

Military in Politics: How did the Military Consolidate its Power in Pakistan?

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Abstract

The military intervention in politics has been a common practice in Pakistan. Soon after the creation of the country, the successive weak civilian governments and their failures paved the way for military intervention. The military portrays itself as the panacea of all the problems in Pakistan by expanding its influence in all political and other non-professional sectors. The military's intervention in politics has helped the armed forces of Pakistan to consolidate their power through multiple strategies. This paper is an attempt to discuss and analyze the modus operandi of Pakistan military's consolidation of power in Pakistani society.

Introduction

There are armies that guard their nation's borders, there are those that are concerned with protecting their own position in society, and there are those that defend a cause or an idea. The Pakistan army does all three. Stephen Cohen.¹

After the independence and soon after the death of Quaid-i-Azam there emerged a power vacuum in the central administration. This power vacuum was exploited and sometimes filled by the most organized, disciplined and professional organization of Pakistan: the military. In our country, the military has been involved in the administration of the country throughout its existence, often rendering the duties of maintaining the law and order and playing a crucial role in the political economy of the country. It is the sole authority of the civilian government to formulate an effective defense policy by identifying the defense and security objectives of the state and to direct the military officials to make an action plan to execute that policy. In other words the defense ministry is the brain and the army constitutes the hands of the

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¹ Stephen P. Cohen, *The Pakistan Army* (California: University of California Press, 1984), p.105.

state to defend the country and to ensure the security and the survival of the state. As Pervez Iqbal Cheema holds ‘...Thus defense policy is primarily a political concern, whereas strategy is a military affair’.² But unfortunately in Pakistan this process happens to work in reverse order.

In Pakistan with the long spell of intermittent martial laws there emerged an opinion among the higher cadre of the military that its role should be acknowledged and validated in the domestic politics as well. The growing dissatisfaction of the common people with the politicians coincided with the public willingness to accept an extended role of the military. In this regard the military got this opportunity first in 1958 when General Ayub Khan imposed the first countrywide martial law in 1958. Mazhar Aziz argues,

Military interventions in Pakistan cannot be seen in isolation as a set of responses to political disorder, but also a manifestation of the military (and at least early civilian bureaucracy) leadership’s determination to challenge political forces seeking to dilute their influence within the political arena.³

After coming into the power echelons the military tried its best to be there for an extended and unlimited period and time has largely proved that it has been successful in gaining this objective. Since 1958 either covertly or overtly the military has remained in politics, and tried to extend its role, consolidate its power and maintain its hegemony over the state and the society in Pakistan.

Military’s involvement in politics: a conceptual explanation

According to Mazhar Aziz: ‘The perception of the military’s status within the polity probably flows from successive civilian governments’ reliance on the former for either performing tasks within the civil sphere or bailing out the civilian leadership from transient governmental crises,⁴ Military intervention in politics is a very common practice in the countries where the civilian governments are relatively weak and political leadership is comparatively inefficient especially in maintaining the law and order in the country. In such societies, the armed forces, being one of the major stakeholders of the state with the foremost duty to ensure the defense of the country from all possible dangers, consider

² Pervaiz Iqbal Cheema, *The Armed Forces of Pakistan*, Allen & Unwin, 2002, p.178.

³ Mazhar Aziz, *Military Control in Pakistan: The Parallel State* (NewYork: Routledge, 2008), p.59.

⁴ *Ibid.*

themselves as the guardian of the state and hence responsible for the security, survival and the development of the country. Ayesha Siddiqi asserts.

The defense establishment views itself as key to the security and integrity of the state, state building and socioeconomic development. This self-acquired role allows the armed forces to impose totalitarian control on the state and launch themselves into politics without any promise of a return to democracy.⁵

Usually the military intervenes in the national politics in many different ways. Among them ‘coup d’état’⁶ is the most commonly found practice. ‘A coup d’état probably originates from the military’s perception of either civilian mismanagement or perceived threat to the formers’ institutional interests from the latter’.⁷ Another familiar way of military intervention in politics is known as ‘praetorianism’.⁸ Military intervention in domestic politics has been common in the third world countries. The national political governments in their countries come across multiple problems which pose a greater threat to their security and survival. According to Hasan Askari Rizvi,

The political leadership of the new nations recognizes the need of maintaining strong and efficient armed forces to defend and protect the territorial integrity of the state from the actual or potential internal or external threats.⁹

In such societies military holds a very dominant status because of its organization, discipline, advancement in technology, moreover in the public image it is the savior of the nation and more organized and honest

⁵ Ayesha Siddiqi, *Military Inc: Inside Pakistan’s Military Economy* (Karachi: Oxford University Press, 2007), p.43.

⁶ A French word, which means, ‘a sudden and decisive change of government illegally or by force’.

