

The Military and the Praetorian Regimes in Pakistan Politics: Political Usurpers or Protectors of an Incipient Democracy?

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Abstract

Pakistan seems to be a classic example of a praetorian state with regimes oscillating on both sides of the middle point of a military rule↔democracy continuum, where the armed forces – often in collusion with the civil bureaucracy – is lodged in the centre of governance, dictating the actual course of actions, even when there is a civilian regime. Even now when Pakistan is supposedly going through a new round of parliamentary democracy, the military is likely to continue to play an important role in the politics of Pakistan, particularly in the backdrop of the military operations in Swat and surrounding districts which comes amid longstanding US pressure on its Muslim ally to root out Al-Qaeda and Taliban hideouts along the border with Afghanistan. Consequently, there are reasons to be worried that praetorianism may persist in Pakistan.

Introduction

The paper contends that the military is still the main actor in Pakistan's politics despite Pakistan's latest transition to democracy and that it continues to play its role as 'guardian', 'protector', and 'custodian' of the state, particularly at a time when Pakistan is beset with problems related to the so-called 'Islamic militancy'. In fulfilling these roles, the Pakistan military influences politics and the social and political correlation of forces in ways that undermine the ability of civilian regimes to build and consolidate a democratic society. The point of departure of this paper is that the consolidation of democracy in Pakistan has been a slow and frustrating process despite clear victories for the democratic forces in the 1988, 1993, 1997 and 2008 elections.

The persistence of weak national institutions, civilian corruption, violence, and general 'ungovernability' has led to military interventions in Pakistan on four occasions (in 1958, 1969, 1977, and 1999). For nearly 60 years, Pakistan has witnessed a pendulum swing between civilian and military administrations. Different types of governments and regimes, both praetorian (army's involvement in politics) and democratic, succeeded one another but none were able to create an atmosphere of sustained democratic development. Throughout the entire period of Pakistan's existence, the military presented itself as a very powerful political actor which moved gradually from an intermittent type of interventionist to a new and sustained type of military oligarchy.

In the backdrop of the situation stated above it is imperative that an analysis of the military rules and the subsequent praetorian regimes in Pakistan is made in order to shed some light on the problems and limitations of military interventions in politics. The belief that, in the absence of a proper political leadership, the military regimes can provide a viable shortcut to political and institutional development has proven to be erroneous in the case of Pakistan as its experiences with military rule and praetorian regimes have, so far, shown that military interventions in Pakistan's political life have actually hampered its process of political institution building. As a frame of reference for this analysis of Pakistan's experiences with military rules and praetorian regimes, this paper begins with a review of the theoretical debates on the implications of military interventions - direct or indirect – for political, societal, and economic development of a given state.

The Military, Political Legitimacy and Democratic Institutions: The Spectacles of the Praetorian Rule

Following its early articulation by Samuel Finer (1962), the idea that the level of political culture in a given society (and the concomitant strength of its civil institutions) is decisive for the regime's vulnerability to military intervention has influenced a host of later studies (for example, Huntington 1968; Perlmutter 1981; Rapoport 1982; Luckham 1971). Finer's (*ibid*) conceptual framework clearly supports the assumption that Western democracies have achieved a 'mature political culture' through which civilian institutions are strongly legitimated, whereas political and social institutions elsewhere are relatively weak and lacking in legitimacy (Berghahn: 1981; Khan et al. 2008).

The list of military interventions in the developing countries is long, although less common in recent times. Even the weakest army is the strongest coercive institution in a country and possesses enough firepower to displace a civilian regime. Moreover, the professional traits of the military are conducive to taking over political control quickly. The structure is hierarchical and centralised, emphasising discipline and obedience to rank and office rather than to individuals. Channels of communication stress clarity and rapidity of message transmission. Yet, simultaneously, internal secrecy is both a requirement and a habit. However, military regimes do not enjoy clear-cut advantages as governments. They face the same economic constraints and social cleavages as faced by the civilian regimes. Instead of a society taking on the military virtues of order and discipline under a spell of military rule, often the soldiers themselves acquire the politicians' vices of drift, strife, factionalism and corruption (Clapham, Clamp and Philip: 1985).

Huntington's (1957) work represented an important starting point for developing a theoretical framework to account for the problems of military intervention in politics. Huntington (*ibid*) depicted praetorianism as a result of a developmental lag of political institutionalisation in relation to socioeconomic development and social mobilisation. Huntington considered the problem of 'ungovernability' as the most characteristic trait of

mass praetorianism. In praetorian societies, different forms of regimes usually follow each other in a 'seemingly unpredictable and bewildering way'. According to him, what distinguishes praetorianism from both authoritarian and democratic polities is the absence of stable institutional arrangements of any kind. In the praetorian scenario, feeble political institutions find themselves at the mercy of unruly and powerful social forces, which 'colonise' the former to advance their private interests. A 'colonised' political system lacks any autonomy from societal groups as various vested interests and individuals utilise public office for the promotion of their private and/or corporate interests.

