

# Should the AFD exist?

**Z A KHAN**  
It is known to all that prime mover of an efficient Armed Forces is the quality and capability of the commanders. Success of the commanders' rests broadly on the uninterrupted functioning of the chain of command as it is stratified into various levels of authority. History is replete with examples that whenever the authority based on a number of echelons was either breached or interfered with-- there was trauma, at

cers of the rank of colonel and above in considerable detail. So, there could be hardly anybody more competent than the Chief to approve promotion and posting of officers that are recommended after a thorough discussion in the presence of all generals. Unfortunately, during the last several decades, there had been repeated interference by government either at its own behest or on being manipulated by the most part of the period

General or equivalent in the Navy and Air forces. Principal Staff Officers of the services are assisted by a host of officers of various ranks at different levels. PSO of the AFD offers his observations on the service HQ's proposals, assisted by a few directors, whose highest rank is Brigadier. Therefore, it may be prudent to assert that generally latter is unlikely to be accurate in its observation when it suggests a major departure from what is indicated by the service headquarter

that the Prime Minister is not likely to repose her trust on the chiefs. Why then has such a powerful office between the Service Headquarter and Ministry of Defence? It is a fact that the Ministry of Defence has been grossly neglected over the last few decades. The main reason behind this was that Military Juntas ruled our country during the parts of the 70's and 80's and who hardly depended on this ministry for support. The secretaries, however deft or astute they were, did not put in any endeavours for the fear of drawing the wrath of the military presidents and thus had let the powers slide out of their hands. Their indifference consequently weaved a few comedies of errors that caused trauma within the services and at the national level as well.

It is about time that some serious down to earth thinking is done to create a congenial atmosphere to pave a way for evolving a work culture that generates mutual confidence and gave time for decision-making. My suggestions in this regard are:

- Ministry of Defence should be the only authorised channel for the Armed Forces to reach the Defence Minister; Chiefs should not be required to go through the Ministry but will keep the secretary abreast with the issues discussed with the Defence Minister for the Ministry to follow up.
- Defence Ministry should have number of senior Armed Forces Officers as Additional, Joint and Deputy Secretaries to help the civilian Secretaries to prepare executive summary for the Defence Minister.
- AFD may be reorganized to be renamed as Joint Chiefs Secretariat (JCS) to coordinate with the three services on matters of common interest and route their recommendation to the Defence Minister when it is dealing with routine issues. On sensitive issues, chairing Chief of JCS himself will take up the matters with the Defence Minister.

Armed Forces of democratic countries like India/UK and host of others are working with enviable efficiency without the existence of a midway office between the Defence Minister and Service HQ. To develop esprit-de-corps among the three Services and to iron out co-ordination difficulties, a co-ordinating body should exist in the form of Joint Chief of Staff Council and this should be subordinated to the Service Chiefs. Service Chiefs should enjoy undiminishing support and co-operation of the Defence Minister who should remove all irritants in the process of efficient functioning.

The author is ex-Director General, BISS.

Armed Forces of democratic countries like India/UK and host of others are working with enviable efficiency without the existence of a midway office between the Defence Minister and Service HQ. To develop esprit-de-corps among the three Services and to iron out co-ordination difficulties, a co-ordinating body should exist in the form of Joint Chief of Staff Council and this should be subordinated to the Service Chiefs. Service Chiefs should enjoy undiminishing support and co-operation of the Defence Minister who should remove all irritants in the process of efficient functioning.

times bordering upheaval. Experience in this regard at home since 1975 provides testimony in favour of the assertion made above.

Our command structure above the service headquarters is not framed on traditional line. It is known that if the command aspect of proverbial C3 (Command, Control and Communication) malfunctions, the military mission is doomed to failure. Command decisions stem from detail analysis and judgement of pulls and pushes of the situations. Therefore, reversing or amending of these decisions are likely to unsettle a situation that may even lead to hiccups, if not tremors. Tempering with the chain of command have caused abysmal discipline in our Army in the past. Since the present government has stated to give fillip to military's image, the aspect of command may be looked into as a priority so that mistakes committed in the past are not repeated.