⁷ Mazhar Aziz. *op.cit.*, p.45.

⁸ Originally descriptive of military rule in ancient Rome, the term now refers more generally to military intervention in politics. Modern praetorianism usually develops where political and social institutions have failed to provide a stable structure for channeling political participation and mediating social conflicts. In this context, civil society disintegrates and social groups begin to polarize. Military rule is often perceived as a solution to this crisis and can often temporarily command high levels of popular support. <http://social.jrank.org/pages/2689/praetorianism.html>">praetorianism m. (20/06/2011).

⁹ Hasan Askari Rizvi, *The Military & Politics in Pakistan 1947-1997* (Lahore: Sang e Meel Publications, 2000), p.20.

than most of the civilian institutions. It has been observed that once the military enters the domestic politics it aspires for the due acknowledgement and validation for its new role. For this purpose it first attempts to get a de jure status for its illegal and unconstitutional actions and then strives for the consolidation of its power in the national political arena through a policy reforms in social, political and economic spheres of the society. After enjoying corridors of power, the military rarely likes to go back to its barracks. And if it happens it never likes to cut its link from the national politics completely, rather it continues to intervene in the civilian affairs by influencing the political authorities by pulling their strings either in a direct or indirect manner.

Military and politics in Pakistan: historical background

The post Second World War period witnessed a process of decolonization across the world. This process of decolonization led to the beginning of national independence movements in many colonies. The colonial powers, devastated by the catastrophe of the war, were neither ready nor able to bear the burden of their colonies anymore, were left with no other option but to give independence to them. Going through their independence movements the colonies were not fully prepared to manage themselves with the departure of the colonial power. Pakistan emerged on the world map in 1947 with this same background. Immediately after gaining independence the country was caught into the quagmire of severe political and economic problems coupled with the sudden demise of its founder. Consequently, the subsequent political governments found it really difficult to run the administration of post independence country with lots of problems. Therefore, soon they realized that the most organized and the strongest institutions they have are those which are trained by the colonial masters, i.e. the military and the bureaucracy, and the feeblest and inefficient institution was of political leadership which was not well adept in statecraft and running the administration of the country. Stephen P. Cohen, a renowned scholar describes the military intervention in politics in Pakistan as,

The army's relationship with the political process can be characterized as a five-step dance. First, the army warns what it regards as incompetent or foolish civilians. Second, a crisis leads to army intervention, which is followed by the third step: attempts to 'straighten out' Pakistan, often by introducing major constitutional changes. Fourth, the army, faced with growing civilian discontent, 'allows' civilians

back into office, and fifth, the army reasserts itself behind a façade of civilian government, and the cycle repeats itself.¹⁰

So, the country because of lack of strong and competent leadership and other multiple problems, fell a prey to the military-bureaucratic collusion, and faced its first martial law in 1958 imposed by General Ayub Khan. The second country wide martial law was imposed by General Yahya Khan in 1969, third one by General Zia-ul-Haq in 1977 and the fourth (may not be the last one) by General Pervez Musharraf in 1999. Hence,

Wherever the social and political conditions deteriorated and an ambitious general was at hand, the country went through a period of military rule. The bureaucracy, claiming to be the natural rulers, found it convenient to function for the military much as they had done for their colonial masters.¹¹

Consolidation of power

Pakistan military did not face any hindrance in consolidating its power in the country. Whenever it came in power no matter in what circumstances, it tried to consolidate its power through all available means ranging from legal, constitutional to political or brutal. The consolidation of military power and hegemony over the entire state and society was the basic and crucial aim of all the martial law administrators, for which they adopted various strategies, tactics and ways either one by one, or simultaneously.

Legal and constitutional means

Since 1958 when the first martial law was imposed in Pakistan, all the military rulers tried to justify their illegal and unconstitutional act. For this purpose they strived to acquire a legal blanket from the highest judiciary i.e. the Supreme Court of Pakistan. Ironically every time this legal covering was provided to them by the apex court. In 1958 when Ayub Khan consulted the higher judiciary to legalize his illegal act, the then Chief Justice, Justice Munir upheld his martial law and laws (Continuance in Force) Order 1958, with the judgment that held that,

A victorious revolution and a successful coup d'état is an internationally recognized legal method of changing a constitution (via Hans Kelsen, General Theory of Law and

¹⁰ Stephen P. Cohen, *The Idea of Pakistan* (Washington, D.C.: Brookings Institution Press, 2004), p.124.

¹¹ Asghar Khan, *We Have Learnt Nothing from History* (Karachi: Oxford University Press, 2005), p.8.