In a praetorian regime, Huntington (*ibid*) considered two main political roads to institution-building. The first one has the military as the central agent of the process of institutionalisation; the second one relies on the organisational skills of political parties. Huntington's confidence in the military as a potential institution-builder is built on the particular organisational characteristics of the military organisation. It has been Huntington's belief that the military institution's emphasis on professionalism, discipline, hierarchy, and so on immunises it from politicisation. In a praetorian context, characterised by generalised politicisation, the military appears as the only neutral depoliticising power. Only the military, as he argued, is in a position of being able to rally the people behind shared national goals because their traditional disdain for politics makes them an impartial power that stands above narrow party-political interests and factionalism.

Following similar line of arguments, Finer (*ibid*), an authority on the role of army in a country's politics identified three characteristics that place the army in a massive advantage over the civilian organisations. These are: (i) a markedly superior organisation (ii) a highly emotive symbolic status, and (iii) a monopoly of arms. While putting forward his framework of analysis for army intervention, Finer highlighted four levels of army interference in politics. At the *first* level, the army has influence over civil authorities. This refers to the efforts to convince the civil authorities by appealing to their reason or their emotions. This level is the constitutional and legitimate one, entirely consistent with the supremacy of the civil power. The *second* level is the level of pressures, or blackmail. Here the military seeks to convince the civil power by the threat of some sanction. The span of such pressure is wide. It can range from hints or actions that are just barely constitutional (i.e., so-called 'playing by the rules') at one end to intimidation and threats that are clearly unconstitutional at the other. The *third* level, however, is that of displacement, i.e., the removal of one cabinet or ruler for another cabinet or ruler. This is achieved by violence or threat of violence. And the *fourth* level sweeps away the civilian regime and establishes the military in its place. This is the fourth and most complete level of intervention, the level of supplement.

Nordlinger (1970) expanded Huntington's and Finer's arguments further by highlighting that there are three patterns of praetorian rule: moderator, guardian, and ruler. In the first type, the army does not seize the government but exercises 'veto powers'. If a civilian government fails to modify itself, the army can then execute a 'displacement coup' to

bring a more malleable civilian government within weeks. In the second type, the army plays the role of ‘guardians’ by displacing the civilian government and assuming control of the country till a civilian government is restored. In the third role - the ‘ruler type role’ - the army takes control as a trouble-shooter in political crises and believes in the implementation of a number of important reforms in the political, economic, and social system. This type is more ambitious and far-reaching than the other two. The praetorian rulers are concerned with changes in the basic structure of the society by labelling and discarding the previous ones as useless.

At this stage it may be useful to touch upon the notion of subservience of the military to civilian authority in a constitutional democracy. This idea, as Grundy (1968) has pointed out, follows a tradition that goes back all the way to Plato. In this context, Huntington (1957), however, has challenged what he called the simple identification of civilian control with democratic government, and, military control with absolute or totalitarian government. He argued that it may still be possible for the military to undermine civilian control in a democracy by acquiring power through legitimate processes whereas, in a totalitarian system, it may be possible to control the power of the military by various means, including creating competing military or paramilitary units or by staffing the totalitarian regimes with civilians, employing them as advisors or commissars, for example.

While Huntington’s (*ibid*) concept of military professionalism has remained influential, the spate of post-independence military coups in the new states of Africa and Asia from the late 1950s prompted a more critical examination of the relation between civilian government and the military. Some commentators (see, for examples, Perlmutter 1980; Valenzuela 1985; Ashkenazy 1994), indeed, suggested that the presumed neutrality of the military and its separation from politics was at best a Western concept, if not a complete fiction. Not only did military intervention sometimes occur in response to the breakdown of democratic civil regimes – with the ostensible aim of ‘restoring democracy’ and often with substantial popular support – but in some states, notably in the communist ‘people’s republics’ and the ‘guided democracy’ of Indonesia under President Sukarno, an alternative model of ‘democracy’ was espoused, in which the military was seen as an integral part of the political system rather than, as in Huntington’s formulation, an agency outside the political realm. Of course, democracy, as defined here, may be quite minimalist in its approach, referring primarily to any political system that broadly satisfies three essential and generally accepted criteria: (i) meaningful competition for government office, (ii) a high level of political participation, and (iii) a level of civil and political liberty sufficient to ensure competition and participation (Diamond, Linz and Lipset: 1988).

From this perspective, democracy requires that not only the armed forces be subject to civilian control, but that those civilians who control the military and police must themselves be subject to the ‘democratic processes’. In other words, a democratically-

elected political regime can also face a crisis of legitimacy if anybody in this regime is seen by the general populace as operating beyond the accepted perimeters of the rule of law or as utterly corrupt and/or incompetent. This can, in turn, provide a sort of 'inferred legitimacy' to any military intervention and/or praetorian rule in the name of 'safeguarding the constitution' or 'playing by the rule'. This can then even endow the incoming praetorian regimes with some sort of 'popular acceptance', at least initially, as happened in Pakistan in 1977 and 1999, in Thailand in 2006 and in Bangladesh in 2007. The 'inferred legitimacy', in this context, refers to the fundamental principle of the democratic model of civilian supremacy in civil-military relations in which an important distinction is made between a state and a legitimate government.

