***The Allegation Of Change In The Subject Of Khatam-e-Nabuwat Declaration***

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***The Fact Sheet***

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1. On 25 July 2014, Speaker National Assembly Pakistan, in consultation with Chairman Senate and leaders of other parliamentary parties, constituted a Parliamentary Committee comprising 34 members representing all political parties and members of National Assembly. The purpose of the committee was to propose election reforms.
2. The committee, in order to propose reforms for the Election Bill, published advertisements, so as to know about the public opinion/proposals in this regard. The committee also sought suggestions through National Assembly website.
3. The committee received as many as 1200 proposals written on as many as 4000 pages.
4. Out of the 34 members of the committee, a sub-committee of 16 members was formed.
5. The sub-committee, in light of all the received proposals, put together all 8 election laws and thus formed a new bill.
6. As decided by the Central Committee, the bill was advertised on National Assembly website so as to invite objections of the general public and the elected representatives.
7. The report prepared by the sub-committee as well as the final draft of the bill was published on 19 July 2017. No one raised any objection to them. Later, the draft was presented before the Central Committee comprised of 34 members.
8. The Central Parliamentary Committee approved the report as well as the draft of the bill prepared by the sub-committee.
9. The final report of the Central Parliamentary Committee as well as the draft of the bill was then placed before the parliament and a copy of the bill was provided to all parliamentarians. The report and the final draft of the bill were also advertised for the public on National Assembly website.
10. A few political parties, such as PPP, PTI, Jamat-e-Islami, Jamiat Ulema-e-Islam [F] and MQM suggested a few amendments/ proposals to the bill, which the committee in turn made part of its final report. However, the amendments which were suggested by the aforesaid political parties did not contain any objection or new proposals with regard to the Khatm-e-Nubuwwat Declaration itself. No new objection to the draft was raised by the parliamentarians at this stage.
11. Hence, Zahid Hamid, the Law Minister, presented the bill before the National Assembly as pr rules and regulations of the house so as to have it approved by the members of the assembly. The Law Minister personally was not authorized to make even a minor change in the bill. The reason for this was that the bill was not prepared by the law ministry, but rather by a joint Parliamentary Committee. Hence, the bill was approved on 22 August 2017. Even on this occasion, no objection was raised by any member of the parliament with regard to the subject of the Khatm-e-Nubuwwat Declaration. Instead, a few members of the National Assembly sought to take credit of the preparation of the new nomination form prepared by the committee. This is now on record in the recorded proceedings of the National Assembly.
12. Later, the Election Act 2017, as the bill was named, was presented before the senate, where Senator Hafiz Hamdullah objected to the wording of the bill saying, ‘the words *solemnly swear* have been replaced by the words *solemnly affirm*. They should be changed back to the original. After the change, the bill was again presented before the senate on 22 September 2017**.( NOTE: In legal terms, both phrases mean the same. The words *‘solemnly swear’* and ‘*solemnly affirm’* carry the same connotation and implication. Likewise, in Section 260 of the Constitution of Pakistan, the term ‘*affirmation’* has been mentioned as part of the required declaration. Hence, the change in the wording did not affect any change in the legal or spoken connotation of the phrases. )**
13. Despite all this, keeping in view the sensitivity of the matter, Raja Zafarul Haq, the Parliamentary Secretary of PML –N in the senate, and Zahid Hamid, the Law Minister, favored the amendment. This was in spite of the fact that other parties in the senate opposed it. All this is on record in the recorded proceedings of the senate on that day [22 September 2017]. Later, the voting took place. 34 members opposed the amendment, while the government benches and Hafiz Hamdullah secured only 13 votes in favor of their stance. Hence, the amendment was not approved by the senate.
14. Another dispute that was witnessed in relation to the new bill was regarding Section 7-C of the *Conduct of General Elections Order 2002*. This law was implemented on 17 June 2002, and according to this law if a Qadiani was found to have his vote registered as Muslim, an objection could be raised against him within ten days after the implementation of the law.
15. And, the dispute was that the present committee had removed Section 7-C from the law, while the fact is that this law was valid only for ten days and had already crashed after being in effect from 17 June 2002 to 26 June 2002.
16. After the approval of the Election Act 2017, in a meeting of the parliamentary committee which was held under the chairmanship of Speaker National Assembly, the government said that although no breach had been committed with regard to the implication of the terms in the Khatm-e-Nubuwwat Declaration, the older subject of the declaration must be restored as the matter pertained to the most sensitive issue of Khatm-e-Nubuwwat.
17. The government also suggested that a new law could be formed by joining Section 7-B and 7-C. However, most parties were in favor of keeping the amendment confined to the restoration of the subject of the older Khatm-e-Nubuwwat Declaration. The government therefore immediately restored Section 7-B and 7-C of the said declaration.
18. Later on, Zahid Hamid, the Law Minister, secured the cooperation of other parties to make Section 7-B and 7-C, which deal with the Qadianis having themselves registered as Muslim voters, more effective by making the sections a part of the new Election Act 2017 under Section 48-A. This was to eliminate the fixed timeframe during which an objection could be raised regarding the Qadianis having got themselves registered as Muslim voters. The government had this proposal unanimously approved by the parliament causing it to become a permanent part of the Election Act 2017.
19. Based on this law, an objection can be raised at any time now regarding a Qadiani who has got himself registered as a Muslim voter, and if he does not sign the Khatm-e-Nubuwwat Declaration, his vote will be registered as a non-Muslim and Qadiani vote in a separate voters’ list.

**Hence, the law regarding Khatm-e-Nubuwwat has now become much stronger and effective than ever before.**

**Belief in Khatm-e-Nubuwwat is the integral part of the faith of the 200 million people in Pakistan and the parliament is its guardian.**

**Now, you can decide for yourselves as to who is doing politics on the pretext of the most sensitive issue of Khatm-e-Nubuwwat.**

**Will it be lawful if a party decides to establish its election campaign on this sensitive issue merely to divide the nation and create disorder in the country?**

**(Ministry of Interior, Government of Pakistan)**