

Civil-Military Relationship In An Ideological State: A Case Of Pakistan

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Abstract:

Pakistan like many state of the world has been experiencing direct and indirect military interventions in the politics since 1950s. This non-elected institution got dominant position at the very onset of country's independence. The lack of experienced and visionary political leadership and their prioritisation of their own interests seriously hurt the political institution. In addition, weak socio-economic conditions, civilian institutions failure, and continuation of colonial state structure contribute to the pre-dominance position of the armed forces are few of the factors that played instrumental role. However, this manuscript examines that the state ideology, Pakistan's relationships with its neighbours, particularly Afghanistan and India, and internal and external threats to the state ideology and integrity posed by socialists, secularists, and ethnic nationalists give the Pakistani army more power to interfere in domestic politics.

Keywords: *CMR, internal and external threats, Muslim identity ideology, national integrity, democracy.*

Introduction:

Pakistan has a turbulent history in terms of civil and military relations. The constitutional and political history of Pakistan is witnessed to the fact that the armed forces has staged four direct coups and has indirectly influenced the performance of elected regimes on various occasions especially in the last ten years (Adeney, 2017). First, military interventions occurred in 1958 where the military remained at the helms of state affairs until 1969. Again, the reins of government were given to another military dictator, Yahya Khan, who went back to the barracks after the dismemberment of Pakistan in 1971. After five years of civilian rule, Pakistan experienced another coup d, etat in 1977 when Zia ul Haq removed Zulfikar Ali Bhutto and remained in power till his unnatural death in 1988(Khan, 2009). In the post-Zia period though elections were held and governments were installed but actual governing powers still remained with the military of the state.

Four elected governments were prematurely dissolved during 1988-1999. The ten years of democratic interlude cum tug of war inside the Troika, i.e. chief of the army staff (COAS),

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the president and the prime minister, ended with another military incursion in 1999 when Musharraf removed Nawaz Sharif from his government (Kapur, 2006).

During the authoritarian regime of Pervaiz Musharraf political elites of Pakistan People's Party (PPP) and Pakistan Muslim League-Nawaz (PML-N) concluded an agreement known as Charter of Democracy paving the way to 18th amendment in 2010 and restricting military direct intervention in the politics (Faiz, 2015). Nevertheless, in presence of the historical 18th amendment the top brass of the army transformed its strategy of direct intervention to indirect intervention. In the post-18th amendment period though two elected regimes have completed their tenures; however, the heads of elected government, i.e. prime ministers, have remained helpless to complete five years in office. Yousaf Raza Gilani of PPP, Raja Pervez Ashraf of PPP, Nawaz Sharif of PML-N and Imran Khan of Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf have been removed from premierships through various means (Javed, 2018). Recurrence of such incidents in the political and constitutional history of Pakistan has happened due to the following facts.

Literature Review

There are scholars who believe that weak socio-economic conditions impact civil-military relations in Pakistan. Divisions among the citizens on vertical and horizontal lines pave the way to social and economic disparities which leads to socio-economic-political unrest in the country (Rizvi, 1986). The unrest during 1977 and Zia ul Haq's intervention qualifies the claim of authors that political instability conjoined by weak economic conditions provided space to military in state political affairs. However, Ishrat Hussain argues that Pakistan until 1990 was having a stable economy which later on got worsened due to corruption (Hussain, Reddy, & Kamil, 2018). We contend that in addition to socio-economic conditions, state ideology was a driving force behind the military intervention of Zia. Of course, the capitalist and neo-liberal great powers such as the US and UK had supported Zia against communism, this is a fact that internally he had gained support of the Islamist political parties particularly and the citizens of Pakistan generally on his claim, 'Communism is a threat to Islam (the state official ideology)'. On this pretext, Zia has to commence his project of Islamization by which politics, economics, education and foreign affairs of Pakistan was Islamized.

Another group of scholars argues that failure of the civilian institutions provide chances to military encroachment in the politics of Pakistan (Cheema, 2002; Rizvi, 1986). Of course, the civilian in Pakistan are too weak to develop a democratic political culture, this is also a truth that the civilians have never found continuity in the political processes due to frequent military and bureaucratic interventions and dissolution of the elected assemblies (Siddiqua, 2017). This is fair to state that civil-military conundrum in Pakistan is a story like 'chicken and egg'. Some scholars held civilians responsible whereas others put onus on the military as responsible for political uncertainties in Pakistan. This is interesting to mention that Pakistani army is one and single institution which takes the credit that they are the saviour of national integrity and state ideology, while the civilians are internally divided on programmatic lines.