Once military intervenes in a political system, the subsequent transition from a direct authoritarian military rule to a democratic one often follows a process of incremental rather than immediate civilian control where the military still dominates the system. The political leadership - as distinguished from bureaucratic, administrative, and managerial leadership - is chiefly recruited from the military, or from groups sympathetic, or at least not antagonistic, to the military and is protected through constitutional changes. These are the basic characteristics of a praetorian regime.

As is evident from the foregoing discussion, a modern praetorian regime may emerge when civilian institutions lack legitimacy or are in a position to be dominated by the military. Praetorianism has always existed. At present, praetorianism often appears in states which are in the early and middle stages of economic development and political mobilisation. In underdeveloped states, the army is propelled into political action when civilian groups fail to legitimise themselves. Military intervention in civilian affairs is not always precipitated by military groups. In some cases, such as in Pakistan, Bangladesh and Thailand, civilians turned to the military for political support when civilian political structures and institutions failed, when factionalism developed, and when constitutional means for governance were weak.

The ways in which the praetorian regimes operate and dictate the course of society at critical moments are not predictable. They vary depending on social developments, global political dynamics, and the nature of the forces the regimes oppose. This is one of the major differences between the archaic praetorian regimes and the modern ones. The modern praetorian regimes possess the methods of intervention and influence that do not necessarily require resorting to a *coup d'état* or direct rule of the military bureaucracy. A praetorian republic may keep the boundaries of the pluralist democracy relatively porous under the tutelage of the praetorian powers, but it will do so only as long as it enjoys a solid circle of support around it.

Pakistan's Road to Praetorianism: Failure in Democratic Experimentation

Pakistan is a classic case of a unique combination of intermittent direct military rule and praetorianism because when the army did transfer power, from time to time, to the civilian governments, the transfer of power was never complete. In other words, in

Pakistan, the return of the 'civilians' to government was not equivalent to the 'civilianization' of power, even after free and representative elections, because the army always maintained hegemony over the larger political domain. All five of Pakistan's elected governments have been removed by the army, on each occasion with the stated or implicit support of the President of the Republic. In 1993 and 1996, the civilian governments were installed, and on the three remaining occasions (Ayub Khan 1958, Zia ul Haq 1977, and Pervez Musharraf 1999), military leaders seized power for themselves outright. Further, of the three elected prime ministers, one was executed (Z.A. Bhutto), and the other two were exiled under threat of imprisonment (Benazir Bhutto and Nawaz Sharif, who both served twice).

One of the main reasons for the dominance of military in Pakistan politics could be that Pakistan, since its independence, never had a consistent and democratic form of government. After independence, its founding father, Mohammad Ali Jinnah, became the supreme authority and the source of all political power since he had won independence for Pakistan and was hailed by his followers as the *Quaid-i-Azam* (Great Leader). After Jinnah's death, his acknowledged lieutenant, Liaquat Ali Khan, assumed leadership and continued in the position of prime minister. Born to a Punjabi family of landed gentry, Liaquat used his experience in law to frame a draft constitution along the lines of the British Westminster system of parliamentary democracy. However, the draft constitution could not be adopted mainly because members of the Pakistan Constituent Assembly -- both from the Pakistan Muslim League (PML), his own political party and other smaller parties as well as the independents -- failed to agree on two important issues: the role of Islam in the political arena and the degree of autonomy for the provinces (Hussain 1995). Liaquat's main problem was that being a migrant from India he lacked a political powerbase in the heartland of Pakistan politics and, consequently, was unable to impose any decision on the warring factions of the Assembly.

Liaquat's term of office ended when he was assassinated in Rawalpindi in October 1951. He was replaced by Khwaja Nazimuddin, who stepped down as Governor General. Nazimuddin was replaced as governor general by Ghulam Mohammad, a former minister of finance. The Pakistan Muslim League, unlike Congress, had not prepared itself for a post-independence role. It was so preoccupied with the struggle for Pakistan that it was poorly prepared for effective governance. Its leaders were largely urban professionals whose political base was mainly in areas that became part of India. In the areas that had come under Pakistan, its political base was weak. Landlords with acquired and inherited privileges were uncomfortable with the procedures of decision-making through debate, discussion, compromise, and majority vote (Pakistan Outlook 1996).

Indeed, the PML was a party with little grassroots support, a weak organisational structure, and powerful factional leaders and centralised decision-making. Although Ghulam Mohammad tried to exercise the 'Vice-Regal' power that Jinnah had used so powerfully as Governor General, concerns about retaining positions and the fruits of

power were more important to most of the politicians than the evolution of ideology or the implementation of mass programs (Haq 2001).

