

The Shift of Power from the Public Representatives to the Bureaucratic and Military Elite: Case Study of the First Decade of Pakistan

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Abstract

A combination of military coups with irregular intervals and failed democratic governments has underpinned Pakistan's chronic instability. This paper explores the impediments in the path of democracy in Pakistan caused by the entanglement of institutions. The basic democratic principles, on which the movement for the creation of Pakistan was launched and succeeded, were lost within the first decade of independence. Several scholars hold that the people of Pakistan got liberated from the British and Hindu majority to be enslaved by socio-political and military elite. The failure of politicians in devising a viable political system resulted in the bureaucratic-military nexus as they made every effort to curb parliamentary politics. Musical chair game of power became the norm of the day which resulted in the decay of democracy and other institutions. Unlike its counterpart, Indian National Congress, Muslim League due to weak and loose political organization, failed miserably in areas constituting Pakistan which prevented it in playing a consolidating role. Moreover, the threats from India and Afghanistan forced the political leadership to invest heavily in security to deter Indian and Afghan threats. In fact, it was the imbalance between the civil and military components of the state, which became the key reason behind the political chaos in Pakistan during its first decade. The Army emerged as an overwhelming force overpowering all other institutions in the country. Democratic ideals such as rule of people through their representatives, fair representation and provincial autonomy, pronounced in the 1940 Lahore Resolution, were soon forgotten. Weak democratic forces could not compete with the skilled bureaucracy and a powerful army. Such chaotic conditions proved instrumental in leading to the proclamation of the first Martial Law in Pakistan.

Introduction

If one looks at the Pakistan's experience of democratic governance in its seven decades of existence, would find the paradoxes and complexities,

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intermingled in such a manner that one would feel the necessity to assess the subject in historical perspective. For most part of its history, Pakistan has been searching for its national identity. Nationalistic, regional and religious forces have been vying for grabbing power since its creation. The argument given by All India Muslim League, a party including Western educated Muslim elite and spearheading the struggle for Pakistan, was that Muslims of the subcontinent, on account of their religion, customs, norms and nomenclature, constituted a nation distinct from the majority Hindu community and other religious communities of India. Therefore, they were entitled to a separate, independent and sovereign state. As a result of its movement in 1947 Pakistan appeared on the world map. Pakistan had to face innumerable problems as a nascent state e.g., settlement of refugees, demarcation of boundaries, annexation of princely states, and division of assets between India and Pakistan.

On the other hand the internal political dynamics posed very serious challenges. The central government faced difficulties from all corners of Pakistan. Such as, Sindh raised its voice against declaration of Karachi as the national capital. Bengal showed its determination to make Bengali the national language of Pakistan. The NWFP (KPK today) government did not agree to accede to Pakistan rather it asked for the third option to be independent instead of joining the federation of Pakistan or India; a demand that was not accepted and the province was merged with Pakistan through a referendum. Punjab was irritated due to the heavy influx of refugees. In this situation the political solidarity was challenged and fragmentation occurred. To put all components to work as a federation was an uphill task requiring an iron will and determination. To add to the miseries, came the sad demise of the Father of the Nation, Quaid-i-Azam Muhammad Ali Jinnah in 1948, just one year after the creation of country. Jinnah might have helped realizing consensus among the diverse political and provincial interests, a job he had been doing before independence as well, as an author recorded:

Jinnah's genius was to recognize the realities and divisions in Muslim Society and to forge what in fact approximated a marriage of convenience between the Muslim professional classes of the Hindu dominated areas and the landlords of the future Pakistan region.¹

¹ Ian Talbot, *Pakistan a Modern History* (London: Hurst and Company, 1998), 10.

Initial difficulties faced by Pakistan

It is necessary to analyze the events of the early years after the creation of Pakistan since these events give an insight about the modes of governance, planning, strategies, and the priorities adopted by Pakistani state. The events of the first decade cast their shadows on the forthcoming decades, too. There were several issues which needed urgent attention but resources needed for them were very little. The disputes over accession of princely states, division of assets and water at the time of partition, settlement of refugees, demarcation of boundaries between the two countries, together increased anxieties about Pakistan's precarious geographical situation in relation to its much larger neighbor, India. Pakistan, however, was by no means a small country as it had inherited 23 percent of the landmass of undivided India and 18 per cent of the population.² Since the developed industrial areas such as Bombay, Ahmedabad, Calcutta and the West Bengal/Bihar were left in India so, Pakistan had to start everything from scratch. Not only deprived of industrial zones, there was also a sense of strategic deficit as East Pakistan was separated from West Pakistan by 1000 miles of India. Karachi was chosen as the capital of Pakistan. The long physical and emotional distance from Karachi and later from Islamabad enhanced the sense of deprivation and alienation in the minds of the residents of East Pakistan—the majority wing. Bengal's Chief Minister Aaur Rahman Khan said in 1956:

