

## *Notes*

# **Beyond Salariat: The Intra-establishment Tussle for Power in Pakistan\***

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Professor Hamza Alavi's seminal study on the role of the salariat in the movement for the certain of Pakistan and its success in capturing the state machinery after Pakistan had come into being won intelligentsia's acceptance at the time of its presentation forty years ago by the logic of his argument. It has been vindicated since by history and the people's experience. In my presentation today I will try to focus on the salariat's efforts and designs to retain its stranglehold on the state machinery, particularly its plans to limit the politicians' share of power, and the beginning of its retreat.

At the time of independence, Hamza Alavi recognized the following pressure groups in the state – the political party that claimed leadership status by virtue of having led the Pakistan movement, the bureaucracy, the defence forces, the ulema, and the landlords.<sup>1</sup> Since the inheritors of power at independence, namely, the parliament and the state's political super-structure, lacked the intellectual resources and practical skills to manage the state, the bureaucrats seized the levers of power and they were soon joined by the military to establish their hold on the new state.

The ulema started their moves to enter the power structure even earlier than the bureaucrats. The partition of Punjab and Bengal radically altered the scheme of Pakistan by making the Muslims a dominant majority in the new state and the ulema saw the possibility of turning the Muslim state into an Islamic one. Thus all those who had opposed the demand for Pakistan on the ground that it was not going to be an Islamic

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<sup>1</sup> See Hamza Alavi 'Misreading Partition Road Signs' *Economic and Political Weekly*, 2-9 November 2002, pp.523-4515 and other essays.

state did a sharp volte-face and decided to foist upon the founders of Pakistan an ideology they had not dreamed of, and set about their task of making Pakistan a theocracy. Within a few months of the emergence of Pakistan they had presented their 22-point charter for establishing an Islamic state.<sup>2</sup>

The bureaucrats, who had given an early notice of resisting Jinnah's concept of a secular Pakistan by censoring his 11 August 1947 speech, recognized in the religious agitators potential allies in their efforts to subdue the politicians, particularly those belonging to the majority province of East Bengal. They had already been using the ulema, particularly Maulana Maudoodi, to inculcate the Islamic spirit in state employees and also to persuade the people to accept their losses in life and property during riots and displacement as sacrifices for the cause of Islam. As Hamza Alavi has noted the ulema were coopted into the state structure vide the second report of the Basic Principles Committee.<sup>3</sup> The ulema have come a long way since and are today courted by all component parts of the establishment.

For dealing with the political party that claimed primacy in the hierarchy of power, the bureaucrats began by persuading Jinnah against his wishes to keep the doors to the Muslim League closed to non-Muslims and oppose the rise of opposition parties.<sup>4</sup> This served the purpose of limiting the competition between the Muslim League and the religious parties to a debate on the extent to which religion could be allowed a role in politics.

### Political party attacked

With ulema in their tow the bureaucrats began their task to bring the ruling political party down. In a flush of democratic fervor, it was decided that holders of office in government would not be eligible for offices in the Muslim league and that the party would function as a watchdog over the government's performance. The Muslim League President, Ch Khaliquzzaman, became serious about his perceived role and expropriated for himself the privilege to tour Muslim countries and persuade them to accept Pakistan's importance as an international player. The government did not like his pin-pricks either. A few stones were thrown at his residence by a small gang and he surrendered and the

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<sup>2</sup> Noted in several histories.

<sup>3</sup> See Hamza Alavi, 'Pakistan and Islam, Ethically and Ideology', in Fred Holliday and Hamza Alavi (eds.) *State and Ideology in the Middle East and Pakistan*, (London: Macmillan, 1980).

<sup>4</sup> Mr Mazhar Ali Khan, editor of the *Pakistan Times* reported this.

leadership of the Muslim League was assumed by the Prime Minister. Eventually, Prime Ministers became ex-officio presidents of the League. The party soon became a bounded maid in the service of bureaucracy. The baton would be passed over from Liaquat Ali Khan to Nazimuddin, to Bogra, to Ch. Mohammad Ali, to Ayub Khan, to Muhammad Khan Junejo, and finally to Nawaz Sharif.