The chain of command of our Army up to formation level is based on the orthodox yet efficient line, which has witnessed many trials and tribulations. The current outline of command channel of the Armed Forces is: AFD (Armed Forces Division) - Service HQs-field formations- field units.

The chain of command from Army Headquarters (AHQ) downwards is unambiguous. Decisions with regard to the promotions and appointments of the officers of the rank of colonel and above are taken by a board composed of all serving generals and is headed by the Chief of Army Staff (CAS). It is a fact that the formation commanders know the officers under their command in fair details and CAS is expected to know most of the offi-

under evaluation, there was great deal of murmur or quiet resentment within the Armed Forces, which need to be addressed so that justice and fair play cannot be questioned. Apart from promotion, procurement programme of the three services face similar interruptions and that affect military competence considerably.

Presently, all the three service headquarters are obliged to route their decisions on promotions, appointments, procurement policies regarding operations and training through Armed Forces Division (AFD) of the Prime Minister's Secretariat and Ministry of Defence is referred to only for matters relating to land acquisition, finance, amendment and enactment of regulations, retirement and discipline. This is a dual control arrangement and this delays decision-making to a great extent while timely decision-making is vital to service efficiency. A complex situation emerges from this arrangement. AFD of prime minister's Secretariat is headed by an officer of rank of Lieutenant General who currently shoulder's the responsibility of preparing the minutes/brief for the Prime Minister (who is also the Defence Minister) for enabling her to take decisions on the issues that the service Headquarters forward to AFD. The prime Minister is constrained to depend on AFD's briefing as she is not likely to be abreast with the modus operandi followed at service Headquarters.

While Services Headquarters decision stems from a thorough deliberations by the service Chiefs along with concerned principal Staff officers who is not below the rank of Major

ters unless entailed by regulations.

This modus operandi during the last few years has caused inordinate delay in decision-making. All these have created a complex situation in the relationship between the AFD and the Service headquarters. The situation could have turned worse if the PSO of the AFD gave way to the enticements of the vested interest to make him think that the PSO is more powerful than the service chiefs. The experience of the past few years in this regard is filled with bitterness and frustration. Some informed sources observed that most of the service Chiefs feel that PSO of the AFD at times behave like a chief of the chiefs. Under these arrangements the PSO of the AFD can do any undesirable act and get away with it because of his closeness with the PM. He can even create a situation of mistrust, disbelief and apprehension, which may distance the prime Minister from the service Chiefs. Although the AFD existed under a different name when former president Ziaur Rahman was at the helm, this was a lacklustre organization. Ziaur Rahman and even another former President Ershad hardly depended on the PSO for decision-making as they themselves came from the service and were ware of the knitty gritty of the service functioning.

It is understandable that democratically elected Prime Minister is unlikely to be aware of the service functioning in great details and should therefore seek information pertaining to the services in comprehensive details from a reliable source. One should not forget that a service chief functions till such time he enjoys the confidence of the prime Minister. Therefore, one should think

## Swiss Arms Industry Demands More Ammunition



The Swiss defence industry says restrictive export laws introduced two years ago have put it at a disadvantage compared to manufacturers in other European countries. Exports were down in the first half of this year, which some parliamentarians say is the result of banning sales to countries involved in armed conflict or which "systematically and severely violate human rights".

Centre-right parliamentarians Bruno Frick (Christian Democrat) and Sylvie Perrinjaquet (Radical Party) have both submitted motions to cabinet asking it to compare Swiss arms exports law with other countries and to present proposals to eliminate any disadvantages.

Weapons and munitions exports were 12 per cent lower in the first half of 2010 compared with the same period in 2009. However, the SFr 728 million (\$725 million) worth of arms sold abroad last year was a record high. The figure was an 0.8 per cent increase on 2008, which itself was a 55 per cent rise on 2007.

