
Causes of Military Intervention in Pakistan: A Revisionist Discourse

_____ Muhammad Hassan

This paper highlights the causes of military intervention in Pakistan and its effects on the polity of the country. The military-bureaucracy oligarchy occupied a dominant position and has been in effective command of state power ever since the creation of the state. This oligarchy installed politicians and political parties in office to provide a façade of parliamentary government for a decade; it then decided to expel them in 1958, when the prospects of the impending general elections seemed to pose a challenge to its supremacy. The intervention of this oligarchy and more particularly, of the military, became more effective and intensified when the new state started facing problems of vast magnitude. These included inexperienced and inadequate administrative staff, a massive refugee problem, poor economic resources, regional conflicts, the decline of the Muslim League and the advent of coalitional politics and unstable governments. This ultimately led to the collapse of the parliamentary system, the utter failure on the part of the political leadership to provide a functioning civilian government by developing a consensus on the rules of polity, and the total indifference of the elites towards the masses and their problems.

It is interesting that India and Pakistan provide illustrations of the contrasting as well as changing patterns of civil-military relations. The most outstanding contribution of British rule in India in the field of military administration was the norm and practice of civil-military relations which emphasized overall civilian control and the military's aloofness from politics.¹

However, in Pakistan, after little more than eleven years of the façade of civilian parliamentary government, the military intervened and imposed its own rule. On four occasions, the military intervened overtly and imposed martial law throughout the country: October 1958, March 1969, July 1977 and October 1999. The military justified its extreme action on the ground of instability in the country.

In 1958, General Muhammad Ayub Khan justified the coup on the basis that the country had to be rescued from chaos. This became the *mantra* for all the succeeding military takeovers. This was the fallout of the circumstances of the pre-1958 period, during which Pakistan was facing ideological and ethnic divisions as well as administrative and security problems.² The poor institutionalization of the Muslim League, and the centralization of power within it, hindered the establishment of a truly participatory democracy. The frequent dissolution of the provincial and national governments made it difficult to lay the foundation for a parliamentary system. Political and constitutional crises added to the tensions between the Centre and the provinces.³ Such problems made it possible for the bureaucracy and military to maintain a superior position in the power structure of the country.

Pakistan represents an example of how an apolitical military could slowly be drawn into the political field due to the failure of political institutions and politicians, low political mobilization, as well as external factors. In the first instance, being well-organized

and skilled, it helped every government to maintain law and order, until it slowly became an important factor in the decision-making process, and ultimately displaced civil authority. Therefore, a study of military interventions in politics can help to make some general remarks about the causes which allow a professional military to assume an overtly political role.⁴ In short, there are multiple causes of military intervention in the political sphere of Pakistan. No single factor can be cited as the sole factor for the militarization of the country. Today, Pakistan stands at the cross-roads of history. Pakistan is fighting against the menace of Talibanization of the Tribal Areas. The basic causes of repeated military intervention in the politics of Pakistan, which turned the polity into a praetorian state, are explained in the next section.

The Untimely Demise of the Quaid-i-Azam and A Leadership Crisis

Like many third-world countries, Pakistan was born a fragile nation-state. It was burdened with ideological and ethnic cleavages, and created amidst administrative chaos. The nationalist movement that culminated in the creation of Pakistan in August 1947, although populist in character, cohered signlarly around Mohammad Ali Jinnah's determination, sense of purpose, and faith in democratic constitutionalism. These have generally been recognized as some of the attributes of Jinnah's leadership.⁵ The first year of Independence was marked by heavy dependence on the charismatic personality of Jinnah; he was Governor-General and President of the Constituent Assembly. He had charismatic appeal, stature and unrivalled prestige that commanded and compelled unquestioned acceptance of his leadership all over Pakistan. However, he died on 11 September 1948, leaving behind an enduring political vacuum.

Liaquat Ali Khan, Jinnah's lieutenant and Pakistan's first Prime Minister, guided the country with courage and confidence during a difficult period but lacked the authority of the Quaid-i-Azam. He endeavored to strengthen the parliamentary system,

but his tenure was cut short by an assassin's bullet in October 1951. The death of two top leaders so soon after freedom was won, created a vacuum and the pattern of 'paternalistic' executive set up by the Quaid-i-Azam came to an end.⁶ With Liaquat's death, the façade of "parliamentary democracy" began to erode. The bureaucratic elites did not take long to convert the office of Governor-General into an instrument of bureaucratic intervention. In the provinces, on several occasions, bureaucratic intervention occurred in the garb of the Governor's rule.⁷ The Chief Ministers were dismissed, despite the fact that their parties had a majority in the provincial assemblies.

While reminding the army commanders of their oath of 'allegiance to the constitution and the government of the Dominion of Pakistan,' Jinnah had always emphasized 'the supremacy of the civilian government' (and that it was the only salvation for the people of Pakistan in the galaxy of modern nation states). To him, the armed forces 'were the servants of the people', since he believed in strong parliamentary institutions. Pakistan's preoccupation with the security threat, and the attendant priority for defence, partially led to the supremacy of the Defence Ministry and GHQ in the wake of the weakened parliamentary process in the post-Jinnah years.⁸ Liaquat Ali Khan's failure to present the country with an acceptable constitution proved to be a great setback to political stability. In the early years, it was easier to find a solution to problems which later assumed difficult proportions.⁹ There was thus insufficient time for these leaders to establish and legitimize participatory institutions and processes. A comparative study of the political systems of both India and Pakistan is a witness to this fact of history. Nehru lived till 1964, whereas Quaid-i-Azam died after one year - creating a void in the leadership of the country. The military stepped in to fill this gap.