The effect of this lack of political acumen was displayed most clearly when the PML was routed in the 1954 election in East Pakistan by the United Front - mainly a coalition of the Awami League (AL) and the Krishak Sramik Party (KSP) - led by two one-time Muslim League members, Hussain Shahid Suhrawardy and Fazlul Haq, who ran on an autonomist platform (Ali 1983). The PML was held responsible for the deterioration of politics and society after independence and had to answer for its failure to fulfil people's high expectations. There was a rising level of opposition and frustration and an increasing use of repressive laws inherited from the British or enacted by Pakistan that included preventive detention and rules prohibiting the gathering of more than five persons. For example, the Public and Representative Office Disqualification Act (PRODA), enacted in 1949, allowed the government to disqualify persons found guilty of 'misconduct', a term that acquired a broad definition. Equally, the Security of Pakistan Act, enacted in 1952, expanded the powers of the government in the 'interests of public order' (Kadri 1983). The armed forces also posed a threat to Liaquat's government, which some senior military officers found less hostile toward India than they wished for. In March 1951, Major General Mohammad Akbar Khan, the then Chief of the General Staff, was arrested along with fourteen other officers, described as the authors of what became known as the Rawalpindi Conspiracy, on charges of plotting a *coup d'état*. These officers were tried in secret, convicted, and sentenced to imprisonment.

The bifurcated Pakistan that existed from August 1947 to December 1971 was composed of two parts or wings known as East Pakistan and West Pakistan, separated by 1,600 kilometres of Indian territory. The people of the two wings were estranged from each other in language and cultural traditions. East Pakistan, with more than fifty percent of Pakistan's total population and its homogeneity in cultural and linguistic heritage sharply contrasted with the ethnic and linguistic diversity of West Pakistan. Whereas, the east wing had only one ethnic group, the Bengalis, the west wing had four major ones- the Punjabis, Pashtuns, Sindhis, and Baloch. However, the political leaders of Pakistan, particularly those of West Pakistan, asserted that the Islamic faith and a shared fear of 'Hindu India' provided an indestructible bond joining the two societies into one nation (Bahadur 1988).

This assertion proved flawed, however. A culture of distrust grew between the two wings, fuelled by economic disparities as well as imbalances of representation in the government and the military. Furthermore, the Bengali politicians argued that the economic underdevelopment of East Pakistan was a result of the 'internal colonialism' of the rapacious capitalist class of West Pakistan. In the final analysis, these economic inequities would fray any 'indestructible' religious bond that might have been holding the country together (Zaheer 1994). Less than a quarter century after the country's founding, Pakistan would break up with the eastern wing becoming the independent nation of Bangladesh.

It was neither Pakistan's precarious security nor even its cultural and ethnic diversity, but rather characteristics deeply rooted in the nation's polity that most impeded its early

democratic development (Ahmed 2001). The essentials for such a process - disciplined political parties and a participatory mass electorate - were missing in Pakistan's first years as an independent state. The PML, the party which under the name All-India Muslim League led the struggle for Pakistan, failed to mature into a stable democratic party with a national following capable of holding together the nation's diverse ethnic and cultural groups (Ali 2002). Instead, it disintegrated into rival factions soon after independence. Lack of a consensus over prospective Islamic provisions for the nation's governance, Bengali resentment over the West Pakistanis' initial imposition of Urdu as the national language, and the reluctance of West Pakistani politicians to share power with politicians of the East Wing- all were factors that delayed the acceptance of Pakistan's first constitution until nine years after independence.

From Democracy to Intermittent Military Interventions and Praetorianism (1947-1999)

So far, there have been four military interventions in Pakistan and, out of these four, three turned into praetorian regimes.

From Military Rule to Praetorian Regime, First Phase: Ayub Khan (1958-68)

Pakistan, in its first 11 years, was governed by a succession of civilian leaders. But, in 1958, the military made its first intervention and the history of military intervention in the day-to-day affairs of Pakistan began. On October 7, 1958, President Iskandar Mirza, with the support of the army, suspended the 1956 constitution, imposed martial law, and cancelled the elections scheduled for January 1959. Mirza was also supported by the civil service bureaucracy, which harboured deep suspicions of politicians. However, on October 27, 1958 Mirza himself was ousted by General Ayub Khan and sent into lifetime exile in London. Ayub Khan, the army Commander-in-Chief, assumed full control of the military government in due course. As army commander-in-chief and, for a time as minister of defence in 1954, Ayub was empowered to veto virtually any government policy that he felt was inimical to the interests of the armed forces.

Ayub justified his assumption of power by citing the nation's need for stability and the necessity for the army to play a central role. He used two main approaches to governing in his first few years. He concentrated on consolidating power by intimidating the opposition. To do so, he introduced what he called, a system of 'basic democracy'. In this unique governmental system Ayub became the 'civilian' head of a military regime. Ayub's 'democracy from above' allowed for controlled participation of the electorate and was supposed to capture the peculiar 'genius' of Pakistan. This political system could perhaps be better characterised as a form of representational dictatorship because this system did not provide anything for the mobilisation of the rural population around institutions of national integration (Bahadur: 1988). Its emphasis was on economic development and social welfare alone. The authority of the civil service was enhanced

and the power of the landlords and the big industrialists in the west wing went unchallenged (Burki 1972). In 1969, an ailing Ayub was forced to resign following a nationwide rioting against his regime's perceived corruption, economic policies, and responsibility for Pakistan's defeat in the 1965 Indo-Pakistan war over Kashmir.

