

An Exclusive Interview By The News International

My body is in exile but my soul is in Pakistan:

Altaf Hussain

By Murtaza Ali Shah



Altaf Hussain, the supreme leader and founder of Muttahida Qaumi Movement (MQM), speaks candidly to The News on Sunday in an exclusive interview and maintains that only his party has the liberal and progressive agenda to make Pakistan a truly democratic and forward looking country as envisaged by its founder, Quadi-e-Azam Muhhamad Ali Jinnah.

The leader of Pakistan's third largest political party shares that the brutal military crackdown of 1992 on his party failed to crack the resolve of his comrades and hardships only strengthened and projected his party's philosophy of ridding Pakistan from the enslavement of the filthy rich and corrupt feudal lords - to bring about a genuine middle class revolution. But he admits that his soul hit the

rock bottom at that time, mainly because he thought he was being victimised through a ruthless misinformation and character-assassinating campaign across Pakistan.

The London-based self-exiled leader, who has masterfully maintained his political hold on Pakistan's industrial backbone Karachi, is happy that his relationship with the establishment is becoming more amicable by the day with the removal of suspicions and doubts about his party.

His consistent opposition to Taliban militancy and rightwing-ism has won Altaf Hussain many admirers across the political spectrum of Pakistan and this makes him confident his party's profile is on the upward curve.

The former student leader from a middle-class background warns that Pakistani state doesn't afford anymore romantic affairs with the so-called jihadis and religious extremists. Lest anyone forgets, he remind that religious extremist parties such as Jamaat-e-Islami and Jamiat Ulema-e-Islam were at the forefront of opposing the creation of Pakistan and took every opportunity to denounce its creator. For these parties to masquerade today as the sole defenders of Pakistan and then support Taliban and Al-Qaeda under various excuses is a joke, he holds. Interview questions and answers follow:

The News on Sunday: How satisfied are you with MQM's progress since its foundation nearly 25 years ago?

Altaf Hussain: Of course I am satisfied with the progress of the MQM since the date of its foundation. You can chart the developmental progress of the MQM with every passing day.

For example, we took part in the local bodies elections of 1987 and achieved a landslide victory in the largest city of Pakistan, Karachi and second largest city of Sindh Province, Hyderabad, where Mayors and Deputy Mayors were elected unopposed.

If you see the record of the general elections results, held in 1988, 1990, 1993, 1997, 2002 and 2008 you can see that the MQM has been accumulatively gaining more seats.

In the 2006 elections held in Azad Kashmir we won 2 seats which is an indication of the progress of the MQM. In the last local bodies elections held in 2005, we again registered a thumping victory, beating

our own previous record in urban Sindh but this time securing a reasonable number of seats from the rural Sindh also.

In short, I would say that now the political philosophy of the MQM is spreading throughout Pakistan and people from all four Provinces, Azad Kashmir, FATA (Federally Administered Tribal Areas) and Northern Areas are joining the MQM in large numbers. The MQM has now established its offices all over Pakistan.

TNS: How relevant is the party's message today?

AH: Due to the progressive, liberal, democratic and egalitarian approach of the MQM, people have begun to understand the relevance of the MQM in today's political climate.

MQM is the only political party which is struggling to attain the rights of the working class and poor people of Pakistan; it wants to abolish the medieval feudal system from Pakistan and establish true democracy in Pakistan where every citizen will have equal opportunities in all walks of life irrespective of their caste, creed, ethnicity, sect, colour, gender and even religion.

One thing that is also very positive and appealing to the people of Pakistan is that the MQM wants religious harmony and is against all sorts of religious extremism. People are witnessing that MQM is the only political party which has been vocal against Talibanisation and Al-Qaeda's terrorist activities.

TNS: What lessons have the party learnt and how chastened are you?

AH: It's a sad state of affairs that in Pakistan a corrupt political culture is prevailing. We have observed the mistakes and corrupt practices committed by other political parties and learnt a great deal to keep the MQM free from such mistakes and corrupt practices.

TNS: How is life in exile for a leader who is loved by millions?

AH: Before answering your question I would like to mention a famous saying or couplet, Ghayal Ki Ghath Ghayal Jane or Na Jane Koi!!!

Meaning: Jis per Jo gozarte ha who hi Behter Janta hay

(Only the sufferer knows the pain of suffering and no one else).