Provincialism

The geographical separation of East and West Pakistan produced not only administrative, physical but social, economic and political problems as well. Distance made communication irregular and expensive. Misunderstandings arose easily and were difficult to dispel. Since the capital was in the West wing, East Pakistan felt neglected. Differences in languages and cultures were obstacles in the way of national integration. In a public speech in Dacca, on March 21, 1948, the Quaid-i-Azam made an impassioned appeal for national consolidation.¹⁰ He warned against the provincialism signaled by the language controversy that raised its head in the East Bengal only a few months after the establishment of Pakistan.

The weight of the Quaid-i-Azam's authority suppressed agitation at the time, but the issue remained alive. Some years later it assumed formidable proportions. Finally, the controversy was settled when the 1956 constitution recognized both Urdu and Bengali as the national languages of Pakistan.¹¹ The demand for maximum autonomy for East Pakistan was unique in that it was not merely a demand for maintaining a cultural identity. The fact of physical separation had always meant economic separation at least in the sense that there was no easy and free mobility of capital and labor.¹²

Historically speaking, the Punjabi-Bengali controversy delayed, more than any other factor, the constitution-making process in Pakistan. Geographical factors separated the two wings of Pakistan by a distance of about one thousand miles. East Pakistan presented a completely different picture. Its enormous problems, on which the opposition thrived, were the result of historical forces as well as post-Independence official policies. Among the major problems was the under-representation of Bengalis in the services - a legacy of pre-Independence days. The Bengalis had practically no representation in the armed forces, primarily due to earlier British theories of martial races, the

imperial defence policy, and the physical standards laid down for recruitment.

Pakistan was an agricultural country and poor. East Pakistan was economically worse off than West Pakistan. The Pakistan Muslim League policies were purportedly directed toward overall economic development, but focused on West-Pakistan, which contributed to Bengali deprivation and alienation.

Rafique Afzal provides a vivid description of the events and personalities of this period. He blames political leaders for promoting the politics of non-consensus. He has argued that during this period it was the rivalry between the Punjabi and Bengali political leaders and the factionalism within the Muslim League that obstructed the development of party politics and led to the decay of the party system.¹³ Mushtaq Ahmed also concurs with this view and considers non-consensus among the political leaders and factionalism within the Muslim League the principal causes for the non-institutionalization of party politics.¹⁴ The Army watched closely the ever-growing frustration of Bengalis with the system. The Army was looking for a suitable opportunity to disrupt the political process.

The Constitution Making Dilemma 1947-56 (Punjabi/Bengali Controversy)

Constitution making in Pakistan was delayed for about nine years. The two most important factors which delayed constitution making in Pakistan were the differences between Punjabi dominated West Pakistani elite, and East Pakistani. East Pakistan demanded maximum provincial autonomy, whereas the West wing favoured a strong centre. The second most important issue was the quantum of representation: the East wing demanded universal adult franchise as Bengal constituted about 54% of the total population.¹⁵ Unfortunately, the West wing elite were not ready to concede this demand. The conflict created a huge political and constitutional problem in Pakistan at its very

inception. The conflict between East and West Pakistan centred on the distribution of powers between the federal and the provincial governments. This problem was not peculiar to Pakistan: it had to be faced in framing any federal constitution. A crucial aspect of the federal state is the distribution of powers between the federal authority and the federating units. A federal constitution attempts to reconcile the apparently irreconcilable claims of national sovereignty and state autonomy.

East Pakistan felt that it did not have a fair and adequate share in the central government and administration. It felt that East Pakistanis had been neglected and dominated by the West Wing. This gave birth to feelings of regionalism in East Pakistan, while provincialism was making equal headway in West Pakistan. Each unit feared the domination of the other, and consequently, against established democratic norms worldwide, the framers of the constitution had to evolve the formula of government based on regional parity in which the Bengali majority was neutralized.¹⁶ The third issue in the controversy between East and West Pakistan was that of language. Pakistan was a multi-lingual state. There was a fundamental difference between East and West Pakistan in regard to language. The East spoke Bengali; in the West, there were a number of languages.¹⁷ Urdu was not the mother tongue of any area in West Pakistan, but it was accepted as the common language of the whole region. The controversy had been on the question whether Pakistan should have one state language, Urdu, or two, Urdu and Bengali.

After the death of Liaquat Ali Khan, the regional conflicts between the eastern and the western wings of the country came to the surface and presented an extraordinary dilemma in the framing of the constitution. With the ascendance of Ghulam Muhammad to the office of Governor General, the clash between bureaucracy and the politicians crystallized into a conflict between the Governor-General and the Prime Minister. The conflicts of regions and personalities found the Constituent Assembly as the natural arena.

East Pakistan had a larger population, aspired towards democratic self-expression and improvements in its economic conditions. It was, however, only about one-sixth the size of West Pakistan. The West Wing, besides having a larger area, advantage of strategic positions and natural resources, also dominated the services and the army and remained apprehensive of the growth of Bengal.¹⁸ The senior echelons were used to deprive East Bengalis of their democratic majority, which, if effectively deployed, would threaten both the Foreign Policy interests of Pakistan's 'guardians' and their domestic priorities. The 1956 consolidation of West Pakistan into a One Unit and its parity with East Pakistan in the National Assembly could thus be understood as an attempt to safeguard the centre from a populist Bengali challenge.¹⁹

Despite all handicaps, however, a new Constitution was ultimately adopted by the Second Constituent Assembly and promulgated in March 1956.²⁰ This Constitution provided for a federal structure composed of two units, East and West Pakistan. The parliamentary form of government was adopted, and, of course, Islamic principles were incorporated into the Constitution. The unicameral legislature was based on the principle of parity of representation between the two wings of the country.