I feel a particular sensation when I come from Decca to Karachi. I feel physically, apart from mental feeling that I am living here in a foreign country. I did not feel as much when I went to Zurich, to Geneva or London, much as I feel here in my own country that I am in a foreign land.³

Pakistan's north-western borders were vulnerable to attacks from hostile Afghanistan as Pakistan had refused to accept the 19th century Anglo Afghan Durand Line. Moreover, Afghanistan also vetoed the proposed Pakistan's entry to the United Nations. Amid such chaos and confusion both British and Congress leaders were hesitant to believe that Pakistan would survive. The reason was simple: it was Pakistan's scarce economic resources to cope with the challenges which led to believe leaders like Sardar Patel and Pundit Jawaharlal Nehru that sooner or later reunification will occur on Congress's terms and condition of

² Ayesha Jalal, *Democracy and Authoritarianism in South Asia* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1995), 24.

³ I.H. Malik, *State, and Civil Society in Pakistan, Politics of Authority, Ideology and Ethnicity* (Basingstoke: Macmillan, 1987), 63.

centralization.⁴ The combination of Indian threat and hostile Afghanistan pushed Pakistan to focus closely on her defense. Pakistan's defense pacts with US in the form of SEATO and CENTO testify the transformation of Pakistan into a security state rather than a welfare one in the very first decade of its life.

Refugees and their rehabilitation

In the newly created state of Pakistan, trained and skilled civil servants, particularly the district officers were very few who could cope with the situation. Neither, the Pakistani government officials were prepared for the mass migration, nor they were expecting violence and massacre. Indian leadership was optimistic that soon Muslims would come to their senses and regret their decision. Nehru told General Messervy in 1947 that: '(h)is desire plan would be to allow Jinnah to have his Pakistan, and gradually make things so impossible economically and otherwise for Pakistan that they would have to come on their bended knees and asked to be allowed back to India'.⁵

Master Tara Singh, the Akali leader of Sikh community, demanded that territories like Nankana Sahib, and rich Sikh farmland of Lyallpur, should not be included in Pakistan and '*shahidi jatthas*' (martyr's military detachments) should be formed to attack Muslims and trains carrying Muslims to Pakistan. So, these organized riots claimed 200,000 lives.⁶ Reza Kazimi writes:

In the face of unspeakable atrocities, writers from all three communities, Hindus, Muslims and Sikhs led by Krishna Chandra, Hassan Manto and Rajindar Singh Bedi rose to the occasion and most impartially showed that the riots were crimes not against communities but against humanity.⁷

Geographical amputation

As a nascent state, Pakistan faced harsh challenges both strategically and institutionally. Separation of 1000 miles between its two wings bred not only a sense of isolation from the centre of power but also reinforced the existence of different outlook of the world between the two wings. West

⁴ Ian Talbot and Gurharpal Singh, *The Partition of India* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2009), 63.

⁵ K.B. Sayeed, *Pakistan Formative Phase 1857-1948* (Karachi: Oxford University Press, 2014), 135.

⁶ Talbot, *A Modern History*, 101.

⁷ Dr Reza Kazimi, *Pakistan Studies* (Karachi: Oxford University Press, 2006) 133.