State, 1954) and that , after a change of that character has taken place, the national legal order must for its validity depend upon the new law-creating organ.¹²

After justifying his action Ayub Khan consolidated the military hegemony on the state and the society by promulgating the constitution of 1962. This constitution was his brainchild and was aimed to consolidate his power. It provided a highly centralized system and was aimed just to ‘presidentialize’ the whole system of the government, which is evident from the remarks of former Prime Minister of Pakistan, Mr. Chaudhry Mohammad Ali, who stated that, ‘The constitution of 1962 provided a government in Pakistan which is ‘a government of the president, by the president and for the president.’¹³ Moreover, this constitution also created a unique constitutional civilian role to a soldier that allowed him to take the political decisions with a portfolio in the defense ministry. Article 238 of the constitution provided that for the ‘first twenty years after the commencement of the constitution, the ministry of Defense should be entrusted to a person who had held a rank not lower than Lieutenant General in the army, or equivalent rank in the navy or the air force’.¹⁴

General Yahya Khan imposed the second countrywide martial law in Pakistan in 1969, though on the advice of Ayub Khan who deliberately handed over the power to a military general instead of a politician, which clearly indicates the total violation of his own constitution. He did not imply any constitutional or legal mean for the change of the government, rather ‘the underlying ignominious idea behind the whole exercise was to perpetuate the monopoly over the coercive levers of the state of the top echelons of the military and civil bureaucracy’.¹⁵ Like his predecessor Yahya Khan also consolidated his power through legal means by introducing the Legal Framework Order (LFO). LFO noticeably usurped the legislative powers of the parliament. As Maluka opines,

...it was an open expression of the junta’s ‘distrust’ in the constitution-making ability of the elected representatives of the people...the junta bound the elected representatives in the steel frame of the LFO to legislate only within its

¹² Zulfiqar Khalid Maluka, *The Myth of Constitutionalism in Pakistan* (Karachi: Oxford University Press, 1995), p.174.

¹³ *Dawn*, 2 April 1963, quoted in *ibid.*, p.185.

¹⁴ Hasan Askari Rizvi, *op.cit.*, p.128.

¹⁵ Zulfiqar Khalid Maluka, *op.cit.*, p.207.

preconceived parameters of constitutionalism and federalism in the country.¹⁶

After Yahya Khan, the next military ruler was General Zia-ul-Haq, who also consolidated his rule by all the available legal and constitutional options. This time the Supreme Court once again came in front with the legal blanket to cover the illegitimate action of the military dictator by upholding the decision of the federal government through the judgment based on the argument that, 'The actions taken on 5 July 1977 were not the usurpation of power but were intended to oust the usurper who had illegally assumed power'.¹⁷ Given by Sharifuddin Pirzada and A.K. Brohi (representatives of Chief Martial Law Administrator (CMLA) and the Federation of Pakistan). This judgment of the Supreme Court, based on the law of necessity, held that 'the new regime was only for a limited purpose and it represented 'a phase of constitutional deviation' dictated by necessity'.¹⁸ Zia-ul-Haq, after getting the de jure status for his rule further strengthened his position by introducing the Provisional Constitutional Order (PCO) and the notorious Eighth Amendment to the Constitution of 1973. Through PCO the CMLA got the authority to legislate and amend the constitution of the country. This was an unprecedented act of the military ruler to breach the law of the land by grabbing both the powers of the legislature and the judiciary. As under the PCO oath the judges were deprived of the right to make the jurisdiction against the members of the armed forces and martial law authorities. Likewise, through the Eighth Amendment the military dictator turned president got the right and power to clip the wings of democracy. This amendment was to strengthen the office of the president who in practice proved to serve the interests of the military.

Similarly the military takeover of General Pervez Musharraf was also supported and justified by the constitutional wizards in the Supreme Court. He too used the tool of Legal Framework Order (LFO) to facilitate and strengthen his rule. Like his predecessor, General Musharraf also introduced a constitutional amendment, i.e. the Seventeenth Amendment, to consolidate his power even after donning off the uniform of army chief. This amendment was to repeal the Thirteenth Amendment in order to revive the Eighth Amendment. Through this constitutional amendment Musharraf not only consolidated his power but also tried to strengthened the power of the military in the political sphere of the country. Though this amendment was not fully

¹⁶ *Ibid.*, p.214.

¹⁷ *Ibid.*, p.259.

¹⁸ *Ibid.*

implemented, its resonance shook the confidence of the democratic entities of the state till the passage of the Eighteenth Amendment by the elected regime of Pakistan Peoples' Party (PPP) in 2008.

Support of common people

The archival records prove that whenever the military came in to power in Pakistan common people always welcomed it. Actually whenever the political leadership failed to provide the needs of the people, the law and order situation got chaotic, and people lost their hope in political government they looked towards the military as 'the savior' not only of their lives but of their future as well. The controversial political performance of the military did not stop their future involvement. Every time, when military came in power, the people turned their eyes towards the army to save them from the filthy politics, corruption, uncertainties and bleak future. The main reason for this attitude can be traced back to the history and the tradition of our society.

