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Imran Khan and the independence of Pakistan

Pakistan has never been independent. It has always remained a toy in the hands of the United Kingdom and the United States. During the Western war against the Afghan communist regime, it became a rear base for Bin Laden's mujahideen and Arab fighters. However, for the past decade, a cricket champion like no other has been trying to liberate it, make peace with India and create social services: Imran Khan.

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Imran Khan, world cricket champion and former Prime Minister. He is fighting for a modern, more social and independent state.

The Pakistani population is rising up against its army and its political personnel. Everywhere, demonstrations are forming in support of the former Prime Minister, Imran Khan, who has just been released but is the subject of a hundred legal proceedings.

WHO IS IMRAN KHAN?

Imran Khan comes from an illustrious Pashtun family. His father is descended from an Indian general and governor of the Punjab, and his mother from a Sufi master who invented the Pashto alphabet. He was educated in Lahore, then in England at Oxford. He speaks Saraiki, Urdu, Pashto and English. He is a cricketer, the most important sport in Pakistan. He was captain of the national team in 1992 and managed to win the World Cup. During the years 1992-96, he devoted himself exclusively to philanthropic activities, opening a hospital for cancer patients and a university with his family's money. In 1996, he entered politics and created the Pakistan Movement for Justice (PTI). He obtained a seat in the National Assembly in 2018, but was the only one elected from his party.

Imran Khan is not a politician like the others. He recognizes himself in the approach of Mohamed Iqbal (1877-1938), the spiritual father of Pakistan. He intended to break with the religious immobility of Islam and to undertake an effort of interpretation, but he remained prisoner of a communal and legal vision of Islam. Imran Kahn only found his way when he discovered the Iranian philosopher and sociologist Ali Shariati, a friend of Jean-Paul Sartre and Frantz Fanon [1]. Unknown in the West, Shariati proposed to his students to evaluate the precepts of Islam by applying them and to keep only those they found useful. He himself engaged in a reinterpretation of Islam that fascinated Iranian youth. He spoke out against the regime of Shah Reza Pahlevi and supported Ayatollah Rouhollah Khomeiny, then in exile and considered a heretic by all Iranian clerics. He was assassinated by the shah's secret police, the sawak, in England in 1977, just before Khomeini's return to his country. So he was the one who instigated the Iranian revolution, but he never knew it.

Imran Khan is therefore a Sunni, an admirer of a Shiite philosopher. He proposes to modernize his country, not by eradicating its religious traditions, but on the contrary, by trying to sort them out to keep only the best. He shows himself to be extraordinarily open and tolerant in a country that was the first in the world to be governed by the Egyptian Brotherhood of the Muslim Brotherhood, a sectarian political party linked to the British MI6 [2]. Like Ali Shariati, he is a revolutionary in the noble sense of the word and an anti-imperialist. In his political life, he never ceased to denounce the Anglo-Saxon takeover of his country. He will therefore logically become the haunt of the British and American imperialists.

When President Barack Obama claimed to have killed Osama Bin Laden in Pakistan [3], the Pakistani political class accused the army of having sheltered the United States' public enemy number one. In theory, Pakistan has civilian rule, but it has been rocked by numerous military

coups. The military is the only effective administration and has gradually gained control of many economic sectors. During the war in Afghanistan, it supported the Afghan mujahideen and of course Osama bin Laden's Arab fighters on behalf of the CIA. To put her in her place, the civil power organized the "memorandum affair". A secret document, echoed by the *Wall Street Journal*, was sent to the Chairman of the US Joint Chiefs of Staff, General Mike Mullen, to prevent a new coup in Pakistan. Iram Khan is not on the side of either the army or the political class. He calls for early elections. He does not believe a word of either the US, the army or the politicians' version. He campaigns against both corruption and submission to the US, two themes that concern both Pakistani camps. In a few months, his party emerged from the shadows and his discourse won over his people. He formed a coalition and became Prime Minister in 2012.

A BREAKAWAY PRIME MINISTER

Inspired by the example of Muhammad when he was head of state, he created a free health care program in Punjab, opened shelters for the homeless and implemented a social protection and anti-poverty program.