It was expected that the general elections would take place in 1958 in accordance with the provisions of the new Constitution, but after a period of unstable coalition politics, the civilian-military coalition of powerful elites brought about a military *coup d'état* in October 1958, abrogated the Constitution of 1956, and imposed Martial Law. Soon thereafter, the CMLA dismissed the President, Iskander Mirza. This act marked the transformation of the bureaucratic state system into a military regime in which the bureaucrats came to play a subservient rather than a dominant role.²¹

Extreme Political Instability

The decline of civilian institutions in Pakistan was set in motion primarily as a result of the serious crisis of political leadership within a couple of years of Independence. After Quaid-e-Azam, Liaquat Ali Khan's assassination resulted in the conversion of the office of the Governor General into an instrument of bureaucratic intervention.²² From 1951 to 1958, Pakistan had only two Governors-General and one Commander-in-Chief while seven Prime Ministers toppled one after the other.²³ Bureaucratic intervention, preemption and opposition among the political leaders made a sham of the parliament and the cabinet government. The façade of "parliamentary politics" persisted but in reality the focus of power had shifted to the bureaucratic and military institutions.²⁴ Liaquat Ali Khan's mysterious assassination left the ambitious bureaucracy in total command. A strong nexus was also formed between the civil-bureaucracy and the military. It is not surprising that in Pakistan's first two decades, 'the locus of power centered on the civil services rather than the political leadership, whom it dominated, or the army with which it closely collaborated.'²⁵ As the political forces fragmented and political institutions declined, the bureaucratic elite gained the upper hand and dominated policy making.

The appointment of Ghulam Muhammad, a former bureaucrat, as Governor General (October 1951) followed by another bureaucrat with an army background, Iskander Mirza, in August 1955, set the stage for the ascendancy of the bureaucracy, supported by the military in the background. They had close connections with the Army Chief, General Ayub Khan, who was reluctant to come into the limelight, but extended support to them in their resolve to establish a centralized bureaucratic and administrative polity.²⁶ The 'ruling alliance', drawn mainly from the top echelons of the bureaucracy and the army, adopted 'a concerted strategy' to exploit and manipulate rivalries among the political leaders. This accentuated political fragmentation and

ministerial crises.²⁷ When in 1954, the political leaders attempted to take on the bureaucratic-military axis by reducing the powers of the Governor General, as head of state to a titular office in the British Parliamentary tradition, the Governor General retaliated by dissolving the Constituent Assembly and removing the Government.

As far as the functioning of democratic institutions in Pakistan is concerned, one finds that after the sudden demise of Quaid-i-Azam, followed by Liaquat Ali Khan's assassination, the political elite which came to power in West Pakistan headed by Ghulam Muhammad and Iskander Mirza, had absolutely no faith in democratic institutions. They flouted all recognized parliamentary practices and played havoc with all established conventions. The supremacy of the Pakistani executive in matters of governance over the legislative wing was similar to the former viceregal system. Naturally, the image of the National Assembly as a representative body and law-making agency was tarnished. In Pakistan no government was removed in accordance with democratic norms, a vote of no confidence on the floor of the National Assembly. The decision to form a new ministry was taken behind closed doors and resulted from the realignment of political factions outside the Assembly.

Thus, during 1947-58, in a formal, constitutional sense, Pakistan's history has been marked by political instability. In a non-legal, non-constitutional sense, it reveals the steady institutional development of the civilian and military bureaucracies. Slowly and gradually political power slipped from political parties into the hands of the civil service and the army.²⁸ One can assess the intensity of political instability by the fact that within a short span of two and a half years (March 1956 to Oct 1958), Pakistan had six prime ministers. During these years, the political situation in Pakistan was seemingly 'fluid', marked by continuous palace intrigues and horse trading. The Presidency, under the power-hungry Iskander Mirza, was the vanguard of this instability. Interestingly, during these years Ayub Khan as Army

Chief had been nurturing dreams and vainly arrogating to himself the role of the saviour of Pakistan through military intervention in politics. Unfortunately, the flagrant failure of political leadership culminating in the promulgation of martial law on October 7, 1958, provided him with this opportunity as he was appointed Chief Martial Law Administrator by President Iskander Mirza. Unsurprisingly, within just a month, Ayub Khan coerced Iskander Mirza to resign and banished him to London. In this way Ayub Khan got the direct opportunity to translate his political ideas into reality.

Factionalism: The Breakdown of the PML

Research about the ascent of the army in Pakistan typically focuses on the vacuum in the political system due to disintegration of the Muslim League after Partition and the decay of political institutions in general.²⁹ When Pakistan came into existence it had no well-developed party organization which had a significant bearing on the process of state formation in Pakistan. According to Rafique Afzal, Pakistan has not been able to steer its way to a stable, consensus-based political culture leading to national harmony. This has been due to the absence of national political parties.³⁰ The Muslim League (ML), which took credit for the creation of Pakistan, has never been able to transform itself from a nationalist movement to a national party that could lead the nation on the path to democracy, constitutionalism and planned economic development.