Still there are scholars claiming that colonial military and bureaucracy has been 'over-developed' in the post-colonial Pakistan. They argue that on one hand, state dominated by feudal, bureaucrats, and military is 'over-developed' whereas on the other hand society is 'underdeveloped'. The indigenous bourgeoisie, feudal lords, could not transform the state political economy but maintained their pre-eminence (Alavi, 1972; McCartney & Zaidi, 2019). Contrarily, India has also inherited institutions from the colonial master where the military do not occupy a predominant status as compared to Pakistan and has never attempted a coup. In addition, we argue that beside these factors; military in Pakistan exercise a predominant position in the society due to nature of the state and its ideology (Kapur, 2006).

Theoretical frame

Huntington (1976); Finer (1975) and Putnam (1967) demonstrate that public attachment to state and its ideology determines the relationship between the armed and unarmed institutions within a state. They opine that greater attachment to state political activities and political ideologies ensures democratic controls as well as deter military from incursion in politics. Contrarily, weak public attachment to state political activities and ideologies provide credible basis for military to assume power (Finer, 2002; Huntington, 1965; Putnam, 1976). The basic trust of the theory is that “the propensity for military intervention in government decreases with increasing popular attention to participation in partisan politics” (Putnam, 1976).

We contend that in comparison to the public masses and civilian institutions, the Pakistani army has greater attachment to the state ideology and that is the reason that army finds credible basis for direct as well as indirect intervention in the state politics. Pakistan, as an ideological state, came into existence on the pretext of establishing an Islamic state for the Muslims of the sub-continent wherein military is constitutionally bound to defend Pakistan and its ideology as well as its ideological frontiers. The Constitution of Pakistan 1973 clearly explains duties of the armed forces in articles 243, 244 and 245 which state that the federal government shall have command and control of the armed forces that are responsible for defence of the state against foreign aggression, natural disasters and threat of war. Keeping in view this theoretical frame, below is a discussion on the ideology and civil-military relations in Pakistan.

Ideology of Pakistan and its origin:

Ideology of Pakistan is associated with Islam, Muslim identity and geographic identity. Before the creation of Pakistan, All India Muslim League had based its struggle on “No god but God” that aimed to mobilize Muslims of the sub-continent to have an independent state where they could live under the guidance and cardinal principles of Islam (Qureshi, 1965). This was an effective strategy where thousands of Muslims were mobilized and assembled under the umbrella of the All India Muslim League. Several religious leaders had joined and supported Muslim League on their quest for an Islamic state in the sub-continent (Rabbani, 2003). However, a change occurred in Muslim League Ideology characterised by Muslim identity in the post-independent Pakistan.

Ideology of Pakistan in the pre-independent period was based on Muslim identity which was directed against the majoritarianism of the Hindus and imperialism or rule of the colonizers. Muslims of the sub-continent especially the propertied class was feeling socio-religio and politico-economic threats to their status from the majority of the Hindus (Alavi, 1990). Similarly, they were struggling against the colonizers to have an independent Muslim state in the sub-continent. However, with the establishment of Pakistan, the above threats naturally got vanished and thus ideology of the state also got transformed.

After the establishment of Pakistan, Muslim leaders’ plea of creating a homeland for Muslims of the sub-continent was replaced by the socio-politico and economic interests of the ‘few rich’, i.e. indigenous bourgeoisie, feudal lords, bureaucrats and military (Khan & Akhtar, 2014). The post-independent state ideology has been characterised by Pakistani nationalism, in other words, one Pakistani nation and centralization of powers (Jaffrelot, 2016). Nevertheless, inherently, the oneness and centralization is dominated by Punjab, a bigger province in terms of population, which has a hold on Pakistani politics and therefore some scholars regarded this as Punjabization of Pakistan.

Here, the constructed ideology of the post-independent Pakistan works as a touchstone for every political development. In case, any parliamentary act, struggle for rights, demand for constitutionalism, contrary to interests of the ‘few rich’ has been considered anti-Pakistan.