Pakistan showed its inclination to the Middle East, while East Pakistan towards South East Asia.⁸

Historically seen, as per the Lahore Resolution, passed in the annual session of Muslim League in 1940, it was suggested that: 'The areas ... [where] Muslims are numerically in majority, as in the North Western and Eastern zones of India should be grouped to constitute independent states, in which the constituent units shall be autonomous and sovereign'.⁹

Later in Delhi Convention, held in April 1946, it was decided that North Western and Eastern zones should form one country—a united Pakistan. Besides the remoteness, it was the language issue which caused immense friction between the two wings. The first Constituent Assembly declared Urdu as the Official Language of Pakistan. This, coupled with a refusal to hold Assembly session in Dacca, triggered a series of protests in East Pakistan. At this, the federal communication minister, Sardar Abdur Rab Nishtar said:

Regional patriotism is simply repugnant to Islam, Pakistan was established on the basis that Muslims were one nation and the tendency to think in terms of Bengali, Punjabi and Bihari would undermine the very foundations of Pakistan. These disruptive ideas are being spread by enemies of Pakistan who are working as fifth columnist amongst the Muslims.¹⁰

Moreover, East Pakistan had a growing feeling that West Pakistan was exploiting them. The economic disparity had widened during the first decade of independence as industrialization process gained momentum in West Pakistan.¹¹ These grievances were growing with each passing day and delay in constitution making added fuel to the fire. The rapid economic growth in West Pakistan undermined the national unity since economic growth was not on equal footings; East Pakistan lagged far behind in this race.

Accession of princely states

The British administered Indian subcontinent comprised 11 provinces and approximately 562 princely states. At the time of their departure,

⁸ Allen McGrath, *The Destruction of Pakistan's Democracy* (Karachi: Oxford University Press, 1996), 4.

⁹ Talbot, *A Modern History*, 25.

¹⁰ *Ibid.*, 112.

¹¹ Ayesha Jalal, *The State of Martial Rule: The Origins of Pakistan's Political Economy of Defence* (Lahore: Vanguard Books, 1991), 20.

rulers of the princely states were asked to join either India or Pakistan. The genuine problem arose in states like Hyderabad Deccan, Junagadh, and Kashmir.¹² Nizam of Hyderabad and Nawab of Junagadh favored joining Pakistan, but India forcibly occupied Junagadh and Hyderabad Deccan. There the rulers were Muslims and wanted to annex with Pakistan but majority of the population was non-Muslims. The partition of subcontinent in 1947, left two legacies, i.e., clashing identities and territorial claims, best captured by Afghanistan and Kashmir conflicts respectively.¹³ The case of Kashmir was a unique one as headwaters of three rivers—Indus, Jhelum, Chenab—were situated in Kashmir. These rivers were vital for Pakistan as its economy was agriculture-based. Moreover, in terms of area, Kashmir was the largest princely state with an area of 84471 sq. miles, and had boundaries with Tibet, Russia, China, and Afghanistan, thus making it strategically and economically important. The people of the valley wanted to become a part of Pakistan but Maharaja Hari Singh wanted to get independence. He delayed joining either India or Pakistan. A series of communal massacres and killings started in Jammu Province leading to eruption of violence like a wild fire.¹⁴ Approximately 80,000 Muslim refugees took shelter in Sialkot. A tribal army comprising of Pashtuns went to Kashmir to seek revenge. Their indiscriminate plunder and violence led Maharaja to accede to India. Indian army drove the tribal warriors out of the valley. It was decided that a plebiscite would be held under UN observation. Lord Mountbatten who was Governor General of India approved the accession request of Maharaja and assured that this request will be confirmed by a referendum. This referendum is yet to take place. Due to this conflict, relations between India and Pakistan have been strained. The same conflict has caused three wars in 1948, 1965 and 1999 (Kargil) respectively. The region is now referred as being a: ‘Nuclear flash point’.

Pakhtunistan issue

Pakistan had a sizzling Western border, with an independent Afghanistan that harbored claims to the western marches of Pakistan as part of a greater Pakhtunistan. Afghanistan voted against the newly independent Pakistan’s entry to the United Nations on that basis. Khan Abdul Ghaffar Khan wanted a country for Pashtuns living in Afghanistan and Pakistan. He raised the issue of Pakhtunistan and refused to accept Durand Line as

¹² Talbot, *A Modern History*, 58.

¹³ Deepa Ollapally, *The Politics of Extremism in South Asia* (Delhi: Cambridge University Press, 2008), 10.