The Muslim League achieved Pakistan and expected to fulfill all new requirements, but this was only possible with a new dynamic programme headed by dedicated leadership. It should have set a definite goal to carry out promises made in its manifesto of 1944. In this way, the League could have diverted the energies of the people toward their sovereign destiny and successfully erected a solid edifice of the state on the ashes of British Imperialism. Unfortunately, the League remained a party without a programme.³¹ The Quaid-i-Azam did not live to respond to the

necessity, and his followers did not seem to feel or care about it. In this context, the Urdu daily *Nawa-e-Waqt* remarked that the Muslim League was like a caravan without a destination. The League has done nothing but thrown dust in the eyes of the people."³² Lawrence Ziring, an astute observer of Pakistani politics, has placed the burden of responsibility for the decay of party politics on the political leaders and the "structural weakness" of the Muslim League.³³

Thus, according to Ziring, the bureaucratic-military elites entered the political arena not by intent but by default. In any democratic system, the basic principle is the establishment of contact with the masses through the political party in power. The people in Pakistan believed in the same value and expected that the League would add a new life to its glorious past. The Muslim League had done little to resolve popular confusion and to mediate between the Government and the people. The popular means of contact between the masses and their party were the open general annual conventions the most popular feature of the old All-India Muslim League but during the first nine years of Pakistan's existence, no such convention was held. Council sessions were held but they related mainly to amendments to the League Constitution for one reason or the other.

Another factor which accelerated the Muslim League's waning prestige was internal disputes. The legacy of factional scramble for positions of power and profit was continued. The League leaders would not judge issues at a national level, but would take them as matters of personal prestige. This trend greatly weakened the organization from within. The reason for the failure of democracy to take root in Pakistan lies in the entire political process in which the state and successive governments have based themselves. An overview of Pakistan's political history suggests that state construction and the consolidation of Pakistan have been on a conflicting course vis-à-vis the social dynamics underlying political processes. Pakistan, due to the absence of a well-developed political party organization, has been unable to

integrate its provinces or distribute resources equitably between the predominant province of Punjab and the weak ones of Sindh, the North-West Frontier Province (now Khyber Pakhtunkhwa) and Balochistan, as well as between the diverse linguistics groups within them. Like other post-colonial states, where the democratic unfolding of political process has been hampered, Pakistan, too, has relied on its civil services—the steel frame of the Raj—and, ultimately, on the army to maintain the continuities of government.³⁴ Thus, the party that was a big political and social force and combated triumphantly against the British and the Congress simultaneously for a separate homeland, was reduced, within a few years, to such feeble stuff that it failed to save Pakistan from dictatorial army rule.³⁵

Democracy means self- government. Democracy and political parties are inextricably linked with each other and there is no concept of a successful democracy without true political parties. The political parties organize and give direction and destination to the masses by providing them with platforms for political purposes. The failure of the political parties and leadership to meet the challenges creates a political void and causes democracy to degenerate into absolutism by the intervention of non-democratic forces such as the military and bureaucracy. This is precisely what happened in Pakistan within the first decade of its Independence.

Failure of Political Leadership

Theoretically, the test of leadership is to lead the country and the nation out of a crisis situation. The dynamic leadership of Jinnah is a witness to this reality. Muslims of the sub-continent under the leadership of Jinnah successfully fought the forces of British imperialism and Hindu nationalism culminating in the creation of Pakistan. After the death of Jinnah, his political successors badly failed to create consensus politics. The second line leadership could not translate the political achievements of Jinnah into a vibrant, moderate and forward-looking democratic

polity. Factionalism, provincialism and power politics marred the first decade of Independence. Pakistan had seven Prime Ministers and eight cabinets during 1947-58. The ruling parties maintained power by using state patronage and coercive apparatus in a highly partisan manner. The situation was not much different at the provincial level where different political parties and leaders engaged in struggle for power in violation of parliamentary norms.

The Constituent Assembly established at the time of independence was unable to frame a constitution as the members and the political parties did not work towards evolving a consensus on the operational norms of the political system. The objectives of the Constitution were approved in March 1949 after a contentious debate; some members did not take part in the vote on the Objectives Resolution. Subsequently, the Constituent Assembly deliberated on the framework of the Constitution during March 1949 and October 1954: when they agreed on a draft of the Constitution, Governor General Ghulam Muhammad dissolved the first Constituent Assembly before the latter could take up the draft for final consideration and vote.³⁶ Governor General Ghulam Muhammad, in violation of established parliamentary norms, dissolved the above cited Assembly in a reactive move. There was unwarranted and continuous interference by the head of state in the political sphere of the country. Traditionally, the head of state is a nominal and titular office in parliamentary democracy whereas there was repeated interference into politics by two heads of state—Ghulam Muhammad and Iskander Mirza.³⁷

Had the political successors of Jinnah been sane enough, the interference of heads of state might have been averted. Those who were to steer the ship of the state of Pakistan were predominantly unscrupulous, corrupt and power hungry. None of them could rise to the level of a statesman. They remained self-centered petty politicians. The result was inevitable extreme political instability, palace intrigues, the ever-growing influence of the bureaucracy

and the military in politics. Thus, military leaders felt justified in taking over when politicians failed to provide efficient and popular governance.

