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## PTI, SIC drift apart amid Raza, Marwat slugfest

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In a dramatic turn of events within the political landscape of the country, Sunni Ittehad Council (SIC) chief Sahibzada Hamid Raza has issued a vehement response to remarks made by Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI) leader Sher Afzal Marwat, igniting a fresh wave of controversy and intraparty tensions. Marwat, known for his outspoken demeanor, aired his grievances against the PTI's alliance with SIC during a recent appearance on a private TV channel. Labeling the partnership with SIC as a 'mistake,' Marwat cited internal party dynamics, highlighting purported directives from incarcerated PTI founder Imran Khan regarding alliances. During his televised interview, Marwat divulged details regarding the internal deliberations within PTI, alleging that Imran Khan had initially directed the party to align with the Shirani group. However, Marwat claimed that discussions suddenly shifted towards an alliance with Hamid Raza's party,

despite purported readiness from Jamiat Ulema-e-Islam-Shirani for an unconditional alliance with PTI. Marwat further asserted that had PTI forged an alliance with the Shirani group as per Khan's directives, the party would not have faced setbacks concerning electoral symbols and reserved seats. Responding to Marwat's accusations, Raza took to X, formerly Twitter, on Friday to rebuke the PTI leader's claims. Raza vehemently denied soliciting PTI for an alliance, asserting that the decision was exclusively made by PTI founder Imran Khan. Expressing his willingness to address the intricacies of the alliance, Raza hinted at holding back criticisms out of respect for Khan and dismissed Marwat's statements as attempts at media sensationalism. "From election symbols to reserved seats, I have a lot to say," remarked Raza, adding that "if I also sit in talk shows and say something, many people will not be able to show their faces."

He said that his commitment is with Imran Khan and will always be, adding that he can't think bad of Khan for the useless media publicity, "that's why I am silent". "Don't sow discord by taking instructions," he maintained without elaborating. Raza's discontent over Marwat's comments manifested in his conspicuous absence from an event organised by PTI addressing Islamophobia today. Sources revealed that Raza had received an official invitation from PTI for the event, where he was also slated to speak. However, Marwat's remarks purportedly deterred Raza from attending, signaling escalating tensions between the two parties. Raza had also voiced his

grievances during a PTI core committee meeting held yesterday, further exacerbating tensions within the party. The meeting, attended by prominent PTI members including Latif Khosa, Salman Akram Raja, Shoaib Shaheen, and Sher Afzal Marwat, witnessed heated exchanges and clashes among top leaders, leading to the premature departure of several members.