In fact, such acts and right movements are not anti-Pakistan but anti to the constructed ideology of the 'few rich'. In this connection, Ayesha Jalal claims that Ideology in Pakistan is a "myth" giving strength to the 'few rich' at the helms of state affairs (Jalal, 1995). State ideology of the post-independent Pakistan and interests of the 'few rich' are intertwined whereas the 'Pakistani poor', the left, liberals and seculars, counter them through various other ideologies like Marxism, secularism-liberalism, and nationalism (Mufti, Shafqat, & Siddiqui, 2020).

Ideology versus ideologies

The citizens of Pakistan being within a Muslim state have been motivated by various contemporary political ideologies like socialism, Islamism, secularism, liberalism-democracy and nationalism (Mufti et al., 2020). The ideologues and followers of varying ideologies have been in contests with another as well as with state official ideology. The history of Pakistan tells us the following facts:

One, the adoption and formulation of various constitutions, i.e. 1956, 1962 and 1973 has not satisfied the demands of Islamists and secularists due to the paradox of 'Islamism versus Secularism' in the political system of Pakistan. The former demands a state based on Islamic ideals while the latter questions theocratic character of the state and demands separation of politics from religion (Khan, 2009). The disagreement on the nature of the constitution led to the Ahmadis episode in Punjab in 1953 where disturbances resulted in the imposition of first martial law in Punjab (Choudhury, 1969). Though the martial law was limited only to the province of Punjab, yet it opened ways to future military incursion in politics. Such divergent voices are still heard in Pakistan claiming a secular or purely theocratic polity.

Army in Pakistan has been held responsible for the protection of state ideology particularly during General Zia ul Haq regime. He used to say that in addition to territorial frontiers, Pakistani armed forces are also the custodian of ideological frontiers and they would never tolerate those forces which harm or show disrespect to the state ideology (Ali, 2016). Military never sits idle when it sees ideology of Pakistan loses its grounds at the face of secularist. The military tries to promote state ideology so that secularist tendencies may properly be checked. Here is Aasim Sajjad Akhtar who argues that liberal-progressive voices inside the educational institutions as well as in the society are suppressed through religious motivated students union like JI and now-a-days Tehreek e Labaik Pakistan (TLP) and religious clerics who work as clients of the state military and religious establishment (Akhtar, 2018).

Two, nationalist and ethnic nationalist politics is another threat to the ideology and territorial integrity of Pakistan. Pakistani society is composed of distinct cultural, racial, linguistic, and ethnic groups. Nationalist leaders use their cultural, ethnic and linguistic distinctiveness as justification of their groups' demands which of course sometimes lead to separatism. The ethnic linkages with Iran, India, and Afghanistan have further fuelled these nationalistic and ethnic sentiments. Even after the dismemberment of Pakistan in 1971, the periodic autonomist sentiments still exist in Sindh and Balochistan (Kennedy, 1987: 5-7). These centrifugal forces are still busy in their demands of having separate identity, opposed to the Pakistani universalism, on the basis of their culture, language, and geography. The oft quoted trend of 'we versus them' has its manifestation in the Pakistani politics.

The lesser economic developmental leverage in Balochistan and Khyber Pakhtunkhwa has exacerbated the nationalist feelings in the two provinces. The Punjabi dominance in civil and military bureaucracies and greater economic development also promote anti Punjabi sentiments in the smaller provinces. Military in Pakistan always tries to integrate the nation under the guise of ideology (Akhtar, 2018). Any detachment from the Ideology of Pakistan

has never been accepted by the military. Thus the army uses ideology and Islam as tools to keep the separatists tendencies at bay.

Three, sectarianism and militancy also threaten the ideological foundation of Pakistan. Though Sunni and Shia are the two major sects in Islam, Pakistani society is divided into multiple sub-sects like Brelvis, Deobandis, Ahl e Hadiths Wahabis. Each of them is having its own version of Islam and gets funds from sources outside Pakistan who are busy in its propagation across the country (Ahmed, 1991). Today, Pakistan is hostage to the will of radical Muslim elements who pose a serious threat to the peace, stability, and existence of Pakistan as a sovereign state.

Further, sectarian sentiments have added to militancy in Pakistan. These militants have publically objected the constitution of Pakistan on the grounds that it is secular and un-Islamic (Kaul, 2002). The armed forces of Pakistan have been fighting a war against these anti-state elements for the last twenty years. National Action Plan (NAP) and the establishment of Military courts through 21st constitutional amendment, 2014, are the results of the on-going war between the militants and the armed forces. The NAP and military courts have further expanded the role of military in the society (Khan, 2018). Though adjudication and interpretation of law is the duty of civilian courts, the establishment of military courts have undermined the role and adjudication of civilian courts. Nevertheless, association of the armed forces with the ideology is not limited only to the internal politics of Pakistan but it goes beyond the borders.

