

Elections in Pakistan. Victory of Imran Khan's PTI Party

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The elections in Pakistan today were much freer and fairer than I had expected. Hence, the preliminary results simply reflected the obvious for most of us: former Prime Minister Imran Khan's political party, PTI (the movement for justice) - facing ruthless repression over the past year - have swept the elections in every single province of the country.

Khan, surviving two assassination attempts and languishing in a supermax dungeon since last August, is more popular than ever. Among the youth, Gallup Pakistan surveys have consistently reported around 80-90 percent support for Khan and his party.

The tyranny of the generals in the military high command along with the kleptocratic and dynastic political parties entailed even the suppression of PTI's symbol (a cricket bat) and virtually a ban, with horrific consequences if violated, on candidates running on a PTI ticket. Thus, all of these candidates ran as independents.

Of course, we have now become used to one criminal travesty after the next by Pakistan's military-intelligence apparatus. So, we are cautious about any temporary victory for people's democracy, triumphing over the Washington-backed totalitarian military and political elite. The latter are in full-blown panic mode, and are trying their best at tampering and rigging before announcing the final results.

The preliminary results, regardless of the fraudulent shenanigans of the national security state expected in the next few days, already represents a resounding defeat of the neo-colonial comprador oligarchy in Pakistan. One just needs to see how highly strung the spokesperson of the State Department was in addressing questions related to these elections.

There is one sign of both hope and danger. For the first time in Pakistan's history, the normally unified and disciplined armed forces are now experiencing deep divisions. The majority of military officers and 95 percent of soldiers are repulsed by the behavior of Washington's minions in the top brass. To the surprise of many of us, these divisions also exist within the intelligence agencies. We are witnessing in an unprecedented way a refusenik impulse within the military. Not to sound like the bogus alarmism we're used to from Washington think tanks, it's still worth remembering that Pakistan is a country of 240 million, nuclear-armed.

The Pakistani people badly need international solidarity at this point.

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