¹⁴ Talbot, *A Modern History*, 45.

a common border between Afghanistan and Pakistan. In July 1949, the Afghan Parliament officially declared to renounce the Durand Line border which was signed between British and Amir Abdur Rehman Khan in 1893. Moreover, Kabul government further claimed to Peshawar, Kohat and certain other areas, which she had lost to Pakistan during Partition. The issue was serious and needed attention as hostile Afghan government vowed again and again to create a separate Pakhtunistan state. The geopolitical imperative was suitable for involvement of military into the affairs of the state. In order to counter the threats of two hostile neighbors, Pakistan joined CENTO and SEATO; two defence pacts with US in the decades of 1950s. So initially Pakistan was pledged to be given US\$30 million in aid, but further insistence from Pakistan brought US\$105.9 million aid in October 1954.¹⁵ While eastern neighbor India and western neighbor Afghanistan chose non-alignment, they received aid from the USSR. Both these recipients of Soviets aid strengthened their own ties, too, so close relationship established between Kabul and Delhi.

Reasons of authoritarianism in Pakistan

Both India and Pakistan achieved independence from the British rule at the same time yet democracy is successful in India and not in Pakistan. The Transfer of Power phase and subsequently running the affairs of the state were almost difficult for both the states. India had been deprived of the sources of raw materials for its industries, especially jute and cotton, a captive market for manufactured products. Yet India inherited the colonial state's central government apparatus and an industrial infrastructure which, despite all its weaknesses, was better developed than in the areas constituting Pakistan. Pakistan faced lack of administrative personnel. There was no established Parliament, Civil Secretariat, Supreme Court, or Central Bank. Unlike other institutions where Muslims were relatively less in number as compared to other communities, in the armed forces the proportion of Muslims was comparatively substantial, i.e., 33 per cent. That is why armed forces of Pakistan acquired greater importance right from the beginning and were better established than the other institutions of the state. Besides, protecting refugee convoys from East Punjab, and vacating their barracks, they were also asked to establish civil secretariat in Karachi.

Different social scientists have applied different tags on Pakistan after analyzing closely its chequered history. Naqvi declares Pakistan an

¹⁵ Husain Haqqani, *Pakistan between Mosque and Military* (Washington: Carnegie Endowment, 2005), 32.

over-developed state,¹⁶ whereas S.H. Hashmi saw Pakistan as a bureaucratic polity.¹⁷ In the words of K.L. Kamal, Pakistan is a garrison state.¹⁸ Khalid Bin Sayeed used the term ‘Viceregalism’ to describe the authoritarianism, which was indeed a legacy of colonial rule in Pakistan.¹⁹

There were several factors which played a crucial role in the promotion of authoritarianism coupled with the failure of democracy in Pakistan such as:

- a) All India Muslim League was not as deeply rooted as its counterpart Indian National Congress was. It did not have the craftsmanship required to steer the newly created state since Quaid-i-Azam died in a year after partition. Moreover, the leadership of Muslim League came mostly from the UP, and it could not compete with the indigenous political elites without enlisting the support of civil and military bureaucracy, which means that Pakistani politicians had to concede much greater autonomy to the administrative bureaucracy to consolidate state authority.²⁰
- b) The viceregal system was deeply rooted in provinces like NWFP and Punjab. These provinces were termed as Non Regulation Provinces. There a deputy commissioner was responsible to run departments like public health, education, agriculture, etc. Moreover, executive and judicial power also vested in his hands. Usually a deputy commissioner would be from Indian Civil Service or from Indian Army. This system was authoritarian rather than being democratic. On the other hand, provinces like Bengal, Madras and Bombay were known as Regulation Provinces, having a careful definition of rights and duties of citizens and officers. It increased the political consciousness and public mobilization in these provinces.²¹
- c) The nexus of army and bureaucracy became more and more powerful with the each passing day and it resulted in the weakening of both these institutions and democracy. There prevailed a perpetual Indian fear in the minds of Pakistani leaders and the war with India

¹⁶ S. Ali Jamal Naqvi, ‘Politics and Economics of a Dependent State’, in, S. Ali Jamal Naqvi and Farz Ali (eds.), *Inside Pakistan* (New Delhi: Patriot, 1986), 12.

¹⁷ Talbot, *A Modern History*, 7.

¹⁸ K.L. Kamal, *Pakistan the Garrison State* (New Delhi: Intellectual Publishing House, 1982), 6.

¹⁹ Sayeed, *Formative Phase*, 10.

²⁰ Maleeha Lodhi, *Pakistan, Beyond the ‘Crisis State’* (Karachi: Oxford University Press, 2010), 26.