My body is in exile but my soul is with my people in Pakistan. The life in exile can be well understood by those who are either living in exile or who have lived in exile. The life of a leader who is loved by millions becomes difficult and at times tumultuous because I miss my leaders, office bearers, followers and sympathisers each and every minute. My people love me and I love them too.

TNS: You have sincerely tried to make MQM a mainstream party acceptable to all provinces, yet something or other happens that somehow goes against the national flight of the party?

AH: Let me explain that the MQM is the only political party which has no linkage either directly or indirectly with the Establishment. MQM has emerged from the grass root level.

Coming from a lower middle class background, from a very young age as a student of Class VI, I started giving tuitions to earn enough money to pay for my own educational expenses. This continued until the completion of my B.Sc and B Pharmacy Degrees. I formed the A.P.M.S.O. (All Pakistan Mohajir Student Organisation) on 11th June, 1978 in Karachi University and thereafter the MQM (Mohajir Quami Movement) was founded on 18th March, 1984. The first public meeting of the MQM was held at

Nashtar Park, Karachi on 8th August, 1986, which was the biggest rally ever to be held then at this venue.

After this mammoth gathering, the Establishment and other political parties were alerted to this success and started hatching conspiracies against the MQM. Thereafter, it was announced that another public rally would be held in Hyderabad on 31st October, 1986 at Pacca Qila Ground. Nefarious plans were made by the Establishment in collusion with other political parties to sabotage this rally.

Whilst a procession of buses and other vehicles was heading towards Hyderabad from Karachi, professional killers, who were part of the preplanned conspiracy, opened fire on the procession with lethal weapons. As a result of this indiscriminate firing at Soharab Goth, Karachi and Market-Chock, Hyderabad, 13 MQM workers were killed on the spot and dozens of others were severely injured. In spite of these brutal and horrific incidents, the rally at Pacca Qila Ground, Hyderabad was the largest rally ever held. After the rally, while on my way back to Karachi I was arrested along with 500 other MQM workers at Ghaggar Phatak. I was taken to Kalakot Police Station and then immediately transferred to an unknown destination (which I later discovered to be a place known as Baldia Police Training Complex.) I was kept in an illegal detention for 17 days; not allowed to sleep and was severely tortured in custody. The Law Enforcement Officers from different agencies interrogated me and offered me large amount of money, plots of land, permits for Industries, etc. to stop me from my just struggle. In short, the officers from different agencies tried their best to buy my conscience. Even when they threatened to kill me in a police encounter I declined their offers and refused to sell my conscience. Later on I was shifted to Karachi Central Prison whereupon many false and concocted charges were levelled against me. I remained steadfast and refused to accept any relief from the Establishment or any offers to grant me pardon. As a result of the public pressure, the Government was compelled to withdraw all concocted and false charges against me and my colleagues and we were released.

While I was in prison, the Establishment hatched a conspiracy to attack Mohajirs (Urdu-speaking people) neighbourhood with hired notorious and heavily armed terrorists. The biggest and the most ruthless attack were carried out in Qasba and Aligarh Colony near Orangi Town on 14th December 1986. This attack continued unrelentingly for six hours yet during this time no Law Enforcement Agencies reached there to rescue the lives of these innocent souls who resided in these areas. As a result, more than 300 men, women and children were brutally murdered and their houses looted and burnt. Instead of arresting the culprits, the Establishment tried to give this massacre an ethnic colour and termed it as a fight between Pakhtuns and Mohajirs. Along with these attacks on Mohajir communities, they formed an organisation under the banner of Punjabi Pakhtun Ittehad (P.P.I.) which was not only funded heavily by the establishment but was equipped with lethal weapons and transportation to attack more and more Mohajir localities. The idea was to make Pakistanis of other provinces think that the MQM was against Punjabis and Pakhtuns.

The Establishment also hired so-called Sindhi nationalists and provided them with money, transportation and lethal weapons to attack the people of Hyderabad. On 30th September 1988, these hired terrorists entered Hyderabad City and opened fire on innocent citizens, killing more than 200 people and injuring hundreds of others. During the entire time that this massacre took place not a single policeman or Law Enforcement Agency Personnel reached this area to rescue the victims. As a result of this attack and as planned by the conspirators, the Sindhi and Mohajir conflict began again.

I was again arrested under false and fabricated charges along with hundreds of my workers. Again I was released when all baseless and concocted charges against me and my workers had to be dropped.