Traditionally the military generals and soldiers have been looked with honor and pride by the common people. Tariq bin Ziyad, Mohammad Bin Qasim or Mehmood Ghaznavi are some names which can be cited here as the example of those military generals who became rulers and have been considered as the great heroes in our society. In addition to that the laudable role of Pakistan military at the time of independence and the Kashmir war in 1948, has gained an enormous prestige and pride for it among the people. Amid all other factors the fear of an external enemy present at the immediate borders of the sacred homeland, led the people of Pakistan to understand and acknowledge the need of a strong army. This fear was stimulated by the hostile attitude of India towards Pakistan and was further aggravated by the war of 1948 over Kashmir. At that time the general public realized the importance of a strong army to ensure the security not only of the physical borders of the country but also of the ideological ones.

The strong religious fervor coupled with nationalism helped to maintain the image of the military as an institution dedicated to a sacred cause. Pakistan was established to defend and promote the Islamic culture and civilization. Its survival, it was claimed, was essential for the survival of Islamic culture and civilization in the sub-continent... Therefore the political and religious leaders claimed, the defense of Pakistan was the defense of Islam.¹⁹

¹⁹ *Ibid.*, p.59.

So, whenever the lives, property, ideology or the future of the masses got jeopardized by any domestic or external threat they looked towards the military to save them. Every time when the political corruption, failure of civilian government and ambitious generals coincided, the result was the takeovers of the military, which were required, desired and welcomed by the society and therefore remained unopposed and unchallenged. Moreover, after assuming and strengthening the power, though supported by the common people, To keep the public at their side it becomes necessary for the military rulers to justify their acts morally. For this, as described by Hasan Askari Rizvi,

They take certain steps to reform the social and political structure and introduce measures to improve the living conditions of the common man...they successfully created the impression that they had assumed power to eradicate the evils which had crept into the economic, social and political life of Pakistan during the last years and they wanted to introduce a system of government which suited the peculiar conditions and the circumstances of the country.²⁰

In this regard in 1953, the army for the first time got the opportunity to run the civilian administration in Pakistan in response to the riots of the anti Ahmedia movement in Lahore. It was the first martial law (though just in a single city) and was heartily welcomed by the general public. It is said that,

The brief period of martial law gave the army a valuable experience of performing the duties of civil government. It also created an impression in the minds of the public that the army could restore peace and effective government when all other devices had failed.²¹

In 1958 when Ayub Khan came in power, the people had lost their hopes in the civilian government and political leadership. They had found and realized that in this utter chaos and instability, the military of Pakistan is the only organized, integrated and well disciplined institution whose primary task is to protect the nation from all types of internal and external threats. So after gaining the legal validation for his rule Ayub Khan's next step was to acquire the moral justification for his action. For this he introduced the social, political, educational and economic reforms in the society. Because of all these steps he was able to rule the country for next eleven years. Though he successfully completed the eleven years of rule, he had to leave the throne. He was forced to resign from power

²⁰ *Ibid.*, p.84.

²¹ *Ibid.* p.75.

not because he was a military ruler rather just due to the fact that he had become a dictator. His ouster from rule was the direct result of the popular movements but these movements were not against the military as an organization, rather were against Ayub Khan in person. Therefore, this was the reason why General Yahya Khan's martial law was not hindered by any political or social group or organization. Here it can be argued that, since 1958, the military had so consolidated its power that change of the persons did not lead to the change of the system. In the same way when Zia-ul-Haq assumed the power as the as CMLA, the military once again entered the corridors of power with much vigor and enthusiasm. Likewise his predecessors, Zia's martial law was also legalized and pampered by the higher judiciary, welcomed by the common people and consolidated by the ones who always like to hang on to power.

After Zia-ul-Haq, the next military ruler in Pakistan, General Pervez Musharraf was also supported and heartily welcomed by the common people. Once again the prevailing circumstances of the country, either tailored or natural led the public to look towards the military as the only 'savior of the state'. These crucial circumstances coincided with the fortunate or unfortunate event of 'The Hijacking Drama'.²² Through this dramatic event, Musharraf got undue and overwhelming support and sympathies of the common people, who not only welcomed his illegal military coup, deposition of the elected Prime Minister and violation of the constitution, but also thanked him for saving the country's dignity from the filthy and corrupted government of a democratic leader. Ironically, every time whenever people get fed up of a political leader, they look towards the military to rescue them from all politicians, but whenever they get exhausted with the dictatorial rule of a general, they do not get disappointed from the whole military as an organization.