²¹ Sayeed, *Formative Phase*, 28.

in 1948 over Kashmir intensified the concept that India wants to undo Pakistan. This fear culminated in the expansion of army. During the first decade, 60 percent of Pakistan's budget was spent on defence. These factors pushed Pakistan to become a security state.²²

- d) Indian Act of 1935 was adopted by both India and Pakistan as interim constitution to run the affairs of state. With some minor amendments it was renamed as, Indian Independence Act of 1947. Under this 1935 Act, the real power rested with the Viceroy who ruled with the backing of powerful bureaucracy, free from any parliamentary check and balance system. The executive supremacy was preferred over legislature. Hamza Alavi points out that:

Jinnah was too ill to take part in decision making process.

Bureaucracy using Jinnah's name made some constitutional amendments e.g., Section 92-A was inserted into the 1935 Act in July 1948 in the absence of Jinnah, since he was in Ziarat (Baluchistan) at that time.²³

Moreover, centralized control was enhanced, as Shafqat writes:

This empowered the Governor General to suspend constitutional machinery in a province and direct the governor to assume the responsibilities of the provincial government. During 1947 and 1954, nine provincial governments were dismissed.²⁴

- e) Muslim League was in fact a highly centralized organization. Its leaders justified centralization for chanting slogans of unity in people due to the threats from India and Afghanistan. Liaquat Ali Khan said it is not in the interests of Pakistan to create new political parties.²⁵ This approach created tensions with regional and ethno-linguistic groups. Moreover, the migrants had no parliamentary constituency. Majority of them belonged to the UP, so they had to depend on bureaucracy to wield power. Waseem holds:

Recourse to election was considered suicidal by the migrant led government at Karachi because there was no way it could win elections and return to power in the Centre. Elections were considered dysfunctional for the

²² Hassan Askari Rizvi, *Civil Military Relations in Pakistan* (Lahore: Sang-e Meel Publications, 2009), 26.

²³ Hamza Alavi, 'The Army and the Bureaucracy in Pakistan', *International Socialist Journal*, 3:14 (March-April 1966), 15.

²⁴ Saeed Shafqat, *Civil Military Relations in Pakistan: From Zulfikar Ali Bhutto to Benazir Bhutto* (Lahore: Westview Press, 1997), 25.

²⁵ Talbot, *A Modern History*, 27.

political parties system of Pakistan in the immediate post-independence period.²⁶

British security state

During the British Raj days, the north-west region of India, i.e., the future Pakistani areas formed part of the British security state. British policy in those particular regions was influenced by imperial geo-strategic considerations since the Punjab was an important recruitment area for British army. Both Punjab and NWFP were instrumental in providing soldiers to British Army in India. In reward of their services, the title of 'Martial races' was given by the British after the 'loyalty' shown by the Punjabi soldiers during the 1857 war of independence. Punjab was considered as an area largely untouched and unmoved by Indian nationalism. Thus, Punjab became the main army recruitment centre. This loyalty promoted the military cooperation and strategic alliance between the ruling British and the Tiwanas of the Salt Range Region.²⁷ According to the John Lawrence's model of patronage of loyal feudal in the Punjab, and the Sandeman or Sardari system for promotion of Sardars (tribal chiefs) in NWFP and Baluchistan were variations of indirect rule. Old-fashioned tribal *riwaj* (custom) was not disrupted, rather force was provided to uphold the authority of local chiefs.²⁸ If Punjab was benefitted regarding its defence with this alliance then it had to pay the cost, e.g., paternalist authoritarianism was also got established in NWFP and Baluchistan as well. Therefore, it is usually said that areas which became Pakistan later, had already formed part of a British security state.²⁹

Military in politics

Analyzing order and stability in postcolonial states, Samuel Huntington came up with his model. According to this model:

Poverty, regional, linguistic and religious group conflicts do not of themselves create instability. It only occurs when institutions are too weak to cope with the conflicts over scarce resources which result from increased social and political mobilization. In this situation, newly emergent

²⁶ Muhammad Waseem, *The 1993 Elections in Pakistan* (Lahore: Vanguard, 1994), 163.

²⁷ Ian Talbot, *Khizar Tiwana: The Punjab Unionist Party and the Partition of India* (Karachi: Oxford University Press, 2002), 34.

²⁸ Talbot, *A Modern History*, 34.