A little more difficult was the suppression of the politicians who had been elected to the Constituent Assembly. It was to them that power had in fact been transferred. While the bureaucrats could capture power they could not deprive the politicians of the mantle of legitimacy. The bureaucrats did not assume power immediately. They waited till Liaquat Ali Khan had been put out of their way. The office of the head of state was grabbed by one of the leaders of the bureaucratic clique, Ghulam Mohammed. The politicians in the assembly were discredited and destroyed step by step; they were denounced for incompetence, mocked for the life-style of their spouses, and ridiculed for their eating habits. Their loyalty to the mother party was destroyed by changing party labels overnight. They did not need to have the trust of parliament, the nod of the man at the top was enough.

Unfortunately, the people of Pakistan have tended to accept as correct the charge-sheet against politicians for their nominal reign during 1947-1958 as drawn up by the propagandists of the military-bureaucracy combine. A proper study may show that they had better respect for the parliamentary system and were less corrupt than their successors from the salariat.

### **Election system undermined**

In any case, the military-bureaucratic combine rightly concluded that the parliamentarians' claim to legitimacy was rooted in the fact of their having been elected by the people. To dispossess the politicians of legitimacy the election system had to be discredited. When constitution-making was delayed the representative character of the members of the Constituent Assembly began to be challenged by opposition political parties. This line of attack on the Constituent Assembly became stronger after the rout of the Muslim League in East Bengal in the 1954 election and Ghulam Mohammad found an unlikely ally in H.S. Suhrawardy for carrying out his putsch against the Constituent Assembly though the military-bureaucracy combine had started knocking down the electoral ladder for ascent to power much earlier.

First, they wanted to avoid an election to the federal legislature as long as possible. The 1955 election to the second Constituent Assembly was forced on the Ghulam Mohammad regime by the federal

court. But there was no threat to the power structure as the provincial assemblies, with the possible exception of the newly elected East Bengal Assembly, were manageable.

Meanwhile, the elite in power had developed its skill in ensuring its favourites' victory in elections. The provincial elections in Punjab, Khyber-Pakhtunkhwa (the NWFP) and Sindh, held in 1951-52, had been manipulated and outrageously rigged by the bureaucracy. Also by holding these elections on the basis of adult franchise without much notice the government forced a battle on its opponents before they could negotiate the problems caused by a radical increase in the electorate. Difficulties in manipulating elections in East Bengal obliged the government to delay their holding till 1954, and since it knew what the outcome was going to be, it started planning for post-election intrigue before the polls were held.

Came Ayub Khan and his first priority was to remove possibilities of an election result of the kind Iskander Mirza had avoided by scrapping the constitution. Whatever other motivations for the Basic Democracy scheme were there, a clear objective was to deprive the members of the National Assembly of their pride in being the directly elected representatives of the people. At the same time he barred many potential winners of election by sending them into forced retirement through the dubious EBDO scheme. Added to it was his plan to have ministers who were not members of the legislature, nor did they belong to any political parties. On the eve of the inaugural session of the National Assembly elected in 1962 Ayub Khan issued an order barring any assembly member from joining a political party. He was forced by the MNAs elected under his own scheme to amend the order, and allow MNAs to join political parties. The order, called the Political Parties Order, survives in an amended form. And then Ayub Khan joined the pack he had failed to beat.

After Ayub Khan had been obliged by the new leaders of the military-bureaucracy combine to quit, Yahya Khan's need to acquire legitimacy compelled him to hold elections. The popular view that Yahya did not try to manipulate the 1970 election was demolished long ago when it became known that his regime did offer money and help to its favourites. It lost for backing the wrong horses and for relying over-much on intelligence reports that had predicted the emergence of a badly divided assembly that could be manipulated as had been done by Iskander Mirza. This was in line with the ruling elite's strategy of avoiding election in the first instance, and of ensuring the success of like-minded politicians if an election could not be avoided.

In 1977, the electoral system came under attack from two sides. The bureaucracy outhiered Herod by helping the PPP candidates win more seats than they deserved and by greater margins than they could expect. When the military decided to back the pseudo-religious challenge to Bhutto, the bureaucracy tried to rejoin their old partners in the military, but Zia had different ideas. In any case the establishment succeeded in discrediting politicians and tried to persuade the people that the electoral system was inherently corrupt.