Support of military fraternity

In addition to all other factors mentioned above the martial laws were also and always supported by the military fraternity. The armed forces in Pakistan share a very unique type of harmony and compatibility. No matter how much the top cadre is at contrast over certain opinions with the junior ranks, the latter will all extend their unconditional support to them in all circumstances. During the days when martial laws became inevitable the demand for a positive change first emerged from the rank and files of the army. They not only helped their seniors in imposing

²² Pervez Musharraf, *In the Line of Fire* (London: Simon & Schuster, 2006), p.99.

their rule over the state but also rendered their undue services in consolidating the power of the military in the country to a greater extent. In 1958 when the political instability, corruption, chaos and anarchy prevailed in the society and common people lost their hope in the political leadership, the military itself felt to control the situation by intervening in politics. It, inter alia, had observed the examples of different countries in the near past, where military takeovers took place mainly because of political upheavals, e.g. in 'Egypt (1952), Iraq (July 1958) and Burma (September 1958)'.²³ Moreover they also had the urge to clean the mess of politicians, to control the situation and to bring peace and stability in the country.

The impotence of the political leadership and general corruption in the society as compared with the well integrated and disciplined organization of the armed forces and their role in maintenance of law and order led to a perception amongst the higher military command that it was they who had to maintain law and order and keep the state intact. General Ayub Khan was under constant pressure from different circle in the army to check political turmoil in the country.²⁴

Furthermore in order to get the support from its fraternity for the consolidation of their power, martial law administrators always appoint military officers on the key posts of the civil administration, which range from national ministries to the provincial governors, even to the vice chancellors of the universities. This is just to facilitate the martial law regime and to consolidate the power of the military in the society.

Military-bureaucracy & military-feudal nexus

There exists a consensus among social scientists on the fact that a nexus of civil and military bureaucracy always dominated the state and its policies in Pakistan, though the internal balance and equilibrium of the nexus underwent numerous ups and down in the last fifty years.²⁵

The political cycle in Pakistan can be best understood by identifying a 'Power Triangle' of the military, bureaucracy and the feudals. The interaction of these power centers has been determining the political destiny of the nation. Any change in the alliance within this triangle marks the change in the existing political structure. Military and

²³ Hasan Askari Rizvi, *op.cit.*, p.71.

²⁴ *Ibid.*

²⁵ Syed Jaffar Ahmed, 'Defeating Independence: Genesis of Authoritarianism in Pakistan', *Pakistan Perspective* (Karachi), II:2 (December, 1997), p.92.

bureaucracy have been the power contender, whereas the feudals play the role of a balancer in tilting the power equilibrium. This also explains why feudalism in Pakistan could not be uprooted and Pakistan remained the only feudal country in the world. Due to this power nexus between the feudals, bureaucracy and the military, the military has been successfully intervening in the politics of Pakistan.

Soon after the independence, Pakistan fell prey to the bureaucracy of the country. After the death of Quaid-i-Azam and Liaquat Ali Khan, the reins of power were held by Malik Ghulam Muhammad who was a former bureaucrat and did not have any desire for democracy. After assuming power he tried to consolidate his own rule in the country by his tyrannical policies. He is the person who introduced the state bureaucracy to the power corridors in Pakistan. Though he got the ruling authority he lacked the skills to run the government efficiently. He and his cabinet were heavily dependent upon the civil servants to execute the administration and on the military to control the law and order situation. The military being an organized safeguard of the country never showed their back to any government to maintain peace, law and order in the country.

Their role in the ‘non-military’ field gave them experience to handle civilian problems and exposed the incompetence of the civil government. With the passage of time the dependence of the civilian government on the military increased.²⁶

At this time the central administration of the country was predominantly occupied by the bureaucrats and the feudals especially from Punjab. And so was the composition of military in Pakistan. This ethnic commonality helped to build a nexus between military and bureaucracy and the military and feudal in the early 1950s. Lawrence Ziring therefore, states: ‘...most of the important political decisions after Liaquat Ali Khan’s death were conceived and executed by the ‘Punjabi-Bureaucratic elite’.²⁷ The rule of Ghulam Muhammad marked many important changes in the political system of the country. During his regime the state bureaucracy and the military came closer to each other. They, as the two dominant forces formed a nexus to rule the country. So with this background

²⁶ Hasan Askari Rizvi, *op.cit.*, p.67.

