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POLITICAL SCIENCE

Islamic Economic Revolution of the Century: Freeom from National Debts in Shortest Possible Time
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Two Stars (out of Five)

Pakistan's current economic system warped by omnipresent corruption and black market exchange produces a literacy rate of 50 and a poverty rate of 32. The government attempts to provide for the needs of 165 million citizens with annual receipts slightly greater than those of Anheuser-Busch and slightly less than the temporary service Manpower. It is a crisis of shoestring infrastructure. Doctor Khan believes now is time for drastic change. He knows how to eliminate poverty halt the drug trade end terrorism and multiply treasury intake by 1500. In fact he's so confident in his solution he's willing to pay a million dollars to anyone who can prove that he's on the wrong track.

The system is based on issuing coupons redeemable for any government service and most privately produced goods or services as well. The key to the value of the coupons is a variable purchase price. During the first three months of a fiscal year coupons would be available at a substantial discount but their value would remain constant. Those with financial wherewithal to pay for their entire year's living expenses upfront stand to save a bundle. Those too short on rupees to look past next week would have to buy most of their coupons at full price as funds allow. The second discount factor also favors the wealthy and larger corporations—Khan would allow discounts year round of large-bloc buys. If the wealthy are paying the least for essential services who makes up the difference? With eventual abolition of all income taxes indirect taxes import duties and given a private corporation running a coupon scheme of "…no checks and balances hardly any documentation…" the answer is either the poor or nobody at all.

"Modern-day people would be much better off if they lived in a tax-free society." Apparently 99 of Pakistanis are already acting on that belief but they still expect roads schools and atomic bombs. Specifics of the coupon plan would take more space to lay out than a review allows however there are highlights which deserve a quick mention. If the plan was partly functional or better the fiscal front-loading of a large proportion of the government's available

funds would make it quickly clear how much was available to spend. The idea of bidders who didn’t capture the coupon concession acting as paid auditors has merit. A section on the practice of Islamic banking is tremendously informative.

The author is an ophthalmologist self-educated in economics and one of the very few in Pakistan who pays income taxes. Should Doctor Khan be willing and able to award this reviewer the million-dollar prize half of what’s left after taxes will be donated to antipoverty programs split evenly between Pakistan and the United States. The robust but definitely flawed *Islamic Economic Revolution of the Century* will mean the most to economists and think tank policy analysts.