

Steering out of troubled waters

The News

Monday, August 02, 2010

By S Rahman

If one were assigned the task of measuring or evaluating the indefatigability and courageousness of the man called Rehman Malik, our Interior Minister, amazing facts would come up with regard to his personality.

In fact, Malik seems to have taken it upon himself to surrender his personal individuality or personality to his national obligations and duties. No doubt, there are people in our society who work with devotion and commitment with love for the nationalistic cause but they are not many in number. Pakistan People's Party (PPP) must be taking pride in Rehman Malik's indefatigable moves that do at least one big service to the nation and that is reconciling the estranged partners and making the things move forward with tolerance and mutual understanding.

This mutual understanding is rather the only way to salvation given the disastrous situation that the country is facing for quite some time in the shape of unbridled terrorism, violent activities including target killings, unrest in Balochistan and natural calamity etc. The targets are not easy and, as such, no easy solution is available to come out of this worst kind of multifaceted mess that can be likened to hydra with several, ever-growing heads.

But if this Herculean task, that of achieving these difficult targets, is handled with extraordinary patience, consistency and above all, with respect for even the staunchest rivals, then the targets come within the achievable range. But all this has to be done not by machines but by men of resolve who do not get deterred by harsh circumstances.

Rehman Malik, over the passage of time, has proved to be one capable of doing all that in practice. This is really encouraging and worth emulate since it inspires confidence in our political and other areas' leadership to keep continuing with their missions without losing heart at any stage under the influence of hateful propaganda and inimical attitudes of certain foreign-sponsored elements.

The recent peace and remedial moves that Rehman Malik made particularly in the wake of escalation in target killings in Karachi, have contributed sufficiently towards assuaging tensions and rifts. His dash to Karachi and his incessant endeavors to bring about rapprochement among political rivals of the past, has earned him recognition as a sincere man who is always galvanizing the political and patriotic forces to combat the rampant menaces and crises with perseverance, fearlessness and unity of approach.

At Karachi, his presence has had a good effect though the lasting results might still take some more time for consolidation. This on-the-spot presence of interior minister has also plugged the loopholes in the working of our security agencies that are functioning under the command of Interior Ministry.

The other remedy lays in soothing the angry elements both within the political ranks and the supporters' cadre. Unfortunately, the mafias of land grabbers, gun traffickers and other nefarious trades have become extraordinarily strong and organized during the last few decades getting prompt logistic and weapons' support from anti-state groups inside the country as well

as abroad. The saddest part of this painful development is that the ringleaders of these mafias had developed connections with some political people.

Removing this tangle is an uphill task indeed. Thank God that we have people with unyielding resolve in the present dispensation to take up these daunting challenges and threats. Somehow, by now, strong messages appear to have been conveyed to the quarters (or mafias) concerned.

This is a good start, of course. More encouraging is the tabling of Anti-Terrorism Act (ATA) Amendment Bill 2010 by the government in the Senate. The proposed bill envisages a number of effective steps like restrictions on members of proscribed organizations to obtain passports and proceed on foreign travel; ban on banks to provide loans and credit cards to such people; automatic cancellation of arms licenses held by miscreants; authority to federal government to trace or bug telephone calls of suspects; penalization of persons possessing illegal explosive material or having illegal links in the same connection.

And, although the general public is very much disturbed over sad happenings like terrorism, target killings and Balochistan unrest, the agility shown by the sitting government functionaries especially Rehman Malik has somehow instilled hope in their hearts that something positive would be done in the foreseeable future to rid them of these scourges.

In the same backdrop, a large number of people have suggested that Interior Minister Rehman Malik should now concentrate on Balochistan crises and allocate his energy and time on the burning question of Balochistan imbroglio.

The suggestion is to spare some time and go to Balochistan and stay there for a while to take additional remedial steps. Certainly, the task is extremely difficult but given Malik's penchant for handling the most complex issues calmly and prudently, not getting infuriated even over harshest criticism, one can expect the beginning of end to Balochistan inferno.

In view is Malik's latest statement in which he has disclosed that as many as one hundred thousand settlers have migrated from Balochistan and that four private armies namely BLF, BRF, BLA and Lashkare Balochistan, have raised their arms against security forces and are engaged in activities to break the country with the support of external forces.

So, that means all is not well in Balochistan but hopes can be pinned on the incumbent leadership for the reason that it has shown the will to hit hard at the root cause of trouble in Balochistan.

Optimism flows from the fact that the government and its top functionaries are aware of the problem, the root causes and the underlying factors and elements. Having identified them, the government has thus overcome the first bottleneck impeding appropriate planning needed to end this crisis. And then comes the government's tendency to act in all matters with consensus and support of democratic forces and the state structures that are the main support behind the democratic dispensation. Rehman Malik deserves special mention in this context for having learned the art of steering the ship out of troubled waters.