General Zia-ul-Haq made a fresh attempt to deprive parliament's members of legitimacy. He held partyless elections which meant the members were free to individually negotiate their terms of service to the ruling establishment. He was so incensed at reports that the MNAs elected on non-party basis in 1985 and while the MRD parties had boycotted the polls, were planning to form parties and threatening to depose his confidant Junejo, that he forced the ouster of the Speaker and drove a hard bargain with his hand-picked Prime Minister.

There has been no general election in the post-Zia period in which the establishment, the name by which the military-bureaucracy combine is identified, has not tried to secure the victory of its favourites. In 1988 the military created IJI which made sure that Nawaz Sharif held Punjab while the PPP had already emerged as the largest single party in the National Assembly. Thus were the seeds of PPP – PML-N confrontation sown and the bitter harvest is still being reaped by the people.

The story of the 1990 election and the distribution of money by ISI can be read in the Supreme Court judgment in the Asghar Khan case. The 1990, 1993 and 1996 elections were all lost by parties that had been thrown out of power by the military-bureaucracy combine. After all those thrown out by the oligarchy could not be allowed to return to power. In the 2002 election Musharraf's regime helped his loyalists become the largest single group in the National Assembly, bagging 37 seat more than the PPP that had polled more votes. In 2008 the establishment influenced the outcome by withholding from the Musharraf party the support it had banked upon. The 2013 election is still fresh in people's mind, but if anyone believes that the establishment did not interfere with the electoral process he should be ready for some surprises in the months to come. The most significant aspect of the 2013 general election is that the military-bureaucracy alliance broke down; the traditional partners backed different actors, thus handing down the political parties a victory they had long been waiting for. By demonstrating that a regime acquires legitimacy through elections and that is the only legitimate way for transfer of power the politicians have

come into their own. Their time to challenge the entrenched oligarchy has come.

### **Bureaucracy pushed away**

Today the bureaucracy no longer appears to be a willing ally of the military. The latter has itself to blame for this. Ayub Khan paid due respect for his allies in the bureaucracy.<sup>5</sup> Yahya Khan tried to placate the people, who had faced bayonets during the anti-Ayub agitation, by finding scapegoats in the bureaucracy. But the purges in bureaucracy carried out under Ayub and Yahya smacked of ethnic and sectarian cleansing with a thin layer of favoritism. The powers of the bureaucracy were not affected. In the purge carried out by the Bhutto government the layer of favouritism got thicker. Bhutto undermined the status of the bureaucracy by withdrawing the constitutional protection it had enjoyed since the British period, by ending the monopoly of a single service over the bureaucratic structure, and by throwing high offices open to lateral entrants. The bureaucrats survived these shocks and started regaining their position when Bhutto began relying more and more on the state apparatus to secure the people's obedience.

Zia-ul-Haq began by excluding the bureaucrats from the list of his *rufafa*, ignoring those who disagreed with his vengeful attitude towards Bhutto, and threatening to hang bureaucrats who found rules and regulation standing in the way of compliance with his orders.<sup>6</sup> While throwing out bureaucrats (and judges too) suspected of loyalty to the PPP he tried to raise a corps of Islamist bureaucrats while he enforced a rule that promotion to high military ranks was reserved for good, practicing Muslims. Thus, Hamza Alavi identified the Zia regime as a wholly military government. In a way Zia thought painting the salariat green was as easy a task as painting the Lal Masjid green or replacing the red tiles in a textbook lesson with green tiles. The bureaucrats had difficulty in taking to the new partners.

In a way General Musharraf completed the alienation of the bureaucrats. His local government scheme satisfied one part of the bureaucracy – the police – while his attempts to dethrone the Deputy Commissioner from the position of the lynchpin of the viceregal system

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<sup>5</sup> Hamza Alavi's paper, 'Authoritarianism and Legitimation of State Power in Pakistan', in Subrata K. Mitra (ed.) *The Post-Colonial State in Asia Dialectics of Politics and Culture* (New York: Harvester Wheatsheaf, 1990).

<sup>6</sup> A significant target was Justice Samdani, the Law Secretary, as told to the present writer by Ms Gulzar Bano, the then Cabinet Secretary.

boomeranged. As soon as Musharraf's decline began, the bureaucracy turned back to the politicians to have the commissionerate system revived.