Rizvi, while analyzing the political developments of Pakistan's early period asserted that "political decay" occurred because Pakistan suffered from a lack of competent leadership and well organized political parties. The growth of regional and parochial forces, political bargaining and open defiance of the norms of parliamentary democracy encouraged instability which reduced the effectiveness of the governmental machinery, while on the other hand, the military was gaining strength.³⁸ Huntington has also noted that such conditions are conducive for praetorianism, emphasizing that it was the inability of the political leaders to build a party system during the pre-military hegemonic political phase in Pakistan.³⁹

According to Khalid Bin Sayeed, the pre-military hegemonic phase was a "period of conflict". Apparently this was a conflict between the political leaders and the bureaucratic-military elites over the nature and direction of the political system (i.e., the constitution, the role of religion in the polity, socio-economic reform, and the quantum of provincial autonomy).⁴⁰ However, Sayeed believed that the sources of conflict were rooted in the tradition and culture of the regions that constituted Pakistan. The behavior of political leaders merely reflected these cleavages. East Bengal's political leadership had a degree of consensus on the issue of provincial autonomy. However, the West Pakistani political leaders were divided not only along parochial lines, but also along "feudal" cleavages, particularly in Punjab and Sindh. Ridden with these cleavages, the political leaders could neither create a consensus among themselves, nor effectively challenge the bureaucratic elites.⁴¹ They lacked the capacity to aggregate public interests and build political institutions. Sayeed's central thesis is that the incompetence and divisiveness of the political leaders brought about the collapse of the party system and facilitated the ascendancy of the bureaucratic- military elites.

Interference of the Heads of State

In a parliamentary democracy, the head of state has no room for political maneuvering. The office of the head of state is nominal and non-partisan. Simply speaking, the head of the state has no political role to perform as such. In violation of well-established parliamentary theory, Ghulam Muhammad and Iskander Mirza violated this norm and actively maneuvered, politics notwithstanding legal tradition and the dreadful consequences of their actions. The head of state (Governor General 1947-57, President 1956-58) gradually assumed effective power and manipulated the divided political leaders and weak political parties. He was directly involved in making and breaking governments at the federal and provincial levels. The active involvement of the head of state in day-to-day politics further fragmented the political forces and undermined the democratic process.

Two heads of state, Ghulam Muhammad (1951-1955) and Iskander Mirza (1955-1958) were former bureaucrats. Iskander Mirza started his career in the military but later shifted to the bureaucracy. They never made any secret of their contempt for parliamentary democracy and relied heavily on their connections in the senior bureaucracy and the military to manage political and state affairs.⁴² Their manipulation of political forces was well-known and they did not allow a Prime Minister to function freely. It may be noted that no elections were held at the national level. The two Constituent Assemblies were elected indirectly. Direct elections were held once at the provincial level during 1947-58. Not surprisingly, Ghulam Muhammad, in a show of utter disregard for democratic conventions, dismissed the Government of Khawaja Nazimudin in 1953 despite the fact that Khawaja Sahib enjoyed the confidence of the majority of the house. This led to what is known as 'constitutional coup' in the history of Pakistan. Ghulam Muhammad repeatedly used PRODA for his nefarious political ends. The constituent assembly reacted back and in a hasty show of power repealed PRODA; in the same session of the

constituent assembly powers of the Governor General were also curtailed. The constituent assembly under the premiership of Bogra had a bill passed in the Assembly making it obligatory for the Governor-General to act on the advice of the Prime Minister.⁴³ At that time the Governor General was on a foreign tour. Upon learning about this development, Ghulam Muhammad hurried back, and in a reactive move dissolved the first constituent assembly in September 1954.

The federal authorities, especially the head of states, interfered in provincial political and administrative affairs as well, thereby compromising the limited autonomy given to the provinces. The federal government interfered in provincial affairs through the Provincial Governor or exercised the special powers to remove provincial governments and impose direct rule by the federal government through the Governor. Provincial politics was linked so closely with federal politics that any realignment at the federal level or a change of federal government often produced political changes at provincial levels.

These political conditions were bound to compromise the ability of civilian governments to assert their leadership over the military. The military top brass got ample freedom to deal with their internal affairs and to consolidate their position. The political governments assigned to the military the highest consideration for formulation of Pakistan's foreign and security policies. The decision to join U.S. sponsored defence pacts in the mid-1950s was made at the initiative of the military top brass. General Ayub Khan, C-in-C of the Army played a key role in aligning Pakistan with the United States. The divided political leaders often cultivated ties with the military so as to strengthen their own positions in the domestic political context vis-à-vis their adversaries.⁴⁴

General Ayub, who was watching the situation very closely, wrote: "The President had thoroughly exploited the weaknesses in the Constitution and had got everyone with the political life of the

country utterly exposed and discredited."⁴⁵ However, President Mirza could not have pursued his Machiavellian policies without the backing of the military. Indeed, General Ayub as commander-in-chief, had been the most powerful member of the central government during 1954-55 when the integration of West Pakistan had been brought about through outright coercion. This policy had set in motion a chain reaction that President Mirza was trying to control through further central and bureaucratic manipulation. Mirza and Ayub were the two dominant leaders of a civil-military oligarchy that had decided that Pakistan could be governed best by tightening the grip of these two institutions on its government and people. This tradition of political interference by heads of state continued through Zia to Musharraf.

Finally, the last blow to the feeble and embryonic parliamentary democracy in Pakistan was dealt by President Iskander Mirza, who in a blatant show of opportunism declared Martial Law in October 1958 and appointed Ayub Khan as the CMLA. Such is the sad story of the failure of political leadership and its harmful fallouts on the body politic of Pakistan. Since then Pakistan has remained the victim of repeated military interventions and disruption of political processes.