Military Rule, Second Phase: Yahya Khan (1969-1971)

On March 25, 1969, martial law was proclaimed once again. General Agha Mohammad Yahya Khan, the army Commander-in-Chief, was designated the Chief Martial Law Administrator (CMLA). Through the proclamation, the 1962 constitution was abrogated and General Yahya assumed the executive role of the presidency. Yahya soon promised elections on the basis of adult franchise to the National Assembly, which would draw up a new constitution. He also entered into discussions with leaders of political parties. However, Yahya and his military advisers proved no more capable of overcoming the nation's problems than their predecessors (Ahmed 2001).

The country's first nationwide direct elections were held in December 1970. The East Pakistan-based AL, campaigning on a platform calling for almost total provincial autonomy won virtually all the seats allotted to the East Wing and was thereby assured a majority in the national legislature. However, the results of Pakistan's first nationwide experiment in democracy were not honoured. Fearing Bengali dominance in the nation's political affairs, West Pakistani politicians, led by Pakistan People's Party (PPP) leader Zulfikar Ali Bhutto and supported by senior army officers, most of who were Punjabis pressured Yahya to postpone the convening of the National Assembly. When the Bengalis of East Pakistan revolted openly at this turn of events, the Pakistani military banned the AL, arrested its leader Sheikh Mujibur Rahman and began a massive military crackdown. In the brutal civil war that followed, tens of thousands of Bengalis were killed, and an estimated 10 million people took refuge in India (Choudhury 1972). In early December 1971, India entered the war and within weeks, decisively defeated the Pakistan military. From the aftermath of the war and the dismemberment of Pakistan came the birth of a new nation: Bangladesh. Consequently, literally overnight, Pakistan lost its status as the largest Muslim nation in the world.

Short-lived Transition to Democracy

Humiliated by both political and military failure, Yahya was forced in December 1971 to surrender power to Bhutto and his Peoples' Party of Pakistan (PPP). Pakistan soon recovered under the charismatic leadership of Zulfikar Ali Bhutto, who launched a forceful campaign to restore Pakistanis' self-confidence and repair the country's tarnished image abroad. Initially, Bhutto was sworn in as the President and the Chief Martial Law Administrator, the two positions he took over from Yahya. Although he soon revoked formal martial law, he continued to govern autocratically – almost in the style of Argentina's Juan Peron- marked by vindictiveness and arbitrary style until he was overthrown in 1977 (Faruqui 2003).

Many Pakistanis cherished the hope that the 1970s might bring escape from the cycle of recurring military interventions. During the following half decade, Bhutto took several steps to erect further barriers to keep out the generals from returning to Pakistan's political stage, where they had been dominant since 1958.

The 1973 Constitution narrowly defined the functions of the military. Its abrogation or subversion was declared to be high treason and an oath to uphold it and not to engage in any political activities whatsoever was prescribed for members of the armed forces. Bhutto reorganised the command structure of the armed forces and created a Joint Chiefs of Staff position reporting to the Ministry of Defence, thus bringing in stronger civilian control. He also limited the tenure of the service chiefs, retired many senior officers, and passed up others in making appointments. Bhutto created the Federal Security Force (FSF) and Federal Investigation Agency (FIA) in order to reduce the reliance of the civil government on the military in law and order situations. Bhutto's strategy in creating a 'post-military state', however, was patrimonial rather than institutional. He extended his personal control over the bureaucracy as well as the military, the party, and the national and provincial assemblies (Munir 1987).

Early in January 1977, he called for general elections to national and provincial assemblies in order to renew his popular mandate. The elections also provided him an opportunity to strengthen his control over PPP. Though the PPP easily won the March 7 National Assembly elections, the opposition, Pakistan National Alliance (PNA) charged them with massive rigging, boycotted the provincial elections three days later, and began daily demonstrations demanding new elections.

From Military Rule to Praetorian Regime: Third Phase, Zia-ul-Haq (1977–1988)

The third phase of military rule in Pakistan began on July 5, 1977 when General Zia-ul-Haq, as Chief of Army Staff, arrested Bhutto and several other PPP and PNA leaders, declared martial law, and suspended portions of the 1973 Constitution and named him Chief Martial Law Administrator. From that point on until 1988, Pakistan was ruled with an iron fist by the military dictator Zia. His first task was to have Bhutto executed. The regime is also remembered for its sharp tilt towards the Shariah and bringing Islamic laws into the realm of social policy.