But Frick and Perrinjaquet, as co-presidents of a lobby group for the defence industry, say manufacturers are being unfairly punished. They point to planned sales in the spring of 2009 to Egypt, Saudi Arabia and Pakistan that had to be scrapped due to the revision of the law.

Economic survival  
The goal of the lobby group, Committee for Security and Defence Technology, is to convince the government to put in place a regulatory framework that contributes to the economic survival of arms manufacturers, both state-owned and private.

The cabinet has admitted that there are differences between Switzerland's authorisation policy and that of other European governments, and therefore has agreed to look into the motions of Frick and Perrinjaquet.

By doing so, the government has reinforced statements made by Economics Minister Doris Leuthard last year ahead of a nationwide vote on a ban of all weapons exports.

Campaigning against the ban (which was rejected at the ballot box), Leuthard said Swiss arms exports policy was already "restrictive". And she said Switzerland would continue to analyse carefully each and every request to sell arms abroad.

Self defence  
Frick rejects accusations that he wants Swiss firms to be able to sell weapons to countries involved in armed conflict or where human rights abuses are common.

"Switzerland would only be able to deliver to countries where the weapons will be used for defence purposes, and where human rights are respected. The export of defence technology contributes to security and self defence," Frick said.

Asked by swissinfo.ch whether Switzerland would still be taking its responsibility seriously if it were to look into revising its policy for countries like Pakistan, Frick said: "I didn't say we must sell to Pakistan. I'm only asking that the cabinet compares its export laws with the European Union and clarifies if any disadvantages are justified."

However, a press release from Frick and Perrinjaquet's lobby group says the criteria that excludes arms exports of all kinds to blacklisted countries should be lifted, because the revised law also prevents the sale of "uncontroversial and unproblematic" goods.

Frick also argues that there are different interpretations of what constitutes a human rights abuse. Even Switzerland has been criticised by the European Court of Human Rights, he added. "It depends on the severity and regularity of the abuses."

Not surprisingly, the prominent pacifist organisation, Group for Switzerland without an Army (GSoA), is opposed to the latest efforts to give the arms lobby more ammunition.

"Since the debate about arms exports is no longer in the headlines, there are moves to allow the weapons industry to do anything it wants to the extent of exporting to states with poor human rights records," said Tom Cassee of GSoA.

According to Cassee, Switzerland is the European leader, per capita, when it comes to arms exports, particularly those to Pakistan.

Pakistan  
Pakistan was the main target of Swiss exports in 2008, but then fell to 30th place last year after the new restrictions came into force. However, the South Asia nation has climbed back to eighth position this year thanks to deliveries of munitions and replacement parts for air defence systems, which are exempted from the ban.