Role of Judiciary

The greatest political development in modern times has been the substitution of medieval absolute monarchies by popular democracy under the philosophical assertion of popular sovereignty. Democracy means self-government or in the words of Abraham Lincoln "government of the people for the people by the people." One of the distinctive characters of democracy is the concept of limited government. It means that the powers of the executive are well defined by the constitution and they operate within the legal parameters provided therein. As opposed to monarchies and dictatorships democracy exists for the welfare of the people. All the democratic constitutions of the world provide a list of the fundamental rights of the people which are recognized

and guaranteed by the superior judiciary. In a democracy, the higher judiciary is not only the guardian of the constitution but also the guarantor of the fundamental rights of the people and a check on the arbitrary rule and excesses of the executive. Unfortunately, the higher judiciary in Pakistan did not play this role from Pakistan's inception, and became subservient to the executive. Chief Justice Munir in his epoch-making judgment in 1955 in the *Maulvi Tamizuddin Case* upheld the incomprehensible and arbitrary action of Governor General Ghulam Muhammad of the dissolution of the first constituent assembly under the Doctrine of Necessity. Justice Munir opened the door for military and civil political adventurists in Pakistan. Consequently, Pakistan has been suffering since the 1950's till the dismissal of Chief Justice Iftikhar Chaudhri by Pervez Musharraf in 2007.

The power struggle at the centre between the president and the prime minister created a crisis. Prime Minister Khwaja Nazimuddin, dismissed in April 1953, silently sulked. He bore the pain of insult but did not seek justice in a court of law. The emboldened Governor-General on October 24, 1954, dissolved the Constituent Assembly and declared a State of Emergency throughout Pakistan. He claimed that the Constituent Assembly had 'lost the confidence of the people and could no longer function.' The dissolution of the Constituent Assembly led to a series of 'legal disputes and a period of constitutional confusion and crisis.'⁴⁶ The President of the dissolved Assembly, Maulvi Tamizuddin, challenged the Proclamation as "unconstitutional, illegal, ultra vires, without jurisdiction, inoperative and void."⁴⁷ He challenged the Governor-General's power to appoint a new cabinet, and petitioned the Sindh Chief Court.

In accordance with the democratic traditions, the Sindh Court upheld Tamizuddin's contention and on February 4, 1955, ruled that the five members of the central government, who were not members of the Assembly, were not to exercise ministerial powers. The Federation of Pakistan and central ministers then appealed to the Federal Court, which held that the Sindh Chief

Court, in giving such a decision, had acted without jurisdiction, pointing out that section 223- A (of the Government of India Act 1935), under which the Sindh Court had given its judgment, was invalid as it had not received the Governor-General's assent under Section 5 of the Indian Independence Act, 1947.⁴⁸

The decision of the Federal Court, announced on March 26, 1955 had far-reaching repercussions: it implied that all the acts passed by the Constituent Assembly in its constituent capacity were invalid because none of them had received the assent of the Governor-General. The Federal Court thereby ruled that the Governor General's assent was necessary for all legislation passed by the Central Legislature.⁴⁹ Notwithstanding the dynamics of democracy Chief Justice Munir upheld the decision of the Governor General on technical grounds and paved the way for Ayub Khan's Martial Law.

Justice Muhammad Munir, a Judge in the colonial mould, upheld General Ayub's military takeover in 1958 on the basis of the doctrine of 'successful revolution being legal'.⁵⁰ Thus, the country paid a hefty price for granting judicial legitimacy to the draconian act. The higher judiciary failed to perform its basic role of the 'guardian of the constitution' in a democratic polity. Its fundamental failure was to check the arbitrary actions of heads of state in violation of established democratic traditions and provided the legal cover to the otherwise illegal and unconstitutional role thereby opening the door for subsequent military coups in Pakistan. Thus, the Higher Judiciary shares the burden of the militarization of Pakistan.

The Pakistan Army and the India Syndrome

In Pakistan, the army is the ultimate arbiter in the affairs of the state. Through most of Pakistan's history, the military has remained the central focus of power. For half of its existence, Pakistan has been under military rule or military dominated governance.⁵¹ The rest of the time, the army has still maintained a

significant influence in politics. In this context an astute scholar aptly comments, 'The army and bureaucracy have been the self-appointed guardians of the Pakistani state since independence. Political parties and constitutions have come and gone or been transformed, but these twin unelected institutions have remained the pillars of the state.'⁵²

The period between 1947-58 was characterized by the trappings of parliamentary governments, but the soul of democracy had long since been smothered by the absence of general elections and the lack of continuous participation through political parties as the vehicle for mobilization. From 1951, effective power was firmly in the hands of a bureaucratic- military oligarchy, notwithstanding successive changes in the form of governments and the installation of political parties and leaders in apparent charge of the state apparatus.⁵³ The early military-bureaucracy establishment maintained its dominant role, which was facilitated by the disarray of political parties that could not organize political support.