²⁷ Lawrence Ziring, *The Failure of Democracy in Pakistan: East Pakistan and the Central Government*, Unpublished Ph.D thesis, New York, Columbia University, pp.116-18. Quoted in Saeed Shafqat, *Civil-Military Relations in Pakistan; from Zulfikar Ali Bhutto to Benazir Bhutto* (Boulder, Colorado: West view Press, 1997), p.28.

whenever the military got the chance to come in power it was always supported by the bureaucracy and the feudals of the state. Here it can be argued that the augmented power of civil and military bureaucracy and the decline of the political leadership and their parties are directly proportional to each other and the direct result of the 'success of bureaucratic-military elites in preempting their control of key governmental positions'.²⁸

In order to strengthen its rule and consolidate its power the military adopted a policy of co-option of the feudals of the country. It was a policy that recognized and acknowledged the dominant position of the feudal class in the civil society and reflected the fact that the majority of the military officers belong to this class. The military also believed that the feudals have the legitimate right to hold the power in their hands. This recognition of the rights of the feudal was based on the fact that they were the only and legitimate power holders in the rural areas of Pakistan where the military wanted to spread its tentacles in order to grab the land and resources which would be helpful for its extended power. On the other hand the feudal needed a strong central authority that could patronize them and secure their interest. Thus, the combined interests of both the entities brought them closer to each other. In this regard, whenever the military came in power it did not challenge the supremacy of the feudals especially in rural areas, and consequently all the CMLAs ruled the country without any significant opposition from the feudal class. To prove this argument the example of Ayub Khan's land reform can be cited here. A close analysis of these land reforms (introduced in 1959) makes it clear that they did not challenge the hegemony and authority of the feudal lords. They did not shatter the power of feudalism through any significant land distribution plan. This was the co-option of the feudal classes by the military regime. Appointment of feudal lords in the key positions during the military regimes can also be taken as the examples of this military-feudal nexus. This nexus continued in the practice during all the military regimes. All the CMLAs had identified the importance of the close alliance with the bureaucracy and the feudals of the country. Though in these alliances the military kept both of them in the subordinate position but, in some areas, they were given an equal status as well. Like in Musharraf's regime bureaucracy and the feudals worked hand in hands with the military especially in the economic sector to generate the maximum capital by exploiting the state resources equally.

²⁸ *Ibid.*, p.32.

Setting its foot on the economy of the state

*The most impressive result of more than forty years of dominance over the state apparatus has been the military establishment's extensive tentacles throughout the economy. Each of the three defense services in Pakistan has trusts and foundations with large investments in the national economy.*²⁹ Ayesha Jalal

After involving it self in politics, the military started to spread its tentacles to capture the economy of the country. This shift in the strategy to grab economic power marked the deviation of military from its primary duties, and consequently affected its professionalism. This process marked the beginning of the different businesses and ventures run by the military, usually covertly, which enhanced the military's internal economy. For this internal economy of the military Dr. Ayesha Siddiqa, has coined the term 'Milbus'. She defines Milbus as,

...military capital used for the personal benefits of the military fraternity, especially the official cadre, which is not recorded as part of the defense budget or does not follow the normal accountability procedures of the state, making it an independent genre of capital.³⁰

In Pakistan the Milbus started with the moving of the military in politics in 1958. Ayub Khan's economic and industrial reforms were an attempt to consolidate the power of military in these important sectors of the government. Although it had started in Pakistan in early 1960s, Milbus did not grow rapidly or significantly during this period. It was in the late 1970s, after the imposition of the third countrywide martial law, when military formally and more efficiently started to enhance its economic interests. It is aptly said: 'With political and administrative roles and interest, the civil and military bureaucracy emerged as a key and entrenched entity in the economy'.³¹ To protect and expand the military's economic interests Zia-ul-Haq suggested the establishment of the National Security Council (NSC), which was aimed to institutionalize the political and economic role of the military.

²⁹ Ayesha Jalal, *Democracy and Authoritarianism in South Asia; A Comparative and Historical Perspective* (Lahore: Sang-e-Meel Publications, 1995), p.143.

³⁰ Ayesha Siddiqa, *Military Inc: Inside Pakistan's Military Economy*, op.cit., p.5.

³¹ Syed Akbar Zaidi, 'State, Military and Social Transition: Improbable Future of Democracy in Pakistan', *Pakistan Perspectives*, 11:1 (Jan-June 2006), p.43.

Today the internal economy of Pakistan military is so extensive and deep rooted that it has made the military one of the key and significant economic players and has consolidated its political power to an extent which cannot be shaken or threatened. For this Dr. Ayesha Siddiqi argues,

...the economic stakes of the military elite and their financial autonomy played a vital role in persuading them to push for an independent status for the organization. The independent economic power not only enhanced the sense of superiority, thus, the political and economic independence is a lethal combination in an army known for its 'Bonpartist' tendencies.³²