At the head of this martial law structure was placed a Supreme Military Council, composed of the three service chiefs (including Zia) and the Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff. Real power lay, however, with the CMLA and the Zonal MLAs, as well as a few other army officers appointed by Zia to key positions. In early 1977, Zia released Bhutto and assured that he could contest elections scheduled for October 1977. However, after it became clear that Bhutto's popularity had survived his government, Zia postponed the elections and began criminal investigations of the senior PPP leadership. Subsequently, Bhutto was convicted and sentenced to death for an alleged conspiracy to murder a

political opponent. Despite international appeals on his behalf, Bhutto was hanged on April 6, 1979. Zia banned all political activities in October 1979, and postponed national elections.

Zia's eleven years of rule left a profound and controversial imprint on Pakistani society. During the period from 1985 to 1988, Zia installed a civilian prime minister but kept all the executive powers vested with him by arbitrarily amending the 1973 Constitution. Like his predecessor Ayub, Zia had been contemptuous of politicians; his style of governing was autocratic in the tradition of the British Raj and its Mughal predecessors (Joshi 1995). Although Zia and Ayub both moved from direct military rule to so-called 'civilianization', Zia's military junta differed in important aspects from the earlier military regime of Ayub Khan. The main difference between Ayub and Zia was that whereas Ayub welcomed Western influences in his quest for economic development and introduced various reform measures, such as the Muslim Family Laws Ordinance, which provided protection for women within their families, Zia followed the path of so-called Islamisation which, in effect, put Pakistani women in a much disadvantageous position. Early in his rule, Ayub isolated the army from the governmental decision-making process and instead relied heavily on senior civil servants and a few conservative politicians. Zia's rule, by contrast, was notable for the high visibility of a small number of army officers and for his fervent advocacy of a more stringent version of Islamic orthodoxy (Khan 2003).

Short-lived Transition To Democracy

After Zia was killed in a plane crash, the caretaker government of Ghulam Ishaq Khan decided to hold parliamentary elections in which PPP, under the leadership of Bhutto's daughter and designated heir Benazir Bhutto, won. She formed a fragile coalition government and assumed the position of prime minister. She became the first woman to hold such position in a Muslim country and the first freely elected leader in Pakistan since her father was deposed. Confronted by severe impediments from the start, Benazir soon discovered that the art of governance was considerably more difficult than orchestrating opposition politics. An experienced politician but an inexperienced head of government, she was outmanoeuvred by her political opponents, intimidated by the military, and diverted from her reform program (Mufti 1995).

Benazir was also frustrated by her inability to control the spread of social disorder, widespread banditry, and mounting ethnic violence between Sindhis and *Muhajirs* (migrants from India) in her home province of Sindh. A prolonged struggle between Bhutto and the provincial government of Nawaz Sharif in the Punjab culminated in bureaucrat-turned-president Ghulam Ishaq Khan's siding with Nawaz Sharif against Benazir. Empowered by the Eighth Amendment provisions of the constitution - a direct legacy of the Zia regime, which strengthened the powers of the President at the expense of the Prime Minister - Ghulam Ishaq Khan dismissed Benazir in August 1990 for alleged corruption and her inability to maintain law and order. He also dismissed her cabinet,

dissolved the National Assembly as well as the Provincial Assemblies, and ordered new elections for October.

The elections held in October 1990, confirmed the political ascendancy of the newly formed alliance *Islami Jamhoori Ittehad* (Islamic Democratic Alliance or IJI), constituting of Pakistan Muslim League, Nawaz (PML/N), Jamaat-i-Islami (JI) and seven other small parties. In addition to a two-thirds majority in the National Assembly, the Alliance won control of all four provincial parliaments and the support of the military and the President. Nawaz Sharif, as leader of the PML/N, the most prominent party in the IJI, was elected Prime Minister by the National Assembly. For a brief period, there appeared to be a workable relationship between the new Prime Minister and the President. Yet this alliance soon unravelled over policy differences, specifically over the question of who had the power to appoint the top military commanders. Nawaz Sharif, like Benazir Bhutto before him, was dismissed and the Parliament dissolved-- without a vote of confidence ever having been taken in the legislature. This time, however, the Supreme Court of Pakistan overturned the President's action, declaring it unconstitutional and restored Nawaz Sharif's government.

However, the crisis in the government continued as Ghulam Ishaq Khan, still determined to undermine the Prime Minister, brazenly manipulated provincial politics, dissolving the provincial assemblies in the Punjab and the North-West Frontier Province. Fears of military intervention and the reimposition of martial law loomed as the ongoing feud between the President and Prime Minister threatened to bring effective government to a standstill. The army ultimately intervened in mid-1993 to break the stalemate and convinced both men to step down. An interim government, headed by Moeen Qureshi, a former World Bank Vice-President, took office with a mandate to hold national and provincial assembly elections in October.