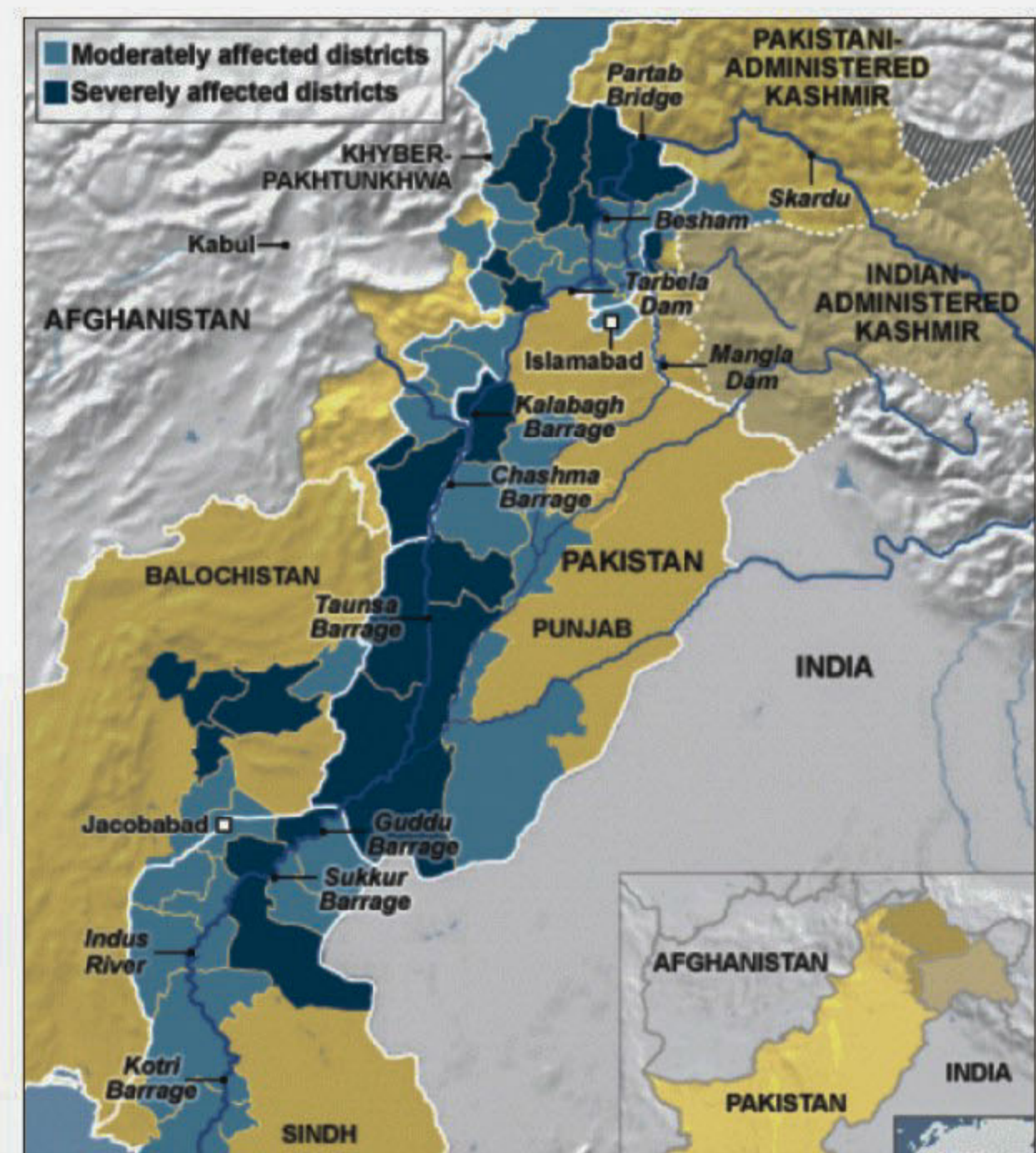
Cassee dismisses the motions by Frick and Perrinjaquet - and the cabinet's reaction to them - as "completely irresponsible". He says weapons are already exported to countries like Pakistan where it is not known whether they are falling into the hands of Taliban. "It's important [to the arms lobby] that weapons are delivered, regardless of who is killed by them."

Simon Plüss, head of the export controls division of the State Secretariat for Economic Affairs (Seco), disagrees. "Arms exports to Pakistan are approved, but only very reluctantly," he said, explaining that this was limited to air defence systems.

Plüss says it is too early to come to any conclusions about the cabinet's decision to follow up the parliamentary motions. But he added that now two years after the updated arms export law came into force was a good time to review authorisation procedures.

Source: defencetalk.com

# Fallout of floods and growing fear of political instability in Pakistan



Pakistan Flood Map (16 August, 2010)

**BARRISTER HARUN UR RASHID**

SIX weeks after the start of Pakistan's devastating floods, waters pouring into a lake in southern Pakistan are threatening several towns and forcing tens of thousands of people to flee, officials said on 13th September.

As floodwaters make their way to the Arabian Sea, new towns in Sindh province are being inundated as embankments constructed to protect cities and towns in the traditional flood plains are now channelling water into new areas, including Lake Manchar.

Tens of thousands of people have fled towns in the Dadu district of Sindh, and officials said more were asked to leave after water, flowing from a breached embankment, reached a dangerous point in the lake, Pakistan's largest freshwater lake. "Our entire concentration is now on Dadu district as the water is just a few inches from overtopping the Manchar Lake that could threaten many towns," additional relief commissioner, Riaz Ahmed Soomro, said.