Let me inform you I was first arrested, on 14th August, 1979, at the Tomb of Quaide Azam during the regime of General Zia-ul- Haq and was unlawfully and illegally sentenced to 9 months rigorous imprisonment with 5 lashes, from summary military courts again on false charges. I completed my nine

months imprisonment, and refused to apply for any petition of mercy, despite many offers from the Establishment.

This persistent unjust treatment along with the media trial was an attempt to tarnish not only my own image but that of the MQM as well. After entering into politics, my committed colleagues and I came to the conclusion that all the damage to the country is due to the corrupt political culture which still prevails in Pakistan. If this corruption is not totally abolished from Pakistan, this menace will further flourish.

It was at this time that I decided to transform the Mohajir Quami Movement into the Muttahida Quami Movement I began to preach and teach the deprived and downtrodden how to obtain their rights and to rid the country from the clutches of the feudal lords, change the ongoing present corrupt political culture and bring constructive and positive changes to Pakistan.

So it was on the 14th August, 1991 that the MQM made the announcement to change its name and to form a national political party to bring changes to the present obsolete and medieval feudal system and to bring honest egalitarian educated people into the corridors of power, not with bullets but through ballot power.

It was then announced that, on the 14th August 1992, the MQM would unveil its manifesto, to bring positive and constructive changes for the benefit of working class people.

Unfortunately, before this date, on the 19th June 1992, the Army started its operation against the MQM under the guise of action against 72 big fishes in Sindh province. This was supposedly to bring to justice persons involved in kidnappings for ransom, robberies or patronising or providing shelter to the criminals. This operation, however, was targeted only at the MQM. Fake torture cells were discovered and other criminal activities of the MQM were orchestrated and then presented through media. This meant that naive people were misled and given the impression that the MQM was not struggling to attain the rights of the common people but was instead a bunch of criminals and thugs.

Even against the backdrop of this negative propaganda campaign the MQM continued to preach its political philosophy throughout Pakistan. In 4 provinces and also Kashmir and FATA, the units and offices of the MQM remained open, but with the connivance of other political and religious parties, the establishment launched an operation throughout Pakistan in which office bearers of Punjab, Balochistan, N.W.F.P. and Sindh were arrested and severely tortured, and their offices raided and sealed.

After the presentation of the Nizam-e-Adl Bill in the National Assembly, on the 13 April 2009 the MQM was the only political party which raised its voice in protest against this Bill and in order to boycott it we walked out in protest. This was not only for the larger interest of the country but the entire nation as well. The MQM and I were the only ones in Pakistan who not only took a firm stand but very strong steps to save the country from the so-called Jihadis or religious extremists. Finally, the Government of Pakistan and the provincial government of the ANP came to the same conclusion as that of the MQM.

TNS: You have been successful in maintaining discipline in your party while in exile?

AH: If you are committed, devoted and well determined with your philosophy, preaching and the cause, you can do wonders and unbelievable things. Whilst living in exile, I was able to maintain discipline in the party because I am still committed, dedicated, determined and optimistic that one day the MQM and its reformational philosophy will take the entire nation under one banner. This is very true that if I were on the ground, then our growth nationwide would be much faster.

No person goes into exile through his or her own desire or happiness, but under undesirable conditions or circumstances, one may have no choice in the matter but to be forced into exile. It is natural for every person to miss his or her own country an enormous amount whilst living in exile and as a patriotic

Pakistani I miss Pakistan and the people of Pakistan very much.

TNS: Looking back, what would you describe as the highs and lows of your political life?

AH: Difficult phases come frequently in the political life of a leader. We continued our struggle despite all the hurdles and conspiracies hatched against the MQM by the establishment and state machinators. The MQM faced many pressures because it challenged the status quo.

As I mentioned earlier, it is an unfortunate fact that since its inception Pakistan has been controlled by a few ruling elite families. The political situation has gone from bad to worse since the sad demise of the Founder of Pakistan Quaid Azam Mohammad Ali Jinnah and the assassination of the first Prime Minister Khan Liaquat Ali Khan. After these events Pakistan became an enclave of the filthy rich and corrupt feudal lords who remained the blue-eyed boys of the civil and military establishment.

MQM is the only political party to emerge from grass root level, including myself. I, under the banner of the MQM, introduced new political phenomena in the prevailing political system and challenged not only the status quo but all the political forces who overtly or covertly remained members or protectors of the status quo. All of these persons conspired one way or the other to malign the image of the MQM nationally and internationally. Due to the persistent negative propaganda campaign against the MQM, the common, working class, innocent people became so confused that they believed the propaganda. The people of Punjab became particularly confused thinking that the MQM was a terrorist organisation, an agent of India and anti-Pakistan, which greatly effected the position of both the MQM and me in these areas.