²⁹ *Ibid.*, 34.

groups are not socialized into the system, nor are their demands absorbed. Instead they enter it on their own terms. 'Civic politics' are replaced by disorder which in turn results in praetorians.³⁰

Scholars such as Lawrence Ziring, Khalid Bin Sayeed, and Veena Kukreja look impressed with this model and thus explain various reasons of military coup in Pakistan. Lawrence Ziring connects the first military intervention in 1958 with the institutional weakness resulting in the collapse of Muslim League.³¹ Sayeed analyses the period of 1951-1958 in these words:

Pakistan (1951-1958) was very much like 'Hobbes' state of nature where every political or provincial group fought against every other group.... It was a ceaseless and ruthless struggle for power.... Pakistan needed a desperate remedy for this malady and Martial law was the Leviathan which emerged to maintain law and order and public good at the point of the sword.³²

Kukreja observes general decay in political institutionalism which results in a crisis of legitimacy. In her own words: 'Pakistan seems to amply fit Huntington's model of praetorian society where military interventions are only specific manifestations of the broader phenomenon of underdevelopment and general politicization of social forces and institutions.'³³

O'Donnell's research on authoritarianism presents an analysis of governing elites, their interaction with different social classes and the nature of 'dependent capitalism' in South American countries. He points out a coalition among army, powerful bureaucracy, technocrats and international institutions.³⁴ Comparing Pakistan with South American countries, it is revealed that rather than economical, it was strategic consideration that determined the duo nexus of military and bureaucratic

³⁰ S.P. Huntington, *Political Order in Changing Societies* (New Haven, CT, 1968), 38.

³¹ Lawrence Ziring, *Pakistan: The Enigma of Political Development* (Belfast (UK) & Boulder: Co.,1980), 82.

³² K.B. Sayeed, 'The Collapse of Parliamentary Democracy in Pakistan', *Middle East Journal*, 13:4 (Autumn 1959), 389-90.

³³ Veena Kukreja, *Civil Military Relations in South Asia: Pakistan, Bangladesh and India* (New Delhi: Sage, 1991), 45.

³⁴ Guillermo O'Donnell, 'Modernization and Bureaucratic Authoritarianism: Studies in South American Politics', *Politics of Modernization Series*, No.9 (Berkeley: Institute of International Studies, University of California 1973), 2.

elites towards the international security systems and making alliances with US in early decades of 1950's onwards.³⁵ O'Donnell has commented on this as follows:

In authoritarian type governments, individual from army, bureaucracy and private firms occupy key posts so as to play crucial role in the drafting, signing and implementing decisions. Individuals in these institutions developed a highly complex network of bureaucratic organizations and pursued policies of political repression and economic exclusion, resultantly politically active segments of society and industrial labor was excluded from processes of political and economic decision making. This in turn led to de-politicization of popular sector. Political and social problems are viewed by decision makers as technical in nature. This kind of thinking promotes and strengthens interactions among the decision makers in the high echelons.³⁶

Bureaucracy-military nexus

Pakistan was a fruit of popular secession movement lead by Muslim League during the 1940s on the ground of suppression of rights of Muslim minority by the overwhelming Hindu majority in India. Except the towering personality of Jinnah, the political acumen of the leadership of Muslims in the subcontinent was not up to the mark and coherent with each other. Although Muslim League was the singular party responsible for the creation of Pakistan, yet it was not genuinely popular in the provinces where Pakistan was formed. The support Muslim League mustered for the creation of Pakistan was mostly based on political alliance of the locally popular political parties with Muslim League for a common objective, Pakistan.

Immediately after independence the unity started to fade away and Muslim League was sacrificed on the altar of regionalism and provincialism. In such chaotic atmosphere the choice to select a team that could steer Pakistan out of troubled water was like one of the Herculean labor. Quaid-i-Azam did not have a big pool of able and effective politician to choose from for running the day to day affairs of the newly created country. He, in the first instance, appealed to all the British officers working in the areas that came to Pakistan not to leave

³⁵ Saeed Shafqat, *Civil-Military Relations in Pakistan: From Zulfiqar Ali Bhutto to Benazir Bhutto* (Boulder: Westview Press, 1997), 29.

³⁶ O'Donnell, 22.

the country and stay with Pakistan. Simultaneously he relied heavily upon the Muslim bureaucrats for the same task.

