

jority of important Western newspapers and a few but important political analysts within Pakistan.

They have expressed the point that that neither the 17th Amendment gives the President of Pakistan the kind of powers that Musharraf seems to daily exhibit, nor can a serving general of the army run the country as an elected head of State. Succinctly stated democracy and direct rule by the chief of the armed forces is an utter *non sequiter* and mutually inconsistent political concepts. No one doubts that the present setup only exists by the propped support of the army. Musharraf himself has provided the greatest proof of this fact. Without his position as Chief of the Army Staff that he is desperate to retain, he is convinced that his created artificial structure would collapse. It is thus an immense political liability that Bush administration has to live by every day.

To begin with the very rubric of this Report is most meaningful. It is entitled: "Supporting Human Rights and Democracy". It aims to flush out from the totality of the political realities of Pakistan to evaluate what and where do human rights and democracy stand? The report stresses categorically that the human rights situation remains very weak in Pakistan. It is aptly pointed out that by constitutional amendments the office of the presidency has become heavily superior to the concept of sovereignty of Parliament. The army has become too excessively involved in the country's political process. The advice of the US administration is for this institution to stop such interference. The Report specifically criticizes Musharraf for keeping his military uniform while aiming to govern as a civilian head of the state. In sum the incumbency of Musharraf on the strength of his military connection is a negation of genuine democracy.

As a jurist I may also particularly note that the feeling articulated throughout the last three years by the country's Bar Associations about the erosion of public confidence in the judicial branch of the state has been correct. The Report uses words such as "corrupt, inefficient and malleable to political pressure" to describe the performance of this crucial institution. This means that judiciary's credentials to judge and adjudicate impartially within the country are being seriously questioned by outsiders as well.

Since every year the Annual Human Rights Reports of the Humanitarian Affairs Bureau of the Department of State have been critical of Pakistan's track record during the Musharraf era, the crucial significance of this publication lies in its pointed reference to democracy in Pakistan and its basic need for a

Musharraf's own experience and that of his principal advisors in the realm of international and strategic statecraft is limited. He has come to believe naively that if he portrays himself as religiously "moderate" Americans will go on supporting him. There is thus a simple-minded logic behind the General's avowed policy of religious "enlightened moderation" and of being a "frontline state" against terrorism. These concepts were surely touted with a view to placate that lobby that he perceived was behind the policy orientation that led to the wars in Afghanistan and then in Iraq.

One cannot be certain if such articulations genuinely satisfied those in Washington. But now Cheney and Rumsfeld are joined by Rice, Gonzales and Goss as the new Secretary of State, Attorney General and head of CIA respectively with Wolfowitz at the World Bank and probably Bolton, the nuclear disarmament, at the UN. Most importantly there is no Colin Powell. Their publicly stated views on many such issues go far beyond President Musharraf's advocacy of such simplistic gestures on which there has been considerable criticism.

With an over all strategic need, indeed political necessity, for the US for having a genuinely political face represent Islamabad at the governmental level (supposedly democratically created) it is certain that the rumors flying around the corridors of power in Pakistan which are reported by the local press from time to time that ousted political leadership now abroad is eager to return to fill this void are not without some truth. In a simplistic yet slip shod approach, Musharraf is trying to get on with this idea as well by reportedly being "accommodating" to sections of the parties he unconstitutionally replaced to usurp power in 1999. But apparently he is confused as well. There is an overt attempt to court the religious elements as well by gestures such as putting back the "Islamic" declaration column in passports.

So we are about to enter a phase in terms of point of time when the answer to the question whether the US "exemption" to Pakistan from having genuinely functioning democracy has ended. The desperation of Musharraf is that he is asserting something that no one believes. Having been evidently told of the Condoleezza Rice Report of 28th of March that army should not meddle in the civilian affairs of the country, he said on 1st April in Quetta while addressing the Staff College celebrations that the army was not interfering in the affairs of government but was back in barracks. Who is the General kidding, we are about to find out soon.