At the moment the bureaucracy seems happy at regaining the opportunity to rule from behind the politicians they have helped to regain power and look like staying away from the military's embrace for some at least.

### **Judiciary alienated**

The military-led state apparatus has also suffered a blow with the end of its traditional understanding with the judiciary.

In its contest with the politicians the judiciary was the most effective ally of the military-bureaucratic oligarchy. The legitimization of Ghulam Mohammad's sack of the Constituent Assembly, and the subsequent military coups – 1958, 1977, 1999 – the judiciary propounded the law of necessity to legitimize acts of treason. One may recall the extraordinary feat of judicial skulduggery in the Nusrat Bhutto case. The petition against the military regime was dismissed for lack of jurisdiction and relief was given to the respondent, because Zia had threatened to sack the Chief Justice.

Stung by the lack of consideration shown for them by the Bhutto regime to judges quietly accepted humiliation at the hands of Zia and Musharraf. Zia got rid of his partners like Moulvi Mushtaq Husain and Anwarul Haq and quite a few others in 1981. Musharraf did the same thing to Chief Justice Saeeduzzaman and several others and almost succeeded in getting rid of Chief Justice Iftikhar Mohammad Chaudhry but for the extraordinary lawyers' movement. And although the Chief Justice owed his restoration to the army chief's intervention at a most critical moment the military has been unable to earn the judiciary's claim to have buried the possibility of a military take-over should be taken with a pinch of salt, the judiciary is unlikely to be as keen to approve of a coup against a political authority as it used to be in the past.

That leaves the military alone out of the military-bureaucratic oligarchy to face the resurgent politicians. Huseyn Shaheed Suhrawardy described the tussle between the military and the political parties as a ding-dong battle and believed the military would always look down on politicians as a past.<sup>7</sup> But the world had changed a great deal since the 1960s.

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<sup>7</sup> Shaista Suhrawardy Ikramullah, *Huseyn Shaheed Suhrawardy: A Biography* (Karachi: Oxford University Press, 1991).

### **Military's rise to a special status**

Before attempting to find out how the present political elite will deal with the military we may recall the military's rise to the status of the final arbiter of the people's fate.

Burdened with a deep sense of insecurity Pakistan's politicians looked upon the armed forces as the only guarantors of security. Liaquat Ali Khan declared that he would let the people starve but would deliver what the armed forces needed. And Bhutto promised the armed forces nuclear weapons even if the people had to eat grass. Besides, the law-makers gave the armed forces a special position in constitutional documents.

Under the colonial administration, the Commander-in-Chief of British forces in India was almost equal in status to the Governor-General. Much has been written about the clash between Lord Curzon, the Viceroy, and Lord Kitchener, the C-in-C, at the end of which a frustrated Curzon, and he was no ordinary Viceroy, had to return home. Even in the Government of India Act of 1935, the Governor-General's appointment was mentioned in Article 3 and the very next Article (No 4) dealt with the appointment of the 'Commander-in-Chief of His Majesty's Forces in India'. The only difference was that while the Governor-General was appointed 'by a commission under the Royal Sign Manual', the C-I-C was appointed by 'Warrant under the Royal Sign Manual'.<sup>8</sup> The defence services were allotted eight articles in a separate chapter in Part X, titled the Services of the Crown in India (while civil services had a separate, longer chapter).<sup>9</sup>

In the Act adapted as Pakistan's provisional constitution, Article 4 was deleted.<sup>10</sup> The chapter on defence forces was re-inserted in 1950 and was later on cut down to two articles (232 and 233). The first Article allowed the Governor-General the power to raise the Naval, Military and Air Forces and grant commissions in these forces. The other article gave the G-G the power to appoint the Commanders-in-Chief of the three services, and other officers and fix their salaries and allowances.<sup>11</sup>

Of the two states that came into existence after the partition of India in August 1947, India was able to finalise its constitution in 1949 and enforce in 1950. It deleted the special chapter on defence services that was there in the Act of 1935 and put all matters relating to 'Services

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<sup>8</sup> *Constitutional Documents of Pakistan*, Vol. II, Government of Pakistan, 1954, p.2.

<sup>9</sup> *Ibid.*, pp.165-67.