Jinnah succumbed to his health in September 1948 and left behind him many unfinished tasks, such as constitution, administrative structure, and refugee crisis, among others. Prime Minister Liaquat Ali Khan weathered the storm bravely, but he could never enjoy the respect and position that was catered to Jinnah by rest of the politicians of Pakistan. He was assassinated in October 1951 in Rawalpindi. His departure opened the flood gates of non-political interventions in the government. Namely the bureaucratic elite under the auspices of Malik Ghulam Mohammad gradually replaced the less able political leadership with skilled bureaucrats in every aspect of government.

In this quagmire, Pakistani leaders could not concentrate on the task of building a political administrative structure for the new state. Liaquat assassination in 1951, while constitution making was in progress, proved a disaster for Pakistan. He was trying to restore the tarnished image of Muslim League which had lost its fame and glory. With Liaquat's death, Pakistan's national politics entered a chaotic period during which bureaucrats were increasingly transformed from the state's servants to its masters.³⁷ The shaken Pakistani leadership moved quickly to nominate Governor General Khawaja Nazimuddin, a Bengali politician from Dhaka, as the new prime minister. While Finance Minister Ghulam Muhammad, a veteran Punjabi civil servant, was appointed Governor General. During Nazimuddin's reign, the division between Punjabi and Bengali groups at the centre widened, creating disorder in the provinces. Heavy handed centralization and the widespread economic discontent arising from the collapse of the Korean War export boom further fanned the chaos and confusion. Citing Nazimuddin's inefficiency in tackling the difficulties faced by the country, Governor General Ghulam Muhammad dismissed the prime minister on 17 April 1953. Neither any public protest was observed nor was Muslim League able to come to the streets to show any sort of disapproval. The deafening silence of Muslim League greeted the governor general's action. The US Ambassador portentously described it as: 'One of the most popular coups in history'.³⁸

Khawaja Nazimuddin's government had hardly passed a budget when he was dismissed by the governor general. The devotion, importance and value of parliamentary practices were badly missing. Most of the party members accepted the governor general's new

³⁷ Talbot, *A Modern History*, 42.

³⁸ McGrath, *The Destruction of Pakistan's Democracy*, 97.

appointee as their prime minister. Not a single voice was raised in the parliament about Nazimuddin's dismissal, thus exposing the weakness of the politicians and the political parties. Disowning of politicians enabled the bureaucracy to increase their power.³⁹

With each passing day, the parliamentary system was becoming weaker. Power now lay with three men: Iskandar Mirza, Army Chief Ayub Khan and Governor General Ghulam Muhammad. Pakistan's ambassador to US, Muhammad Ali Bogra was called to take oath as new prime minister on 17 April 1953. Like his predecessor, he was also a Bengali although he was regarded as a nonentity in political circles. He was selected by Ghulam Muhammad for being pro-US. Ayub Khan held defence portfolio under his belt while he was Chief of Army Staff and Iskandar Mirza held interior ministry. So the bureaucratic-military nexus had captured all important posts. Bogra was unseated in October 1955 at the centre because he opposed Iskandar Mirza's bidding efforts to replace an increasingly ailing Ghulam Muhammad as interim Governor General. These circumstances were conducive for the civil-military establishment to assume Jinnah's mantle and thereby weak leadership of the Muslim League. But in taking control of the party they also denied the Muslim League's legitimate right to speak for the people of Pakistan. In time the bureaucracy would find it difficult to accommodate a political calling. The politicians would again assert themselves, but never again would they have the opportunity to demonstrate their inclusive goals. The elevation of Chaudhary Muhammad Ali to the post of prime minister, another veteran civil servant neither having a political constituency nor political background, on 12 August 1955, the British Commissioner in Pakistan commented: 'A deplorable departure from the established parliamentary norms'.⁴⁰

M.M. Syed criticizes the role played by the seasoned bureaucrats, i.e., Ghulam Muhammad whereas Iskandar Mirza got elevated to the position of authority amidst the democratic failure of Pakistan.⁴¹ Both men held anti-democratic instincts and their dismissal of elected governments one after another paved the way for military intervention in Pakistan.

³⁹ Keith Callard, *Pakistan: A Political Study* (London, George Allen & Unwin, 1957), 65.

⁴¹ M.M. Syed, 'Pakistan: Struggle for Power 1947-1958', *Pakistan Journal of History and Culture*, XV:2 (July-December 1994), 85.

