

Military Dominance in Post-Colonial States; A Case Study of Pakistan

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Abstract

All colonies got independence in the twentieth century through fighting or political movements against the colonizers or got independence without any struggle. mostly in these (post-colonial) states, military is dominant where political institutions are weak. Pakistan is one of these states, where army waged war against the democracy successfully and ruled directly half of the independence period. It indirect ruled the country through installing or dissolution of civilian governments. Now, they run the state from behind through giving instructions to the civilians, legalized its power using rivalry with India (Shah, 2020). Coincidentally, during the military rule, Pakistan got economic well-being and remained stable (Burkey, 2010). It is now ray of hope that the military will disassociate itself from politics and become neutral. This paper will discuss the reasons behind the military dominance and provide a solution how to get rid from this dominance without hurting people confidence in the military and without wrong labeling it.

Keywords: *Military , Dominance , Post-Colonial, Democracy, Pakistan*

Introduction

Era between 17th century to 19th century is generally remembered as an age of colonization. It was such a practice through which powerful states used to acquire political control of weaker states for politico-economic purposes. Hence they started to extract their resources and to shift to their home states. During that time, Dutch, Portuguese, Spanish and British were colonial masters respectively in North America, North South America, most of Central America, North Africa and South Asia regions. They conquered different areas for achieving political and economic objectives. During great depression in Europe these Empires started to decline. However, further these colonial powers declined during second World War. On one side, these powerful states were economically declining, on the other side USA pressurized the colonizers for the independence of colonies. Also in these areas, Nationalist movements started. Resultantly, colonizer started decolonization. This process done in two phases. First phase started soon after the second World War in which Middle East and South East Asian colonies got independence and emerged as new states. Second phase started after the 1955 in

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North Africa and sub-Saharan African nations got independence. These newly born States now known as post-colonial states. (The beginnings of decolonisation and the emergence of the non-aligned states, n.d.)

Military played a dominant role in these states.. Roundabout four hundred and seventy one coup were registered worldwide between 1950 to 2014 (Muhammad Nauman Hayat, Kaneez Fatima, Uzma Mukhtar, Safia Bano, 2016). Mostly, Asian and African states experienced military direct rule. In Myanmar civil government overthrown by military coup¹ in 1962 and rule till 2011 and again overthrown the civil government on February 1, 2021 (Goldmen, 2021). Bangladesh civilian secular government of Mujib ur Rehman overthrown by military in 1975 (coup led by Zia ur Rehman) (Maniruzzaman, 1976) for Islamic government. Again, military coup overthrown the government in 1982 (Auerbach, 1982) and also many attempts done by military to overthrow the government in 1996, 2007, 2009, 2011. Nigeria was another British colony which experienced military rule from 1966 to 1999 (News, 1999). Sudan is an African country which got independence after 1st world war and there also civilian government of Omar ul Bashir was overthrown by military coup led by General Abdel Fateh Burhan (Aljazeera, Thousands rally in Sudan against military coup, 2022). All of them, Thailand had faced more than other states eleven successful coup attempts. So, Pakistan is not an exceptional case where military is dominant.

This paper will explain the post-colonial states and military domination in these states. This paper will provide detailed note on the reasons behind the military dominance in the Pakistan. This paper will explain how military domination can be reduced and what steps will be taken to be control it? It also elaborates the partition legacies behind the military dominance.

Literature Review

There is a lot of literature on military dominance in the “Islamic Republic of Pakistan” (Pakistan, 2018). This study reviews the existing literature on the dominance of military in Pakistan. This abundance of literature is identified two school of thoughts ; first is pro military or State. that justified the military role in politics because of weak political institutions. Second is considered as anti-military known as liberal led by Ayesha Jalal, Ayesha Siddiqqa-Aga and others. According to Ayesha Sadiqqa military intervened in politics only to secure business interest. She mentioned the driver of the objectives of the army to intervene in politics; “political economy of military's business activities and the personal economic stakes of the military personnel” (Khawaja, 2007). Ayesha Jalal identify the reasons of military intervention in politics because of the weaknesses and incompetence of the democratic political forces (Muni, 1993).

Now a days, this is the topic of hot discussion not only among the national and international researchers, scholars, and analysts but also among the common men in the Pakistan specifically after the dissolution of PTI government. It is also the focus of international media attention. Everyone want to know about the topic

¹ It is defined as the “overthrow of the current government through power by military” (Muhammad Nauman Hayat, Kaneez Fatima, Uzma Mukhtar, Safia Bano, 2016). It is not a peaceful transit of power from one party to other.

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because wanted to know why military intervene in politics and how can it be kept away from politics?