Wiping out the political opposition

In Pakistan all the military regimes adopted the policies of depoliticization in order to wipe out any obstacle in the way of consolidation of their power in the society. Military knew the fact that their entrance in the power corridors was mainly due to the exit of the political leadership and civilian authority because of their incompetency, corruption and weaknesses. Thus '...The organization considers itself the sole judge of national interests. Civilians are frowned upon as incompetent, insincere, corrupt and driven by greed'.³³ So to remain in power and to extend their stay in the power corridors it became essential for Pakistan military either to keep the politicians out of the main stream politics or to keep them under strong checks. For this purpose right from 1958, when the first military regime was set up in the country, many policies and attempts were adopted by the military rulers to keep the politicians out of the power corridors and away from the decision making bodies. In preventing of such coercive policies of political exclusion the first attempt was made by General Ayub Khan, after coming in power he introduced the draconian laws of Public Offices Disqualification Order(PODO) and Elective Bodies Disqualification Order(EBDO), these laws were against the bureaucrats and the politicians respectively. Under these laws, on charges of misconduct, corruption or malpractices many bureaucrats were removed from their services and many politicians were declared disqualified for elections and expelled out of the political arena. Though in theory these laws were aimed to clean the mess of the parliamentary system and to eradicate the evils of the corruption and

³² Ayesha Siddiqi, *Military Inc: Inside Pakistan's Military Economy*, op.cit., p.20.

³³ *Ibid.*, p.61.

mismanagement from the country, in practice Ayub Khan introduced these laws to expel the politicians from the ruling authority. He, in fact, wanted to be the sole person in authority and as a key player in politics. Consequently, 'upon such repressive measures, many prominent politicians were either disqualified or made to retire from public life 'voluntarily'.³⁴

After Ayub Khan all the successive military rulers continued such coercive policies of political exclusion just to strengthen their rule and validate the supremacy and the hegemony of the military in the mainstream politics. Zia-ul-Haq was, however, much ahead of his forerunners in this regard. Besides implementing the most coercive policies against the politicians and the military control over the media and education, he used the constitution to support his policies of political exclusion. Thus he introduced the notorious Eighth Amendment which was to empower the president (the position he was going to sit on after lifting the martial law in 1985) and to cut the wings of democracy by dissolving the national assembly which was an elected body of the politicians. After Zia-ul-Haq, though this amendment was used by the civilian presidents against the civilian elected governments, everybody knows that behind the hands of these civilian presidents the brain and interests of the military was working. Thus the Eighth Amendment strengthened the power of military in an indirect way.

Similarly when General Pervez Musharraf came to power he also had the same old ambitions of the military elite to consolidate its power furthermore. He proved to be the another efficient military ruler who countered all the challenges to his plans of consolidating military power, crushed all types of evils and wiped out all the hurdles in his way, no matter whether they were the chief Justice of the Supreme Court or the popular movements for the restoration of democracy. Though he came to power through the back doors, i.e. ousting elected Prime Minister from his office, he had him sent to exile and grabbed all political power in his own hands. With this power he continued to rule for a long period of nine years. Thus, the political exclusion and the policy of coercion has proved as a successful tool to consolidate the military rule in Pakistan.

Social & political reforms & public services

Besides fighting wars, Pakistan's armed forces are involved in multiple activities within the borders of the country, ranging from building roads, catching electricity thieves, running commercial ventures and weeding out corruption to

³⁴ Zulfikar Khalid Maluka, *op.cit.*, p.179.

running the state. The military considers itself as an alternative institution capable of contributing to socioeconomic and political development. Infact, such a role is now seen as part of the primary role of providing military security.³⁵

A study of all the periods of martial laws in Pakistan reveals that after attaining the de jure status for their rule and to gain support from the society, all the CMLAs moved towards the process of introducing social reforms and public services, in order to acquire more strength and consolidation of their rule for a longer period. In this regard the first CMLA General Ayub Khan introduced the system of Basic Democracies (BD) and land reforms. For the first time in the history of Pakistan, the BD system of Ayub Khan devolved the power to the grass roots level and people got to cherish the authority of local self government. Ayub Khan's BD system was aimed to develop an effective political system with a broad based decision making authority but unfortunately this system could not make a real difference and failed to integrate a wider section of the society. However, irrespective of the actual designs of Ayub Khan and the real consequences of this system, the general public welcomed and supported the military rule for a long period of ten years with many successful and unsuccessful social, educational, political and administrative reforms.

Though General Yahya Khan did not get much time for the introduction of public services and reforms, he just got the opportunity to consolidate his rule through the Legal Framework Order (LFO). After him, General Zia-ul-Haq, the next CMLA, took one leap forward from his predecessors by introducing religious reforms with social and political ones. It is said that,

On assuming power General Zia-ul-Haq conveyed the image of political novice and a reluctant ruler, but in reality very cautiously and carefully consolidated personal power. In his opening speech, after the takeover he extended two reasons for military's intervention. First, the country was on the threshold of civil war. Secondly, Islam had not been effectively put into practice in Pakistani society.³⁶

After Zia's regime, General Musharraf superseded his forerunners in acquiring the people's support. Like all the military rulers he also came in power from the back doors and sought a legal justification, but very

³⁵ Ayesha Siddiqa, *Military Inc: Inside Pakistan's Military Economy*, op.cit., p.64.

