full disclosure for all elected or otherwise officials. I call for this to happen now. Not next year, not after the next election. Now, without question, is the time.

2. ANTI-TRUST

Second, we must break the monopolies by instituting strong Anti-Trust legislation. I call upon all political parties to pass strong and viable anti-trust legislation to ensure that the forces of the market regulate corruption in commerce, holding prices low and forcing honesty through competition.

Let us abolish the monopoly, and abolish many a corrupt tendency with it.

3. CREATE A "CODE OF PUBLIC TRUST"

Third, we can and should create a new "Code of Public Trust", the purpose of which is to enunciate those principles of virtue, honesty and integrity in public commerce which all companies doing business with the government, or bidding on any business with the government, must first sign. Any company which signs this covenant, and which then violates these principles shall be immediately terminated from any and all government contracts for a period of at least five years, and that company and its officials shall be placed on a black list, for all to see.

This code would include a series of statements of faith, honesty and openness which that company and its executors will follow.

I call upon my colleagues in the National Assembly, from all parties, to constitute this code through the forming of a new Code of Public Trust commission within the National Assembly. Let us give ourselves six months to accomplish this task. The people of Pakistan, whose hard work provides the tax dollars which pay our salaries and create the largess of government contracts deserve to know that their hard work is well spent, in an honest way.

To help us in this matter, I circulate for your consideration a draft code prepared by the United Nations, and urge all of my colleagues to give these words your due consideration.

4. OFFICE OF AUDITOR GENERAL

Fourth, many of the more successful democratic governments have created a budgetary watchdog agency, or Office of the Controller, independent from political pressures. Pakistan needs an independent Auditor General to provide verifiable audits of suspected improprieties within the government.

5. CIVIL SERVANTS DECENT WAGE

Fifth, we must pay our civil servants a decent wage. Government employees have power, and, if underpaid, they may use that power to seek increased financial security and wealth. We can curtail this by providing decent wages, as well as increasing the penalties for acts of corruption within the civil service.

I call upon all the parties in the National Assembly to constitute a second all-party commission on the Civil Service to investigate and ensure that our citizens in the civil service are adequately provided for.

6. EDUCATE OUR YOUTH

Lastly and most important to the future of our great nation, we must instill in our youth through education that corruption is a sin, that it will shred the fabric of one's character, destroy one's family and ultimately one's nation. The PPP calls for programs in every school which expound the virtues of honesty and trustworthiness. If we do not teach our children that the path of corruption is destructive to themselves, their families and the nation, then our society cannot prosper.

What the Pakistan People's Party is proposing today is a good first step, a move in the right direction and a warning to current and future generations that the leadership of this great nation does indeed hold honesty, integrity and trustworthiness to be of the highest value to which all of us must aspire.

They are values which I, in spite of the unfortunate political bickering, will hold myself to and those around me. And, as this debate moves forward, as well as the actions, statements and frivolous accusations against me on this very same issue, let us not lose sight of the fact that corruption has become pervasive in Pakistan, and must be removed at every level.

And, if this unfortunate attack on my character will do nothing else than galvanize the nation to rid itself for ever of the dark veil of secrecy and deceit called corruption, than that is enough. For I will have served my nation the greater good. And in the words of an author much more eloquent than I:

"Love thyself last: cherish those hearts that hate thee; corruption wins not more than honesty. Still in thy right hand carry gentle peace, to silence envious tongues. Be just, and fear not: let all the ends thou aim'st at be thy country's, thy God's and truth's.

[William Shakespeare, King Henry VIII]

I thank you for your time.

INTERNATIONAL CODE OF CONDUCT FOR PUBLIC OFFICIALS

Prepared by the Crime Prevention and Control Division

United Nations

Vienna, Austria

I. GENERAL PRINCIPLES

1. A public office, as defined by national law, is a position of trust, implying a duty to act in the public interest. Therefore, the ultimate loyalty of public officials shall be to the public interests of their country as expressed through the democratic institutions of government.
2. Public officials shall ensure that they perform their duties and functions efficiently and effectively, in accordance with laws or administrative policies, and with integrity. They shall at all times seek to ensure that public resources for which they are responsible are administered in the most effective and efficient manner.
3. Public officials shall be attentive, fair and impartial in the performance of their functions and, in particular, in their relations with the public. They shall at no time afford any undue preferential treatment to any group or individual or improperly discriminate against any group or individual, or otherwise abuse the power and authority vested in them.

II. CONFLICTS OF INTEREST AND DISQUALIFICATION

4. Public officials shall not use their official authority for the improper advancement of their own or their family's personal or financial interest. They shall not engage in any transaction, acquire any position or function, or have any financial, commercial or other comparable interest that is incompatible with their office, functions and duties or the discharge thereof.
5. Public officials, to the extent required by the officials' position, shall in accordance with laws or administrative policies, declare business, commercial and financial interests, or activities undertaken for financial gain that may raise a possible conflict of interest. In situations of possible or perceived conflict of interest between public officials' duties and private interests they shall comply with the measures established to reduce or eliminate such conflict of interest.
6. Public officials shall at no time improperly use public moneys, property, services, or information which is acquired in the performance of, or as a result of, their official duties for activities not related to their official work.
7. Public officials shall comply with measures established by law or administrative policies in order that after leaving their official positions they will not take improper advantage of their previous office.

III. DISCLOSURE OF ASSETS

8. Public officials shall, in accord with the officials' position, and as permitted or required by law and administrative policies, comply with requirements to declare or to disclose personal assets and liabilities, as well as, if possible, those of their spouses and/or dependents.

IV. ACCEPTANCE OF GIFTS OR OTHER FAVORS

9. Public officials shall not solicit or receive directly or indirectly any gift or other favors which may influence the exercise of their functions, performance of their duties or their judgment.

V. CONFIDENTIAL INFORMATION

10. Matters of a confidential nature in the possession of public officials shall be kept confidential unless national legislation, the performance of duty or the needs of justice strictly require otherwise. Such restrictions shall apply also after separation from service.

VI. POLITICAL ACTIVITY

11. The political or other activity of public officials outside the scope of their office shall, in accordance with laws and administrative policies, not be such as to impair public confidence in the impartial performance of their functions and duties.