<sup>10</sup> *Ibid.*, p.553

<sup>11</sup> *Ibid.*, pp.665, 666.



under the Union and the States' in a single chapter. The expression defence forces/services did not figure in any of the seven Articles.<sup>12</sup> The defence forces were part of state services and were to be administrated by the relevant ministry, so ran the argument.

When Pakistan had its first constitution in 1956, it put the contents of Articles 232 and 233 of the Act of 1935 in one Article (40) which declared the President to be the Supreme Commander of the Armed Forces. Until parliament made the relevant laws, the President was allowed the powers to raise the three forces, grant commission in them, appoint their chiefs and fix their salaries/allowances.<sup>13</sup>

The constitution followed the Indian example of not providing for a separate chapter for defence forces and had a single chapter for 'Services'. It referred to 'defences services' only once when it said that 'every person who is a member of defence forces, or of a civil service of the Federation, or of All-Pakistan Service, or holds and post connected with defence, or a civil post in connection with the affairs of the Federation, shall hold office during the pleasure of the President.'<sup>14</sup>

The 1962 constitutional documents retained the Article 40 of the 1956 constitution as Article 17. It also retained the 1956 chapter on the Services of Pakistan.<sup>15</sup>

The 1973 constitution devoted a new chapter to the armed forces. The federal government was put in control and command of the armed forces. The supreme command of the forces vested in the President and he retained the power to appoint the service chiefs and fix their salaries and allowances. The chapter included a new article of 'functions of armed forces'. It was clear that the President was to formally appoint the service chiefs on the advice of the Prime Minister. General Zia-ul-Haq amended the constitution in 1985 to empower the President to appoint the service chiefs in his discretion. Nawaz Sharif had these words removed in 1977. Gen. Musharraf brought these words back via the LFO of 2002. He was forced to retract vide the 17<sup>th</sup> amendment in 2003 and the President was required to appoint the service chiefs. 'in consultation with the Prime Minister'. However, the advice of the Prime Minister was not binding on the President. The 18<sup>th</sup>

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<sup>12</sup> Constitutional of India, Lal, 3<sup>rd</sup> edition, 1990, p.125.

<sup>13</sup> Dr. Safdar Mahmood, *Constitutional Foundations of Pakistan* (Lahore: Jang Publications, 1991), p.257.

<sup>14</sup> *Ibid.*, p.293.

<sup>15</sup> *Ibid.*, pp.548, 596.

Amendment of 2010 restored the original scheme, that is, the President appoints the service chiefs on the Prime Minister's advice.<sup>16</sup>

By inscribing special provisions about the armed forces in the constitution the law-makers have set them apart from other services and the reluctance by Gen. Zia and Gen. Musharraf to allow the selection of service chiefs made by the Prime Minister needs no elaboration.

Besides, the military had been on its march towards autonomy from the days Col. Iskander Mirza, as Secretary for Defence, got his rank raised to Major-General and won the right to fly the national flag on a Secretary's car because otherwise he could not properly engage with the military officers. The military moved out of the Finance Ministry's oversight in the 1950's<sup>17</sup> and was answerable to no one after 1958.

### **From NSC to 'same page'**

As Hamza Alavi pointed out, the military in Pakistan avoids taking over power directly so long as the politicians up from are amenable to its advice. For more than three decades a series of attempts have been made to institutionalize the military's role in politics. General Zia-ul-Haq ceaselessly campaigned for military's permanent share in state power. Eventually he inserted Article 152-A in the constitution whereby a National Security Council was overseeing the affairs of the state. Many observers argued that the National Security Council was a supra-parliament entity. However, Gen. Zia had to accept deletion of Article 152-A as condition for getting obnoxious 8<sup>th</sup> amendment adopted by the National Assembly elected in 1985.<sup>18</sup> Even without the National Security Council the military's power to force a regime change was not affected. When President Ghulam Ishaq Khan and Prime Minister Nawaz Sharif went for each other's throat, COAs General Kakar gave marching orders to both and made his name in history for demolishing the theory that there could be situations when the constitution offered no way out of crisis and military take-over could be justified. When COAS Gen. Jahangir Karamat referred to the need for National Security Council Nawaz Sharif asked him to resign and the good soldier obliged him. But when Nawaz Sharif tried to get rid of Gen. Musharraf in 1999 we know what happened. Preparations for a coup had been made before Nawaz Sharif decided to rely on an ill-informed intelligence chief, if Gen (R) Shahid Aziz is to be believed.