⁴⁰ Jalal, *Authoritarianism in South Asia*, 150.

The judiciary was no way lagging in supporting the undermining actions of bureaucrats. Allen McGrath analyzes the role of Chief Justice Munir and adds him in the same ‘rogue league’ of seasoned bureaucrats.⁴² He looks Munir as possessing an authoritarian role which he had inculcated during the colonial rule. With this frame of mind, he provided legitimacy to Ghulam Muhammad’s October 1954 dissolution of the Constituent Assembly and to Ayub’s later military rule in 1958. According to McGrath, neither the illiterate masses of Pakistan, nor ill-disciplined and allegedly corrupt politicians were to blame for the democratic failure. He blames the troika of Ghulam Muhammad, Iskandar Mirza and Munir in the failure of democracy.⁴³

Charles Burton Marshal, an American advisor to Pakistani governments (1955-1957) described Ghulam Muhammad and Iskandar Mirza’s hatred for democracy in these words:

Each in his own way represented the viceregal system under new conditions without foreign principle. Each scorned politics, except own ruthless kind, which neither acknowledged under that name. Each was possessive of executive ascendancy, regarded with repugnance. The very idea of parliamentary experiments in Pakistan, and professed to presidential governments on American model, though without having any insight into the political character of American presidency. Each fancied himself a strong man.⁴⁴

A veteran west Punjabi politician, Malik Firoz Khan Noon was selected as the new prime minister on 16 December 1957. He was the last prime minister before the first military coup of Pakistan’s history. Both Iskandar Mirza and Army Chief Ayub Khan had told the US ambassador that only dictatorship is feasible for Pakistan.⁴⁵ On 8th October 1958, Iskandar Mirza abrogated the 1956 constitution and promulgated Martial Law declaring Ayub Khan as Chief Martial Law Administrator (CMLA). He had forgotten that the same constitution had allowed him to stay in power. Strains between him and Ayub resurfaced soon on the issue of the timing of lifting the martial law. Iskandar Mirza wanted it no longer than one month. On 27th October 1958, Mirza was summoned by a delegation comprising General Azam, General Burki and General Khalid Shaikh.

⁴² McGrath, *The Destruction of Pakistan’s Democracy*, 216.

⁴³ *Ibid.*, 218.

⁴⁴ Charles Burton Marshal, ‘Reflections on a Revolution in Pakistan’ *Foreign Affairs*, XXXVII (1959), 250.

⁴⁵ *Ibid.*, 156.

They declared that ‘in the interest of the country we want you to leave Pakistan’. Thus, Ayub Khan declared himself CMLA. It was the beginning of a decade long martial law in Pakistan.

Conclusion

It was the nexus of powerful civil and military elites which opened the doors of military interventions in a newly established country. The tradition to dismiss prime ministers was initiated by a powerful and ruthless bureaucrat-cum-governor general, Ghulam Mohammad. This tradition led Pakistan in political black hole. Keith Callard observes the damages inflicted to the political and democratic process thereafter: ‘The consequences of night attack of the Governor General were extremely grave and in this process three significant traditions of parliamentary government were either destroyed or received irreparable loss. The most important tradition which was smashed was the impartiality of the Governor General’.⁴⁶ Ghulam Mohammad considered military a partner in keeping the politicians at bay. His successor, Iskandar Mirza, also a former bureaucrat, involved the military in functioning of the state and bestowed upon it with autonomy and power. However, it was Ayub-Mirza combination to forge a superordinate-subordinate relationship with the armed forces.⁴⁷ Mirza twice extended Ayub Khan’s tenure as army chief, first in 1954 and later in 1958. The first military coup of 1958 was ‘vying for power contestation’ fought among three contenders: the civil military bureaucracy, center, and the provinces. The weak center had to rely more and more on bureaucrats. Provinces had their grievances which were largely ignored, thus creating sense of alienation among provinces. In the presence of two hostile neighbors, i.e., India and Afghanistan, concrete efforts were made to focus on building military strength. In order to thwart the threats, Pakistan joined US camp and signed SEATO and CENTO. These decisions played a crucial role in shaping of Pakistan as a ‘security state’. Resultantly, Pakistan embarked on a creeping centralization and authoritarianism which resulted in the country’s first military coup.

⁴⁶ Keith Callard, 220.

⁴⁷ Shafqat, *Civil-Military Relations*, 9.