Military role in Pakistan

Military is an institution that viewed with highly respect all over the state because of its activeness, professionalism, well-disciplined and capable to deal with all emergency situations. And most of all, it has the support of religious leaders because they mold the public opinion during their speeches and sermons. It is sometimes called the Mullah-Military nexus. Military play an important role in Pakistan's politics. Military tried to achieve her objectives by portraying Indian threat. Polity's adversarial relations with India play a key role in the formation of this threat perception and national security plans. (Saddiqa-Aga, 2001) From day first to today, it is successfully portrayed Indian threat because of weak political leadership, people trusted on the military, border issues with Afghanistan and India particularly Kashmir issue.

Absence of middle or local government in Pakistan is cause of instability and weak administration, in result military take advantage of this situation and intervene in government business. According to Aristotle local governments are guarantee of stability of the polity. (HAQ, 2009)

Refugees problem was the biggest factor in the strengthening the army and also bureaucracy. (BRASS, 2010) Analyst Faisal Pervaiz mention two reasons behind the military dominance in Pakistan first is that Pakistan got 17% of revenue from colonial India but inherited 33% military. Second reason is immediately emergence of issue on Muslim's majority State Kashmir. It fueled a belief within Pakistanis that Hindu's India is against Pakistan 'Muslims' unfortunately Indian governments practiced against Pakistan and Muslims helped this narrative. (Worldview, 2016) When military controlled the public office, development, progress and stability took place in the Pakistan. Major reason of it is long term rule and policy and autocratic type of regime². Literature identified two political system in Pakistan democracy and dictatorship. Pakistan experienced Westminster form of democracy and "military coup as dictatorship" (Muhammad Nauman Hayat, Kaneez Fatima, Uzma Mukhtar, Safia Bano, 2016).

Role of military

Military is a political institution that is responsible to secure the country from foreign aggression. Today, each State has her permanent army. It performed its duties under the civilian government. It has very prestigious position in each and every polity. Military institution is established for the defense of the nation. It specially trained for the fighting war. So, it well equipped with all modern weapons which are used for war. Government support and allocated maximum budget to them than the other departments.

War is not a permanent phenomenon³ (Malik, 1999) so, military personals mostly remained in their camps only few numbers are on the borders. Military are called

² Ruler is not responsible before the people nor anyone else.

³ It is a situation or fact which "observed to exist or happen, especially one whose cause or explanation is in question" like earthquake, tsunamis are natural phenomena.

by the government in case of emergency. In this way army support the civilian institutions because military are well equipped with tools, it increased the strength of civilian institution to deal with emergency. These are the constitutional duties of the armies as in Pakistan, according to article 245 of the constitution of 1973, military is bound to help the other institutions in case of emergency (Pakistan, 2018). When the situation is out of control and police are failed to maintained law and order in the State then, armies may be called by civil servants or by public officials.

Sometimes armies work as an interest group for achieving some benefits from the government. They do propaganda to achieve these goals. Government accept their demands because it secured from foreign aggression and conflict between government and military result in overthrow of the government. It is very well disciplined, organized and one of the more powerful institution of the state in nature. Formally they can advise the government but in practice, particularly in developing states, can also influence the policies related to the foreign affairs and defense.

Why Military Seize power?

Formally, military perform its duties under the civilian command (king or president). It is common in all state. Sometimes civilian government create such a situation in which it is necessary for the army to intervene in politics for public or the self-interests. There conflict of interest arises between the military and government or government become unable to manage the state business or government may unable to protect the rights of the people. When government unable to resolve political issues politically like no trust motion against the ex-premier of Pakistan Imran Khan Shb, other institutions intervene in government. There are also many other factors behind the seizing power by the military.

In this regard economic factor play an important role. If the polity is economically strong and stable then military cannot seize the political power. Military coups are not become success without public support. Like in Turkey coup detat attempted to seize power of government of Recep Tayyip Erdogan on 15 July 2016 (Aljazeera, Turkey failed coup attempt: All you need to know, 2017) Public stand against the army in support of their government. In china, army also attempted to topple the regime of Mao in 1971 but failed (Scobell, 1995). Another factor is also behind this that is crisis of the legitimacy of the ruler. If the government loses its legitimacy then army easily topple down the government as in Pakistan. It experienced such a coup led by General Muhammad Ayub Khan in October 1958 (Magazine, 2011) and also on 5 July 1977 by General Zia Ul Haq overthrown the PM Zulfikar Ali Bhutto government (Reporters, 2015).

Military may be seized power due to conflict with the civilian government. (HEYWOOD, 2013) Pakistan also experienced such type of coups on 12 October 1999. Chief of army staff General Pervaiz Musharraf topple down the civilian government of Mian Muhammad Nawaz Sharif (KHAN, 1999). Sometimes international environment become favorable for the military to seize government power. In some cases, external forces support the military to seize power for securing their own interest. They provide all types of aids to military established regimes. For example, Pakistan has very good relations with United States of

Military Dominance in Post-Colonial States; A Case Study of Pakistan America only during the military regimes.