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<sup>16</sup> Zain Sheikh, *Constitution of Pakistan 1973*, 2012, p.183.

<sup>17</sup> See A.O. Mitha, *Unlikely Beginnings: A Soldier's Life* (Karachi: Oxford University Press, 2003).

<sup>18</sup> Zain Sheikh, *op.cit.*, p.106.

For the last several years evidence of government-military accord is offered by describing them on the same page. In practical terms the Zia formula of the military's oversight of an elected government's actions and policies is now apparently in force. The government's keenness to stay on the same page with the military may lead to a situation where the page will belong wholly to the military and the politicians' nominal authority may have space only for single-line footnote at its bottom. This is the scenario if you go by appearances. The reality is perhaps different.

There have been two occasions in Pakistan's history when political leaders, after gaining power through elections, that is, armed with legitimacy, could break the military-bureaucracy oligarchy. The first occasion was Bhutto's ascent to power in 1972, a situation Hamza Alavi briefly analysed in the following manner:

Unlikely the political leader preceding him. Bhutto had authority and legitimacy of power both. He knew about the military-bureaucracy alliance and also desired an end to its dominance. Through administrative reforms he did try to rein in the bureaucracy. While the military had already lost its prestige after its defeat in Bengal and was no longer in a position to capture state power. Sadly enough Bhutto failed to subdue this military-bureaucracy alliance.<sup>19</sup>

This is not the occasion to discuss Bhutto's attempts to break the military-bureaucratic oligarchy but one may note, in passing, his fumbling in this area. His attacks on the bureaucracy and eventual surrender to it have been discussed earlier. But he found even the defeated military too strong to yield to his manoeuvring. He did get away with a dramatic sack of the army and the air chiefs of staff but that was the only victory he could score over the military establishment, and that was before he gave his political opponents cause to start challenging him. By using the army in Balochistan and by depending on it to overcome the PNA agitation he rehabilitated the army to an extent that it could regain its dominant position. Finally, Bhutto's attempt to raise a parallel military force, and that too consisting largely of ex-servicemen, gave the military an additional excuse to overthrow him. Besides, Bhutto faced the military without the backing of the bourgeoisie that had helped him gain power.

Nawaz Sharif also was strong enough after his thumping victory in the 1996 election to defeat the military-bureaucratic oligarchy, but he blew away his chances. He forgot the role the military, and Gen Zia and

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<sup>19</sup> Hamza Alavi's paper 'Authoritarianism, etc.', *op.cit.*

Gen Jilani in particular, had played in his rise in politics, and when he forced the chief of the army staff to resign the military took it as an insult to its institution from a person when his appeal to Clinton to help Pakistan wriggle out of the Kargil misadventure was considered a stab in the army's back. Besides, Nawaz Sharif chose to assert his authority over the army after alienating sizeable sections of the public by throwing out President Leghari, by having the chief justice squeezed out through a tell-tale intra-court coup, and by failing to prevent the storming of Supreme Court.

Nawaz Sharif's fall in 1999 highlighted the failure of politicians to out manoeuvre the military establishment. Bhutto believed the powers to order the generals around that he had under the constitution could be exercised without harm to himself. He realized much too late that power, as Dr. Mubashir Hasan had so often explained, lay with the military-bureaucratic establishment.

Benazir Bhutto had no reason to have illusions of being powerful enough to exercise her constitutional authority. She had been told before being invited to become Prime Minister that she could have no say in the military plans for Afghanistan and in the military's other affairs. Yet she forgot these things. She did succeed in replacing the ISI chief but her plan to reorganize the ISI in the light of Air Marshal Zulfikar's report was a non-starter and when she tried to remove the Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff Committee, incidentally the last officer outside the army to hold this office, she had her fingers burnt. That her government was at the sufferance of the military was confirmed more than once. When she heard rumours that the military was planning to oust her she sent a friend to sound out General Aslam Beg, the COAS. The general's reply was that five corps commanders were still in her favour as against the four opposed to her. Her fate would be sealed the day the division become adverse for her, he candidly declared.<sup>20</sup> This did come to pass and the general announced Benazir government's sack a couple of days before the President dismissed her government on 6 August 1990.