There was little military organization to speak of when Pakistan was created in 1947. Soon after her birth, the small-sized and inexperienced Pakistani military moved towards an improvement in resources, and by 1958 the 'ex-colonial' military was in a position to be able to challenge the civilian political institutions and took over total control of the political system. Despite a weak military organizational establishment, the Pakistani armed forces enjoyed three massive political advantages over civilian organizations, as suggested by S.E. Finer, namely: a marked superiority in organization, a highly emotionalized symbolic status, and a monopoly of arms. Because of the peculiar features of the military organization hierarchy, discipline, cohesiveness, *esprit de corps*, and the military virtues such as bravery, obedience, self-abnegation and patriotism, the Pakistani military formed a more prestigious and highly organized corporation than any civilian body.⁵⁴

It has also been argued that Pakistan's pursuit of parity with India in defence potential put army into a commanding position in the corridors of power.⁵⁵ This phenomenon, also known as the 'India syndrome', continued to operate for half a century after Partition.⁵⁶ It has been pointed out that threat perceptions vis-à-vis India produced two major schools of thought among the elite: one conservative, which looked at India as a potentially hegemonic power in the region; the other ultraconservative, which saw India seeking to destroy Pakistan at the first opportunity.⁵⁷ In addition to the internal crisis, the Pakistani political leaders and the elites alike perceived a threat from India. This insecurity, combined with the Kashmir dispute, brought the military into the political arena almost from the inception of Pakistan. In this India-Pakistan tension, a militarily strong Pakistan was considered imperative. This encouraged the military elites to participate in the political arena. Both Jinnah and Liaquat were conscious of the weakness of Pakistan's military strength vis-à-vis India. The Kashmir War (1948) and cease-fire ensured that in Pakistani politics the military elites would not be staying out of Pakistani politics for too long.

The administrative and political weaknesses of the country and the high ambitions of the army's top brass introduced the military factor into its national politics at an early stage of its life. The country was caught in a vicious circle in which political instability created opportunities for military interference. The egocentric commanders intervened to preserve the unity of the motherland. In a society in which individuals overshadowed institutions and a democratic political system was preached but not practiced, the fibre of national unity remained weak and under stress.⁵⁸

The civilian government relied on the Army for the restoration of their authority in situations of law and order and to cope with natural calamities. These operations helped to build the image of the military and exposed the weakness of the political leaders. These 'aids to civilian authorities' operations enabled the senior commanders to get firsthand knowledge of the troubled

political situation and provided them with experience of handling civilian affairs. This also created the impression at a popular level that the military could salvage any situation when the civil governments failed and that the latter were able to survive largely because the military came to the rescue in difficult situations.

The military take overs and the imposition of martial laws in October 1958, March 1969, July 1977 and October 1999 were preceded by law and order situations and serious legitimacy crises for the then existing governments. Many sections of public opinion looked towards the military to rescue the country from a difficult and troubled situation. Ayub succeeded in seizing power because he had the support of the military and could control the actions of Mirza, who abrogated the constitution of 1956 and ushered in martial law in Pakistan. There is evidence to suggest that "a broad tactical outline" to impose martial law in the country was being prepared and that it received the final approval of General Ayub on September 20, 1958.⁵⁹ Later, even when Iskander Mirza was still president, General Ayub disclosed that it was at his initiative that the president imposed martial law. "I said to the President: 'Are you going to act or are you not going to act? It is your responsibility to bring about change if you do not, which heaven forbid, we shall force a change.'⁶⁰

Therefore, the military faced no problem in displacing a political government and justifying its assumption of power. The generals could point out to the political chaos, maladministration and corruption under the ousted regime.⁶¹ Like many a Third World country, Pakistan inherited a fragile and volatile political system. A distinctive characteristic of these countries has been that political leadership had no experience in self-government. In most cases the political leadership came from the feudal base. Such leadership had her vested interests and could not translate the newly won national freedoms into vibrant and dynamic democracy. In Pakistan's peculiar setting, after the sudden demise of the father of the nation, political leadership utterly failed to meet any of the challenges it faced. Political wrangling among the

freewheeling and power hungry politicians during the first decade of Pakistan's existence created a dismal situation in the country. The political leadership lost its prestige. This created a political void in the country and the ambitious military leadership stepped into politics to fill the gap.

Homogeneity of the Pakistan Army

The military's strength in Pakistan is also a result of its strong ethnic and regional cohesion. The Punjab provides the majority of officers, followed by the North West Frontier Province and Tribal Areas. The Army officer cadre and other ranks are predominantly Punjabis and Pakhtuns.⁶² The officers of these two ethnic groups have not only developed strong mutual ties but have also established links with the civilian bureaucratic elite, most of whom have a similar ethnic background. In fact, only three Army Chiefs in Pakistan's history came from outside of the Punjab and NWFP. These were General Mohammad Musa (COAS, 1958-66; from Balochistan, but not a Baloch), General Mirza Aslam Beg (COAS 1988-1989; an Urdu-speaking refugee from U.P., India, settled in Karachi, Sindh), and General Pervez Musharraf (COAS, 1998-2007; an Urdu-speaking refugee from Delhi, initially settled in Karachi). The Punjabi-Pakhtun composition of the Army has been a major source of grievance for Sindhis and the Baloch, who are underrepresented in the Army. This ethnic imbalance has enhanced the military's efficacy in politics.⁶³

A theory of military intervention maintains that this has been a cover for continued Punjabi domination over the rest of Pakistan. This view is strongly held by politicians, intellectuals, and journalists, in Sindh, and in Balochistan. Not only are Sindhis and Baluchis underrepresented in both the officer corps and the ranks, but there are important differences in regional styles. Historically considered, tensions have existed between the Punjab and these other areas. Then, too, there may be strategic considerations that inadvertently reinforce the impression of Punjabi dominance.⁶⁴ Thus, the relative homogeneity of the Pakistani Army, dominated

by Punjabis and Pakhtuns, facilitated its direct and indirect participation in the body politic of the country.