In the October 1993 elections, the PPP won a plurality of seats in the National Assembly, and Benazir Bhutto was asked to form the government. However, because it did not acquire a majority in the National Assembly, the PPP's control of the government depended upon the continued support of numerous independent parties, particularly the Pakistan Muslim League/Junejo (PML/J)), the other faction of the Pakistan Muslim League. The unfavourable circumstances surrounding the PPP rule - the imperative of preserving a coalition government, the formidable opposition of Nawaz Sharif's PML/N, and the insecure provincial administrations - presented significant roadblocks for the government of Prime Minister Benazir Bhutto. However, the silver lining in the cloud for Bhutto was the election of her close associate, Farooq Leghari, as President in November 1993.

However, Benazir Bhutto's becoming the prime minister of Pakistan in mid-1995 did not ensure the stability of Pakistan's incipient democracy. It may be noted in this context that

Benazir Bhutto's return to the pinnacle of Pakistani politics in October 1993 was portrayed with great theatrics as a redemptive return for the country's self-proclaimed "Daughter of Destiny." (Ummat 2007). Benazir Bhutto pledged this time to fulfil some of the promises she had failed to keep during her first tenure as Prime Minister. These included calming the potentially explosive ethnic problems, strengthening a Treasury overburdened with debt, reconstructing a financial system weakened by corruption, managing a burgeoning population with inadequate access to social services and one making heavy demands on the country's fragile ecology, enforcing women's rights in a decidedly male-dominated society, and forging a consensus on the role of Islam in contemporary Pakistani society (Shafqat 1997).

In November 1996, President Leghari dismissed the Bhutto government, charging it with corruption, mismanagement of the economy, and implication in extra-judicial killings in Karachi. Subsequent elections held in February 1997 resulted in an overwhelming victory for the PML/N, and President Leghari called upon Nawaz Sharif to form a government. In March 1997, with the unanimous support of the National Assembly, Nawaz Sharif amended the Constitution, stripping the President of the power to dismiss the government and making his power to appoint military chiefs and provincial governors contingent on the 'advice' of the Prime Minister. Another amendment prohibited elected members from floor crossing or voting against party positions. The Sharif government also engaged in a protracted dispute with the judiciary, culminating in the storming of the Supreme Court by ruling party loyalists and the engineered dismissal of the Chief Justice and the resignation of President Leghari in December 1997.

Rafiq Tarar, the new President elected by the parliament, was a close associate of Prime Minister Nawaz Sharif. Taking advantage of this close association with the President, Nawaz Sharif soon started targeting the opposition and the critics of the regime, using a unilateral anti-corruption campaign. His government also moved to restrict press criticism and ordered the arrest and beating of prominent journalists. As domestic criticism of Sharif's administration intensified, he attempted to replace the Chief of Army Staff General Pervez Musharraf on October 12, 1999, with a family loyalist, Director General of the Inter-Services Intelligence Directorate, Lt. Gen. Ziauddin. Although Musharraf was out of the country at the time, the army command, loyal to Musharraf, moved quickly to depose Sharif.

For nearly 11 years (1988-1999) the PML under Nawaz Sharif and the PPP led by Benazir Bhutto shared power alternately. Within the mainstream politics, for the first time, a two-party system emerged, promising political stability that was not seen before. However, both the leaders failed to use their authority to strengthen the political institutions and consequently, the political process which started in 1988 failed to promote democracy (Akhtar 2007). Both governments lacked seriousness of purpose and agenda for the future. Their commitment to the welfare of the people was weak and matters that affected the real lives of the people were never addressed. These civilian governments also failed to allow a democratic culture to take roots in the polity of Pakistan (Dawn 2007)

From Military Rule to Praetorian Regime: Fourth Phase, Pervez Musharraf (1999-2008)

Following the October 12, 1999 ouster of the government of Nawaz Sharif, the military-led government stated its intention to restructure the political and electoral systems at the earliest opportunity. But then, on October 14, 1999, General Musharraf declared a state of emergency and issued the Provisional Constitutional Order (PCO), which suspended federal and provincial parliaments, held the Constitution in abeyance, and designated Musharraf as Chief Executive. Musharraf also appointed an eight-member National Security Council to function as Pakistan's supreme governing body, with mixed military/civilian appointees; a so-called 'civilian' cabinet; and a National Reconstruction Bureau to formulate structural reforms. On May 12, 2000, Pakistan's Supreme Court unanimously validated the October 1999 coup and granted Musharraf executive and legislative authority for three years from the date of the coup. On June 20, 2001 Musharraf appointed himself as President. Thereafter, on April 30, 2002, Musharraf held a so-called referendum held for extending his presidency for five more years.

Then, a theatrical handover from military to civilian rule came with parliamentary elections in November 2002 and the appointment of a civilian prime minister by the self-elected President Musharraf. The 1973 Constitution of Pakistan – which was amended substantially in 1985 under Zia and was suspended by Musharraf in October 1999 - was restored again on December 31, 2002. However, on November 3, 2007, Musharraf, for the second time, proclaimed a nationwide state of emergency. It is to be noted that during the first proclamation in 1999 his target was the elected government of Nawaz Sharif whereas in the second proclamation in 2007 it was the re-born judiciary of Pakistan, headed by its independent-minded Chief Justice Iftikhar Muhammad Chaudhry.