He clashed with the Islamists of Tehreek-e-Labbaik Pakistan who demanded the death penalty for blasphemers. During the attack on the former premises of *Charlie-Hebdo* in Paris and the murder of a teacher Samuel Paty [4] in Conflans-Sainte-Honorine, he attacked the French president, Emmanuel Macron, who justified the attacks against Islam provoked by these crimes. In the end, after having negotiated a shaky agreement with the fanatics of Tehreek-e-Labbaik Pakistan, he ended up banning this movement.

As a symbol of his open-mindedness, he built the Kartarpur Corridor which allows Indian Sikhs [5] to come on pilgrimage to the shrine of their founder Guru Nanak, 5 kilometers inside Pakistan. But the Indian government is not opening an equivalent corridor for Pakistani Sikhs to come on pilgrimage to Dera Baba Nanak in India. Despite the advancement of the China-Pakistan economic corridor, the situation forces it to ask the International Monetary Fund (IMF) for help. As usual, the IMF demanded neo-liberal structural reforms. The result was a drop in living standards and a return to poverty. He went to Russia after the latter had just intervened militarily against the "integral nationalists" in Ukraine. Let us recall that Stepan Bandera was working at the beginning of the Cold War with the Muslim Brotherhood. Immediately, the United States intervened politically in Pakistan to bring down the government of Imran Khan. After a first attempt, parliamentarians passed a vote of no confidence and dismissed the Prime Minister.

AN UNPREDICTABLE OPPOSITION LEADER

Imran Khan, who was in a very small minority in the Assembly but had a huge majority among the population, became the leader of the popular opposition.

He was succeeded as Prime Minister by Shehbaz Sharif, brother of former Prime Minister Nawaz Sharif. The Sharif dynasty is involved in many of the financial affairs exposed in the Panama Papers. It has a number of offshore companies that it has used to organize tax evasion. Nawaz Sharif was sentenced to 10 years in prison, then to 7 years in prison in another case, before going into exile in London. As for Shehbaz Sharif, he was exiled in Saudi Arabia during the dictatorship of General Perwez Musharaf.

An attack was organized against him on November 3, 2022, killing one person and injuring three others, including Khan himself, who was wounded in the leg. He accused the Prime Minister, Shehbaz Sharif, of having ordered the attack. According to a video, one of the two gunmen cited Khan's playing music during prayers and his agreement to talk to Israel, a "kafir" (infidel) nation, as motives. This shooter is a member of the Tehrik-e- Labbaik Pakistan. In reality, Pakistan's rapprochement with Israel under Imran Khan was the result of favorable pressure from Saudi Arabia.

The US-based journalist Ahmad Noorani accuses on his website General Qamar Javed Bajwa, who has just retired as Pakistan's Chief of Staff. He claims that he and his family have become considerably richer over the past six years.

Imran Khan then demanded that what he had stolen be confiscated and raised the question of the power of the army: an institution that defends the country, but also plays a murky economic role.

The Sharif government launched an incredible number of legal proceedings, more than 100, against the most popular man in the country. None of them seemed to be very serious, but all of them had high legal stakes, so that Imran Khan could do nothing but answer to the police and the judiciary. At the same time, one of his followers, Senator Azam Khan Swati, who had criticized the attitude of senior officers, was arrested for insulting the army and imprisoned.

But the man did not react as expected. He denounced the instrumentalization of justice and asked his supporters to be voluntarily incarcerated to saturate the system and discredit it. In front of each prison, 500 members of his party gathered and ask to be arrested. Some of them were arrested, but the government quickly realized the trap and tried to disperse them.

Not knowing what to do, the Sharif government once again considered having Khan assassinated during an attempted arrest by the military. His party, the Justice Movement (PTI), surrounded his family palace and prevented the army and police from entering.



Imran Khan's arrest by the police and army at the Lahore court. The forces of "order" broke the doors and windows of the courtroom during the pleas of the lawyers.

In the latest incident, as Imran Khan was on his way to court to answer charges against him, police surrounded the court to arrest him. As his supporters closed the doors of the courtroom, the police broke them down to seize him.

The Westerners, who presented themselves as defenders of human rights, did not lift a finger.

White House spokeswoman Karine Jean-Pierre said, "As we have said before, the United States does not have a position on one candidate or political party over another.

Within hours, spontaneous protests erupted across the country.

The EU commented: "Restraint and composure are needed (...) Pakistan's challenges can only be met and its path determined by the Pakistanis themselves, through sincere dialogue and respect for the rule of law.

After a few days and several deaths, Imran Khan has just been released.

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