When the government not fulfilled the economic or business interest of the Army, in this condition Military can seize government power. For this, Ayesha Saddiqa used term 'Milbus'⁴. Religion, ethnic and regional conflicts also encourage the military to seize power. In short, there are only two main reasons of overthrow of civilian rule is conflict between the political and military leadership and legitimacy crises of ruler.

Military as alternative to Civilian Rule

Generally, military is considered as alternative to civilian government. It is not true in real sense because both military and civilian governments are against each other in method of govern the people but it is right in this sense that military provide alternative civilian rule by putting civilian rule. Military seized power in two ways. First method is very common in which it overthrows the civilian government and hold all power in their own hands and a council formed comprised of military officials, pro-military civil servants or bureaucrats, and politicians. During this type of government, all political activities are banned. Military use powers and controlled the all State's institutions. People rights curtailed and strictly checks on media, censorship of broadcasting and publications and so on. Sometimes military government chief founded their political parties or collaborated with one or more political parties to legalize or legitimate their rule. As in Bangladesh both General Zia Ur Rehman and General Mohammad Ershad founded political parties respectively Bangla National party and Jatiya Party (Blair, 2010). Also, in Pakistan, General Ayyub khan got support of Conventional Muslim League⁵ (Qureshi, 1966), General Zia got support of those parties which are against the Prime Minister Zulfiqar Ali Bhutto, and General Pervaiz Musharraf got support of Muslim League Q (Editors, 2018).

In second method military ruled indirectly. In this practice military topple down the existing rule and installed new civilian government. Newly installed government receive instructions for the military and follow it. In simple, command given by military officers and followed by civilian government. Only civilian face presented before the public, actually government business run by military. Apparently, the civilian government is doing everything but in reality, the military is doing everything. With this, the military maintains its good image before the public.

How to control the military?

Military controlled by two methods objective or liberal, subjective and penetration method or model.

1. Objective methods applied in developed states or where political leadership is strong. In which military keep itself away from political matters and focused on their duties. There is clear division between political and military duties and responsibilities. They are formally subordinate to civilians. They

⁴ Milbus term coined by Ayesha Saddiqa in his book 'Inside Pakistan's Military Economy'. She defined it as "military capital used for the personal benefit of military fraternity". (Khawaja, 2007)

⁵ Founded with the support of President Ayub khan by ch. Khaliq uz Zaman in 1962. It is also known as king party.

acknowledged the civilian supremacy and respect it. They understand that policy making is responsibility of civilians not theirs. So, they do not try to influence them but give them only advice. They do not have authority to challenge the policies, and decisions made by the civilian. When USA Senate called the army chief General Mark Milli, he came there and answered their questions related to rapid withdrawal of army from the Afghanistan. He said, he advised the president but he rejected it. Next question was very interesting, a Senator asked that you are chief military advisor of the president why you did not resign? He replied that "sir as a senior military officer resigning as protest, it is really a serious thing as a political act. My job is to provide advice. My main responsibility is to provide legal advice or best military advice to the president and that is my legal requirement. That would be if the president does not have to agree with that advice. We do not make decisions just because we are generals and it would be a terrible act for a political officer to just resign because my advice does not take. This country does not want generals. We just follow, what order we accept and what not, that is not our job." This strict political neutrality of the military offices also found in UK and Switzerland etc. (HEYWOOD, 2013)

2. Subjective model founded in dictatorship and one-party rule. In which leaders are not compromised on their supremacy. They politicized the military institution so that they controlled it strictly. As in USSR under Stalin; he removed 600 senior military officers and 30000 junior officers from their offices. (HEYWOOD, 2013) People's Republic of China, Nazi Germany, fascist Italy are also best examples of subjective or penetration model.

In context of Pakistan with these methods one thing is very necessary that people support the civilian government instead of military in political matters.

Conclusion

In general, military have been and are dominant in the states that gained independence in the twentieth century. So, Pakistan is not only the state in which the military is dominant. There are many reasons behind this which we cannot deny because it is a fact. On the one side, political institutions are weak in Pakistan from day one. On the other side, both the political leaders; founding father of the nation Quaid-e-Azam and first Prime Minister Choudhry Liaquat Ali Khan died at a time when the nation was in the dire need of them. The circumstances that followed were beyond the reach of ordinary politicians. When the political leadership failed to resolve political issues, the military had the opportunity to intervene in politics. At that time, the people had lost confidence in the political leaders, people welcomed the interventions of the military in politics and martial law. Of course, the generals had personal interests behind it and it took time. Although its shape has changed from direct to indirect, indirect to direct, it has dominated the State ever since. Military domination can be reduced but not eliminated because it is not an easy task. It is possible only if politicians sit together and to decide that from today, they will resolve their issues in the parliament and not allow the military to intervene in their affairs and politics. This requires that all political parties be on a single page and determine that we will handle all issues ourselves.

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