After the commencement of the Army Operation on 19th June, 1992, my party's and my position were enormously effected by the negative propaganda campaign launched by the then Army General, and those in high positions in the I.S.I. You might say that these were some of the lowest days of my political life.

The majority of my leaders and office bearers remain determined, loyal and committed to me. This support enabled me to remain committed to my cause and not to bow down or surrender to the massive campaign launched against the image of the MQM and myself. One can easily understand why my party and I are gaining the support of people throughout Pakistan, Azad Kashmir, FATA and northern areas. Now the people of Pakistan have begun to understand the reasons for the campaign against the MQM and have started to realise the benefits of the spirit of the liberal, secular and democratic approach and the philosophy of MQM.

The MQM is now gaining not only the support of the people but also gaining more electoral wins with every coming election. By the grace of Almighty Allah we have roots of growth all over Pakistan, particularly Punjab, NWFP, Sindh, Balochistan, Azad Kashmir, FATA and northern areas. Thank God that more and more educated and enlightened people of Punjab are joining the MQM with every passing day. It is also a very good sign that the MQM is gaining popularity amongst youth, both young boys and girls. You may term these days as the highs of my political life.

TNS: Critics say that you do not afford to stay out of government or it may lead to fragmentation of your party?

AH: Critics are critics, they can say whatever they wish and they have their own opinions about the MQM and me, but the facts are entirely different. MQM has passed through crucial times both as a part of the coalition government and outside of the government.

When the Army Operation began, with the support of almost all the political and religious parties, the MQM remained intact and did not go through any kind of fragmentation. I have been in exile for the last 18 years and the MQM has gone through many ups and downs, but at present if you chart the popularity of the MQM its numbers have not decreased but greatly increased.

TNS: You started warning about the Taliban danger when there was almost a national denial consensus on Taliban. What alerted you to Taliban's looming threat?

AH: It is regrettable that even some of the learned people are unaware of the present scenario regarding the danger of the Taliban or are naïve to the efforts made by the MQM and the apprehensions raised by the MQM regarding the danger of Taliban. The MQM was the only political party of Pakistan to raise strong vocal objections to the Taliban and were the first to oppose Talibanisation and speak of the threat to Pakistan's future and that of innocent people. Now the government of Pakistan, the armed forces of Pakistan and the people of Pakistan are not only united but are also of the same opinion about the danger of the Taliban, just as the MQM had been warning previously.

TNS: Taliban's exposure, finally, as militant terrorists and petty criminals is well established in public life. What feedback are you getting from Pakistan?

AH: Yes, the profile of the MQM has increased enormously because there was a time when the MQM was alone in warning the Government and the people of Pakistan, but now the entire nation, the Government and the Armed Forces are not only united but in agreement with MQM's stance and are taking strong action to eliminate the menace of the Taliban.

TNS: Karachi is the most lucrative area for Taliban/Al-Qaeda after NWFP areas, how entrenched Taliban are in Karachi and what fears you had when you asked for the registration of IDPs into Karachi?

AH: This is very true that Karachi is the most lucrative area for Taliban and MQM has been persistently warning the Sindh Government, Federal Government, Armed Forces, Investigating Agencies and other Enforcement Agencies, the people of Karachi and the people of Sindh particularly for the past 2 years about the growing Talibanisation of Karachi. In the beginning though, the Government and other relevant quarters and other political pundits started to blame the MQM. They implied that the MQM was simply creating a cause amongst the masses and exaggerating fears about the Taliban in Karachi.

Now everybody has witnessed that the Taliban are making Karachi their safe haven. The MQM is not against the migration of IDPs in Karachi but wants to make sure that under the guise of migrating IDPs the Taliban do not gain shelter in Karachi and start their criminal activities in this city. If this were not done by the government of Sindh then there is a chance that the Taliban may unite and form a strong terrorist network in Karachi.

TNS: You recently said that armed groups should be formed to counter Taliban, will it not lead to civil anarchy?

AH: I have never said that armed groups should be formed to counter the Taliban. What I have persistently said is that people should form vigilant groups in each and every locality in order to keep an eye on the Taliban entering the city and their subversive activities in Karachi. How can this appeal to the people be misconstrued as any sort of encouragement of anarchy in Karachi?