³⁶ Saeed Shafqat, op.cit., p.189.

soon he penetrated among the ranks and files of the society through his policies of enlightened moderation, independent media, enhanced women's participation in politics and devolution plan etc. This was all to consolidate his rule and to enhance the military hegemony over the state and the society. In short it can be argued that in order to provide a validation to their rule and to consolidate their power, all the military rulers introduced a number of measures which can be described as follows:

- a. step to eradicate corruption, nepotism in civil service, black marketing, smuggling and similar evils in the society.
- b. measure to ensure economic development, industrialization and better standards of living to the people.
- c. A political framework for the future.³⁷

Help of foreign powers

Many scholars and historians believe that all the military coups in Pakistan were either helped or encouraged by foreign powers, specially the United States, which has great strategic interests in the South Asia, in general, and in Pakistan, in particular, and the military was the only viable institution that has the strength to safeguard its interests there. Many scholars and historians believe that Pakistan military's political strength is directly proportional to the massive foreign support and aid it received in terms of weapon technology and strategic cooperation. These relations built an alignment which is mutually beneficial for the military and the donor country. This 'rentier character'³⁸ (as it is termed by Ayesha Siddiqa) of Pakistan military, is generally responsible for the augmented political influence of the institution.

Among all the influential powers of the world Pakistan has been very much close to the USA and this Pak – USA link was established soon after the creation of the country. After some time this link was transformed into a partnership with an aid and assistance programme and then turned into an alliance with the inclusion of Pakistan in 1954/55 into the US sponsored military alliances against communism in the region, viz. South Asian Treaty Organization (SEATO) and Central Treaty Organization (CENTO). In 1958 Pakistan experienced its first martial law at the hands of General Ayub Khan and it is usually believed it was not without the encouragement or due acknowledgment of USA. It is understood that USA has massive strategic interests in Pakistan mainly

³⁷ Hasan Askari Rizvi, *op.cit.*, p.84.

³⁸ Ayesha Siddiqa, *Military Inc: Inside Pakistan's Military Economy, opcit.*, p.66.

because of its geography (being a neighbour of China, Middle East and Central Asia) and all these interests and massive US aid has been at the expense of the country's political stability and social cohesion. 'US military assistance appears to be a contributing factor in undermining civilian elements and increasing the incidence of Praetorianism in the less developed areas of the world'.³⁹ However it is an irony that irrespective of the fact that the USA is the champion of the cause of democracy and rhetorically has always been condemning all the military coups, it has been very much close and comfortable while working with the military rather than democratic governments in Pakistan. It is generally observed that during all military regimes, Pakistan emerged as the 'client state'⁴⁰ of the USA, particularly at the time of active US-Pakistan military collaboration (in 1971, during Afghan *jihād*, post 9/11), some Pakistanis have referred to the American ambassadors as a 'viceroy'.⁴¹ Besides that USA, China, UK and Saudi Arabia are those countries who, though have been frowning upon the military coups in Pakistan, worked with the military regimes very amicably and without any severe consequences.

Conclusion

In Pakistan the military has penetrated very deeply in politics and it appears seems a very difficult task to really send it back to the barracks. Military has evolved itself as a class of ruling elite which has its stakes not only in the socio-political set up but also in economy of the country. What should be done to disengage it at least from the political sphere, is a big question in front of all the scholars and the policy makers. It can be argued that only the principles of democracy and the electoral process can be of help for the civilian stakeholders to control the armed forces and can break the hegemony of the military in Pakistan. In the countries that have gone through a proper democratic culture like India, and many other countries as well, the military is involved in politics and capital generation but it is either from the subordinate level or is in partnership with the civil society. Here political forces are powerful enough to call the military in the hours of the need and can also send it back to its

³⁹ Edward Thomas Rowe, 'Aids and Coups d' Etat: Aspects of the Impact of American Military Assistance Programmes in the Less Developed Countries', *International Studies Quarterly*, 18:2 1974, p.253, given at [URL:http://www.jstor.org/stable/2600307](http://www.jstor.org/stable/2600307) accessed on 12/06/2011.

⁴⁰ Philip Oldenburg, *India, Pakistan and Democracy: Solving the Puzzle of Divergent Paths* (New York: Routledge, 2010), p.164.

⁴¹ *Ibid.*

barracks to perform only its traditional duties. The importance of the military in a 'security centered' country like Pakistan, cannot be underestimated but the need of the time is that the role of military should be supervised by the democratic governments and should be well controlled by the constitution.