During the time of the proclamation of emergency, a case challenging the legality of Musharraf's self-election as president was pending in the Supreme Court of Pakistan and it was widely speculated that the Supreme Court was going to declare his self-election as *ultra vires* and, therefore, null and void. Faced with such a grim possibility, Musharraf promulgated a Provisional Constitutional Order (PCO) on November 3, 2007 in order to purge the judiciary of the majority of the judges that had become a potential threat for his rule. In the PCO, he blamed the judges of the Supreme Court of Pakistan for trespassing their constitutional limits and for meddling into the affairs that fell exclusively within the domain of the executive and the legislature. Accordingly, through the PCO, he took away the powers of the superior judiciary - the Supreme Court, the Federal Shariah Court, and the High Courts – as well as any other tribunal or judicial authority which could call into question the legality of the Proclamation of the State of Emergency and/or his presidency. The PCO also suspended the fundamental rights of the citizens. Furthermore, the Oath of Office (Judges) Order 2007, issued simultaneously, required all judges of the Supreme Court and High Courts to take a fresh oath of allegiance to his regime, failing which they would cease to hold their judicial offices.

The way Musharraf ruled the country until he was forced to relinquish political power in August 2008 in the face of a massive peoples' uprising, spearheaded by the lawyers, clearly depicts how he concentrated all powers of the state in his own hands. Despite having a subservient prime minister and a showcase parliament, it is he who ruled the country unilaterally (The Nation 2007). Musharraf - who almost overnight transformed from a political pariah into an ally of the Bush administration by virtue of his active participation in Bush's so-called 'War on Terror'- had also achieved the dubious distinction of imposing the state of emergency in Pakistan twice in an extra-constitutional manner, with the full backing of the US administration. Within a span of five years, Musharraf removed two prime ministers. During the fag end of his presidency before he was forced to leave office, Musharraf had in fact installed a third prime minister but, true to his authoritarian tradition, retained the powers of appointing and removing the prime minister.

Musharraf's military rule and the subsequent praetorian regimes under him had a striking similarity with the military rule and the subsequent praetorian regimes under Zia, another beneficiary of the short-term US strategic goals which also catapulted him from a pariah to a dependable ally.

Though Pakistan is once again going through a new round of parliamentary democracy since the fall of the Musharraf regime, the military is still likely to continue to play an important role in the politics of Pakistan, particularly in the backdrop of the military operations in Swat and surrounding districts which comes amid longstanding US pressure on its Muslim ally to root out Al-Qaeda and Taliban hideouts along the border with Afghanistan. Consequently, there are reasons to be worried that praetorianism may persist in Pakistan.

Conclusions

Pakistan seems to be a classic example of a praetorian state with regimes oscillating on both sides of the middle point of a military rule↔democracy continuum, where the armed forces – often in collusion with the civil bureaucracy – is lodged in the centre of governance, dictating the actual course of actions, even when there is a civilian regime. In consistent with the general characteristic of a praetorian ruler, once having seized political power for avowedly temporary and limited purposes, none of the Pakistani military rulers - from Ayub Khan through Zia-ul-Haq to Pervez Musharraf - has been able to disentangle himself from the political process and return the reins of government to the civilians voluntarily; all of them had to be removed by force, either through popular uprising or through killing.

This is not surprising at all because when not in an openly military dictatorship, all praetorian rulers generally try to legitimise, as Ayub, Zia and Musharraf tried to do during their so-called 'civilianisation' processes, all their undemocratic and unconstitutional acts through dictating, directing, and restricting the civil administration. For them, democracy, elections, and judicial and administrative reforms are only acceptable as long as they support and/or legitimise their hegemonic position. That is

why Huntington's (1957) assumption that the military rulers, due to their organisational characteristics, are better prepared to strengthen institutionalisation and ensure political stability, particularly in times of acute political crises arising out of political and/or factional interests of individual political leaders, has been proven erroneous in the case of Pakistan.

It is an established fact that the democratic institutions have not flourished in Pakistan and that the leaders of the two mainstream political parties, PPP and PML/N, are primarily responsible for this because they contributed to the widespread degeneration of political culture as well as to the collapse of the democratic institutions in Pakistan. During their rules, general elections have been preludes to the crises of governance and consequent violent confrontations among the ruling party activists and the members of the opposition. As a result, more often than not, political succession has come about through mass agitation and military takeover and not through the ballot boxes.

But then, numerous military takeovers in Pakistan have also failed so far to provide any panacea because while the authoritarian polities of these military regimes have provided temporary relief to the problem of 'ungovernability', they have proven to be poorly equipped to deal with the challenges of political institutionalisation. In fact, instead of strengthening the political and legal institutions of democracy, they have rather entrenched praetorianism as a prominent feature in Pakistani polity, both in the narrower sense of military political involvement and rule, but also more broadly, as the direct engagement of social forces and groups in 'uninstitutionalised political action'.

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