TNS: What measures do you propose to free Pakistan of religious radicalism?

AH: I intend to continue to create and facilitate the promotion of modern education in accordance with the need of the present era and time and economic prosperity. The outdated and obsolete system of education should be abolished and replaced with the introduction of a new system of education. This should open the minds and replace outdated modes of thinking. New inventions are occurring each and every day. If we continue to think about travelling a great distance from one place to another, on horses and donkeys, then our brains will never accept the vehicles that have already been invented.

TNS: You strongly speak against feudalism yet you are in coalition with PPP which houses most feudals amongst its ranks?

AH: One has to progress and develop to further ones cause and teach the new ideology to the nation according to the need of the time. If you consider the past history of nations, they adapted new techniques and ideologies to gain greater success. We have to here look at the background and strategies adopted by our beloved Prophet Mohammad (PBUH). He migrated with his followers to Shaib-Abi-Talib Gihati and stayed there for 3 years in deplorable conditions. He then made an alliance with Sardare-Quresh of Macca and returned to Macca. When the opponents of the Prophet Mohammad (PBUH) made his followers lives unbearable and impossible to live in Macca, the Prophet (PBUH) sent them to Habsha (Abyssinia) with a message for the King of Habsha. The Prophet (PBUH) then had to go to Madina (Yesrab) with his colleagues, making an agreement with the Sardars of Quresh for 10 years. In Madina, Prophet Mohammad (PBUH) made an agreement with the Jews and other non Muslims known as "Misaq-e-Madina". It did not mean however that he abandoned or left his righteous message but that he made all of these agreements to become more united, stronger and better able to counter the unrighteous "Sardar of Quresh" and their forces.

Similarly, other leaders such as Lenin, Castro, Ho Chi Minh, Mao, Marx and many others went into exile in order to continue to preach their message and to bring reformational changes to their society. So at times you have to discover new ways to keep your movement active and prosperous. The MQM had no choice but to preach and teach its egalitarian and progressive philosophy and make such kinds of adjustments whenever needed. This does not mean that through making such kinds of alliances the MQM has left behind its basic and fundamental philosophy.

TNS: What stops you from going back to Pakistan? What threats there are to your life and will you identify those forces posing threat to you?

AH: Time and again I have expressed my wish to the Central Coordination Committee and other office bearers and workers that I want to return to Pakistan, but my people are not allowing me to do so at this stage because they strongly feel that there are many unnatural risks to my life.

Before coming to London, several assassination attempts were made on my life but Almighty Allah saved me. When the opponent forces tried with hired criminals to assassinate me with hand grenades and explosives, it was at this time that the Central Coordination Committee of MQM and other followers requested me to go abroad and to guide them from there.

TNS: How are your relations at the moment with Pakistani establishment, mainly secret services and military?

AH: Many misunderstandings have been removed about the MQM within the establishment, secret services and the military. I hope with the passage of time those remaining, if any, would be removed as well. Time is the best healer.

TNS: Your party has been involved in violence recently with tiny splinter group Mohajir Quami Movement. Where is this group drawing support from?

AH: My party has not been involved in any violence with any so called splinter group but in fact was the victim of armed attacks of criminals. There are some groups in Karachi who are involved in land grabbing (land mafia), drug trafficking, kidnapping for ransom, car theft, dacoities, bank robberies, mobile phone snatchings and other criminal activities. MQM has requested Karachiites to form vigilant committees in their areas to keep an eye on such kinds of criminal elements. These neighbourhood watch groups became the biggest hurdle against groups of criminals. These groups of criminals take shelter within different political parties. Recently, these criminals attacked different localities of Karachi with lethal weapons and as a result of their indiscriminate firing, 12 innocent people were killed and dozens were injured including MQM workers and sympathisers.

TNS: How do you view the role of right-wing parties, such as Jamaat Islami and Imran Khan's Tehreek Insaaf, in Pakistan?