Absence of Land Reforms

Large landholdings or feudalism are medieval hangovers and inherently opposed to democracy. Landlordism and democracy cannot go together hand in hand because they are the antithesis of each other. Landlords are a privileged class, with vested interests to serve through politics and are status quo oriented. They are averse to change. Democracy exists for the welfare of all without discrimination. This is a paradox in the sense that both cannot coexist under one political system. Europe and North America abolished large landholdings to allow democracy. India followed suit in the first decade of her independence. Neither Ayub Khan nor Bhutto nor any other ruler in Pakistan was earnest in the abolition of huge landholdings, as landlords are the most powerful indigenous class in Pakistan. Electoral politics being highly biased towards rural areas, landlords predominate in the political landscape of Pakistan. The bureaucracy and the army also mainly come from that class. By virtue of that class status of bureaucrats and military officers, the big landlord lobby is directly and deeply entrenched in the Pakistani state.⁶⁵

Politically, landlords are the most effectively organized class in the country: unlike the subordinate classes, landlord-led factions dominate the rural vote.⁶⁶ Democratic norms and institutions have failed to compete with more powerful traditional forces that are highly resistant to change.⁶⁷ In the absence of land reforms no truly national and educated middle class emerged which could play a positive role in the affairs of the country. Consequently, Pakistan remained hijacked politically by big landlords of Sindh, Balochistan and Southern Punjab. At the top emerged a 'civil-military-political' oligarchy always looking for backdoor opportunities to rule the country.

Absence of Independent Election Commission

Another factor which facilitated the army's rise to power in Pakistan was that the country had no democratic elections for eleven years after Independence, and democratic values had scarcely struck roots.⁶⁸ An independent and powerful election commission is the guarantor of free, fair and multi-party based elections. Taking only two examples from the democratic list of the world, America and India are the references in point. The election commissions in these two countries are very powerful and prevent any sort of rigging, whether pre-poll or otherwise during elections by the contemporary executive (ruling party) or anyone else. The election commission in Pakistan has always been the favorite of the ruling party. Unlike India, both pre-poll and during the polling day rigging more or less with certain exceptions have become a permanent feature of Pakistan's politics. The national elections of 1977, 1990, 1993 and 1997 are cases in reference. The Election Commission, usually under influence of the ruling party, has never played the democratic role assigned to it. Soon after the result has been announced, post-elections blame games begin, culminating in political wrangling between the mainstream political parties and sometimes degenerating into national crises leading to martial law. The military coups of 1958 and 1977 are cases in reference. As Veena Kukreja observes: "In Pakistan, the vitiation of the electoral process led to the continuous narrowing and increasing unrepresentativeness and unresponsiveness of a self-perpetuating political elite that so irretrievably discredited the parliamentary structure and process that it got brushed aside by the military elite by a decade after its birth."⁶⁹

International Factor

The post-World War II world order was known for its rigid bipolarity. The whole world was more or less divided into two hostile blocs, the capitalist bloc led by the U.S. and Communist bloc led by USSR.⁷⁰ These Cold War years were characterized by ideological military and political confrontations between these

two powerful blocs and were locked in a struggle for dominance in world politics.

Both blocs were looking for allies worldwide. America invited India in the early 1950s to become a part of U.S. sponsored policy of containment against Communist block. But Nehru refused to identify India with the 'Western World and toed the path of neutrality in the East-West confrontation. Pakistan welcomed the U.S. move and happily became a part of U.S. sponsored military pacts-SEATO and CENTO respectively.⁷¹ The Pakistani Army was at the centre of this move. For the U.S. it was easy to deal with military leadership than political elite. America extended her tacit support to the military intervention into politics in Pakistan in 1950s. Whereas Pakistan's real concern was her security vis-à-vis India. The nature of international politics during the Cold War years was a major factor of the military interventions in Pakistani politics.

As a result, America's patronage of Pakistan's military rulers contributed to the inability of democracy to take root in the country. In the face of Indian hostility, Pakistan thought it would be best to meet security needs by forming an alliance with America and participating in U.S led Western treaties (SEATO and CENTO) in the 1950s. Despite all its talk of democracy, the U.S. finds its own interests are better served when the military has a very prominent role in Pakistan's national matters. This is because the U.S. finds it easy to deal with an unelected dictator rather than an elected political leadership that represents the whole nation. The history of external powers' interest and intervention in Pakistan's internal matters is long and sad.

The U.S. patronized General Ayub Khan so that it would have an ally in the region. It wanted to check the spread of communism, of which Soviet Russia and China were the two main protagonists. The U.S. fully backed General Zia-ul-Haq with respect to the Soviet invasion of Afghanistan and Pakistan's support to the Afghan resistance. This was the U.S. strategy even

during the Musharraf regime. Declaring its attack on Afghanistan in October 2001 as a “war against terrorism,” the U.S. enlisted General Pervez Musharraf’s support as a “close ally” in this war. Before this, the General did not enjoy favor from the U.S. The perception in Pakistan is that as long as the U.S. needs General Musharraf, it will continue to support him regardless of how that affects democracy in Pakistan.

Conclusion

In short, Pakistan inherited the well established tradition of supremacy of civil-political over military institution under British political theory. Within a few years of her independence, Pakistan encountered the ever growing influence of military into politics. Ultimately, unlike India, Pakistan degenerated into a praetorian state with dreadful political, social and economic fallouts. This process of militarization of Pakistan owes its transformation to multiple variables as have been discussed. No single factor can be cited as the sole cause; rather, a cluster of causes led to the intervention of military into politics in Pakistan.

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