Now Nawaz Sharif is better placed than any of his predecessors to sideline the military-bureaucratic oligarchy. He has legitimacy. The bourgeoisie is with him. He is acceptable to the ulema. The bureaucracy is willing to go along with him. The purse of a rich patron can be opened for him. He can get weapons, or money to buy arms, a qualification military considers essential for any politician it may be prepared to

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<sup>20</sup> A.G. Noorani, *The Kashmir Dispute – 1947-2012* (Karachi: Oxford University Press, 2014), p.185.

support. As the leader of the Punjab he cannot be suspected of disloyalty to the Lahore-based ideology of Pakistan.

A growing awareness of Nawaz Sharif's strength has made the military hyper-sensitive about its prestige. It is unhappy that it cannot prevent a former chief's trail for treason. The conviction of a former Navy chief for corruption did not bother the military. It would not mind perhaps Musharraf's trial for a crime of moral turpitude but his trial for violating the constitution is different. The military will be loath to give up its privilege to take liberties with the constitution. The military's handicap is that Nawaz Sharif is no rival on an away-from-home pitch, he is competitor with support in military's constituency. We may be witnessing what Hamza Alavi described as ambivalence in the relationship between political parties and the establishment, in the sense that they are allies and rivals at the same time.

Whatever the reasons that necessitated the grant of special status to the military they are fast losing their validity. While no sane citizen will deny Pakistan's need for a well-trained, efficient and disciplined army, under civilian control and with full rights to be consulted on matters of defence, it will be unfair to the military to burden it with the defence of the so called ideological frontiers.

Much confusion still prevails about the military's alleged resistance to normalization with India or moves towards a peaceful settlement on Kashmir. Pervez Musharraf claimed to be speaking for the military when he told A.G. Noorani, what he had been telling the world directly and through Khurshid Mahmud Kasuri, that the military had okayed his 4-point formula for accord with India.<sup>21</sup> It is difficult to believe there are no grey heads in the military who should want to end the strategy of confrontation.

The way the military seized the Hamid Mir/Geo affair to announce that it also has the backing of the public, including ulema, political parties, young persons, and even a large part of the media, does not reveal confidence in its strength. When Jammat-ud-Dawa has to blow off its cover and take to the streets in military's support the sign of desperation cannot be missed. Never before has the military acknowledged the need for public backing the way its Martyrs Day newspaper ad did.<sup>22</sup>

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<sup>21</sup> Hamza Alavi's paper 'Nationhood and Nationalities in Pakistan', *op.cit.*

<sup>22</sup> Babar Ayaz's, *What is wrong with Pakistan* and Dr. Moonis Ahmar's *Conflict management and Vision for a Secular Pakistan*, (OUP) are two recent works on the subject.

But where does the latest round of the intra-establishment tussle leave the people of Pakistan? Mian Nawaz Sharif is not the Messiah who can lead Pakistan out of the many crises it faces. He may have learnt much during his years in wilderness but what he has learnt may not be enough. Still, circumstances have placed him in a position to retrieve civilian politicians' powers. He may begin to wield an upper hand in the state structure, but he is unlikely to break with the military. Nor will he alienate the bureaucracy altogether despite his regime's penchant for reserving key posts for favourites. The regime will still need the state apparatus to keep the poor, the marginalized and the egalitarian forces at bay, even if the police can be told not to beat up women seeking recovery of missing persons. A new oligarchy, with a politician at its helm must replace the old one.

And this will continue until the people of Pakistan find a way to reclaim the state for refashioning it as a secular, socialist federation. Hamza Alavi identified the confused thinking on the national question as the main stumbling block to progress in that direction. That is the issue our intellectuals should address on priority basis. While one should be grateful to Dr Mubarak Ali, Prof. Tahir Kamran, Sh. Riaz Ahmed and Fiction House for the translation and publication of Hamza Alavi's path-breaking work in Urdu and the voices in support of secularism raised by Babar Ayaz, and most recently by Dr. Moonis Ahmar, are most welcome, nothing is more urgently needed today than a united political struggle by the oppressed people of all the federating units for the restitution of their rights to freedom, justice and equity. This is the only message that should go out from our meeting in remembrance of the great mind named Hamza Alavi.