AH: Every enlightened person and one who has even a little knowledge of history knows the fact that the Jamat-e-Islami was against the Pakistan Movement. Jamaat-e-Islami went too far in the opposition of the Pakistan Movement and even termed it as the movement of "Kafiristan". It crossed all limits by even terming the Founder of Pakistan Quaid-e-Azam as "Kafir-e-Azam". It is known to all those who go to colleges, universities or other institutions that Jamaat-e-Islami, through its students organisation Islami Jamiat-e-Tuleba introduced Kalashnikov, sten guns and other lethal weapons in all the educational institutions to suppress other students organisations and made the educational institutions into the "No Go" Areas for other students organisations. Very recently according to the reports of print and electronic media, State secret agencies and law enforcement agencies including the police stated that all Al-Qaeda people have either been arrested or discovered in the houses of Jamaat-e-Islami's well known office bearers. Very recently the culprit of the armed gang who attacked the players of Sri Lanka Cricket Team in Lahore was arrested by the police who confessed that he stayed in Mansoorah in Lahore, the main headquarters of Jamaat-e-Islami, for two days before launching the terrorist attack on the Sri Lankan team. He also confessed that the weapons he and his accomplices used were provided in Mansoorah. What further can I say about the role of the Jamaat-e-Islami in Pakistan. Readers are the best judges. As far as the role of other religious political parties is concerned, almost all the parties who were against the Pakistan Movement are supporting Taliban or Al-Qaeda directly or indirectly. As far as Imran Khan's Tehreek-e-Insaaf is concerned, I have never made any comment on him or his political party, so please forgive me again for not making any comment.

TNS: How are your relations with Nawaz Sharif as some of his hawks have issued statement against you?

AH: Personally I do not have any kind of animosity against Nawaz Sharif. He was the one who passed two resolutions in the APC (All Parties Conference) held in London against MQM. After the announcement of 2008 general elections results, in my first public speech, I publicly congratulated

Nawaz Sharif and said that the MQM respects and accepts his mandate. As far as hawks statement of his party against me is concerned, I am used to reading such kind of statements and this is part of our political culture.

TNS: Do you regret supporting General Musharraf's supra constitutional steps?

AH: MQM was the only political party which did not support when he took over power. MQM was the only political party which did not take part in the Local Bodies Elections held in 2001, whereas other political parties and religious political parties took part in these elections. When General Elections 2002 were held we were hoping that the country will enter into a democratic phase. We never made any kind of alliance with General (Rtd) Pervez Musharraf before the formation of democratic set up. However, we made an alliance with the PML-Q, the political party led by Chaudhry Shujaat Hussain, and came into coalition government at the federal and provincial level. It is on record that we opposed many of the decisions and supra constitutional steps by President Musharraf and boldly opposed the army operation in Balochistan province etc.

TNS: Will you consider returning to Pakistan back under international guarantee?

AH: If the hearts and minds are clear without any confusion and misunderstandings then there is no need to get any sort of guarantee from the international community to return. Look! what happened to Ms Benazir Bhutto after taking advice and returning to Pakistan with the guarantee of the international community. In my opinion, the minds and all sorts of misunderstandings must be cleared within the country as this is more important than any other guarantee or guarantees.

TNS: What is it that you have but other political leaders don't?

AH: The answer in my opinion is the commitment, determination, devotion and sincerity to the cause, goal and struggle, otherwise it is just a "tamasha" and nothing else.

TNS: What in your opinion a politician should do to connect to his people?

AH: This question looks like you want to ask for the magic or a magic trick to obtain or remain connected to the people. This is not so easy but it needs depth, sincerity, involvement with truth, hard work, day and night for your cause, full commitment without any personal gains and intense depth of sacrificing your own desires and wishes and above all their workers. One must be prepared to follow the above-mentioned facts, and do the same as I have been doing for the past 18 years while living in exile. However, it all comes from within. Your teachings and upbringing, the way you are brought up and finally I would say that your genetic make-up always play a very important role.

TNS: How do you see the future of Pakistan evolving?

AH: The future of any country depends upon the collective thinking of the people of that country which mostly depends upon the education and awareness of the demands of the present time. Unfortunately in Pakistan the majority of the people, due to illiteracy, are encircled by uneducated clerics and so-called intellectuals who are on the payroll of the state agencies. In this situation one can easily imagine the future of Pakistan evolving. However, I remain optimistic that one day the philosophy of the MQM will bring about the much needed change and only the rule of the middle class will be able to secure a better future for Pakistan.

TNS: Where do you see MQM 10 years from Now?

AH: If the establishment of Pakistan changes its previous policies and withdraws its support to the

feudal elites and adopts new and constructive means and policies, then the MQM will be the only political party which can not only save Pakistan but make Pakistan prosperous and put the country on the path of progress and strength according to the needs of 21st century.

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<http://jang.com.pk/thenews/jul2009-weekly/nos-12-07-2009/dia.htm#1>