Officials say several towns around the lake including Bhon and Jhingira are in danger of inundation, threatening an estimated 250,000 people.

The floods have affected 20 million people, an eighth of the population.

Millions of dollars' worth of crops and livestock have been lost. No province escaped the destruction. UN thinks that 10 million people are considered short of food their situation will remain precarious for six months or so. People face a triple threat of crops, loss of seed for the next planting and loss of a daily income.

Pakistan officials and aid workers warn that while civil unrest has so far been averted, the aftermath of the worst-ever flooding in the country starting from Baluchistan at the end of July spreading to Khyber Pakhtunkhwa (NWFP), the Punjab and now Sindh provinces could destabilize the country in the months ahead and aggravate already deep regional, sectarian and class divisions.

There are many reasons for the concern and some of them deserve mention as follows:

First, while the country was in the grip of unprecedented floods, Pakistan President Asif Ali Zardari's trip to France and Britain in August created an image of an indifferent and arrogant leadership to people. Zardari, who is widely unpopular at home and whose public engagements are often limited, came under flak for failing to scrap his visits in Britain and Paris to confront the miseries at home.

An editorial in a leading Pakistani newspaper also criticised Zardari, and said: "In choosing to go ahead with the tour... President Zardari appears to have badly miscalculated the impact this untimely visit will have on his image as Pakistan's head of state."

Second, management of the disaster has added to the distrust that many Pakistanis already feel for their civilian political leaders while armed forces have burnished their image performing rescue and relief missions along the length of the flooded areas.

Third, there have been angry accusations from politicians and flood victims that officials have guided relief to their own party supporters and serious allegations that powerful landlords and politicians diverted surplus floodwaters to protect their own lands at the expense of others.

One of the most angry accusations has come from former Prime Minister Mir Zafarullah Khan Jamali of



Baluchistan. He criticised members of government accusing them of intentionally redirecting floodwaters through Baluchistan and inundating the homes and farmlands of one million people in the country's poorest province.

Fourth, the floods have displaced rural people in Sindh province and they have started coming to Karachi, adding a volatile new element to the political dynamic here. While Sindh nationalists welcome them, the Urdu-speaking immigrants from India in Karachi warn that they will create more violence between Sindhis and Urdu-speaking immigrants.

Furthermore the immigrants have established an influential political party the Muttahida Quami Movement (MQM) which has been a part of the governing coalition in the country. The National Awami Party which is composed of most Pashtuns has been involved in a power struggle in Karachi and in August sectarian war killed about

165 people.

Finally, the huge relief effort undertaken by the Pakistan Army has forced to alter plans to combat militants with the Taliban and Al-Qaeda. He had reportedly to divert 72,000 men including army and navy commandos of its special services to do relief work. As a result analysts say that militants will look for every opportunity to continue their campaign of violence, destabilising the country. In recent times bomb attacks against Shi'ite religious processions in Punjab and Baluchistan killed more than 90 people and wounded more than 300.

Politicians, meanwhile, seem to have become absorbed in scoring points and squabbling, which had added to disillusionment many Pakistanis already feel for their leaders. Altaf Hussain, the leader of MQM, one of the government's coalition partners, suggested that "patriotic generals" should step in to

lead the country in such a crisis, a reminder that he could cause the government to collapse, if he chose to pull out his party out of the coalition.

Meanwhile on 11 September, former Pakistani President General Pervez Musharraf says he is planning to return home and return to politics. In an interview with the BBC, Musharraf, who now lives in London, said he is willing to risk his life in order to restore a sense of hope to his people. He criticized the current Pakistani government, accusing it of putting the country on "an artificial, make-believe democratic path" that has resulted in a "darkness all over." General Musharraf said he would return to Pakistan and create a new political party before the next elections in 2013. He also defended his record as President and promised to answer any allegations against him.

The author is former Bangladesh Ambassador to the UN, Geneva.