Ideological Pakistan and her neighbours

Pakistan has hostile relations with its neighbours especially in the east with India and west with Afghanistan. The hostility between Pakistan and her neighbours has been impacting the internal politics between civil and military institutions since independence. Desch argues that when a state receives external and internal threats, the military occupies a predominant position in the internal politics of the state (Desch, 2008). Pakistan is no exception to Desch's theoretical exposition because it faces existential threats to its territorial integrity from eastern and western borders along with internal threats emanating from miscreants, terrorists and separatists nationalists. The history of Pakistan's relations with Afghanistan and India explains the internal politics between civil and military institutions.

Pakistan's relations with Afghanistan have not been cordial since 1947. In the early days of independence, Afghan government had to repudiate recognition of Pakistan in the UN due to de facto status of Durand line, a border between Pakistan and Afghanistan. This reality has made civilian and military leaders thoughtful of the territorial integrity of Pakistan (Rizvi, 2013: 270). Multiple issues like Pukhtunistan, refugees, strategic depth policy⁶, cross border infiltration etc are the core issues hindering friendly relations between Pakistan and Afghanistan. These hiccups have been impacting bargaining between the armed and unarmed institutions of Pakistan.

Pukhtunistan⁷ is a considered threat to the territorial integrity of Pakistan. The demand was raised on the grounds that historically Pukhtoons had been denied their due rights. The

⁶A government setup which works either in accordance with the policy recommendation of an outside nation or accommodates her policy designs in its domestic policies.

⁷The term Pukhtunistan was used for the first time by Bacha Khan, Abdul Ghafar Khan, in a public gathering at Bannu in 1946. He talked about the rights of Pakhtuns and reiterated that Pakhtuns had been denied their political rights. For more detail on the issue see, Affendi (2000). *Durand Line: Its strategic Importance*. Area Study Center, University of Peshawar.

nationalist leaders had objected the referendum which was held in the then NWFP (present Khyber Pakhtunkhwa) before the creation of Pakistan. Ghafar Khan stated,

“I strongly repudiate the referendum which was held in NWFP on the grounds of limited franchise, with no supervision and control of the ballots and above all, no participation of the Pashtuns” (Khan & Effendi)

(127-162).

Likewise, border dispute between Pakistan and Afghanistan also affect the relationship of the two states. Afghan government has repeatedly denied the recognition of Durand Line concluded by Ameer Abdur Rehman, Afghan king, and Durand, Secretary of State in 1893. The Afghan government objected it on the grounds that it had geographically bifurcated one nation having same culture, language, history, traditions, religion, and geography. King Daud stated that the British had done wrong with same geography many years before and we had been fighting to rectify it. Until that is done, the struggle will continue (Effendi, 2000: 127). The phrases “same geography” and “the struggle will continue” create suspicions in the minds of Pakistani establishment because it clearly violates the principle of territorial integrity of Pakistan.

Moreover, cross border infiltration is another concern of both the states. They always blame each other on the grounds of using soils against each other for terrorist activities (Hussain, 2016). The outlawed, who violate the border restrictions, have challenged the sovereignty and territorial integrity of Pakistan. Indian presence in Afghanistan has also been a concern for the Pakistani security establishment. This compels Pakistan to adopt a policy known as ‘strategic depth policy’⁸ in Afghanistan. Pakistan supports the type of government in Afghanistan which best serves her interests in the region.

Constitutionally the armed forces of Pakistan are the sole guarantor of the state ideology and territorial integrity and whenever the army feels any threat to security of the state, they pre-empt it either by offensive or defensive operation. Pak-Afghan relations are being determined by several issues which are considered as existential threats to the survival of Pakistan (Paris, 2010: 21-25). Thus Pakistan’s relations with Afghanistan contribute to the supremacy of military in terms of policy formulation and implementation.

Similarly, Pakistan and India have also strain relations since their independence. The issues and disputes which have caused hiccups between them are; Kashmir, rivers water, Siachen, Run of Kutch and currently Terrorism. Pakistan got independence in 1947 against the wishes of Congressmen⁹ who have never accepted whole heartedly the creation of Pakistan. The All India National Congress demanded united India under a unitary constitution which was never acceptable to All India Muslim League. After the creation of Pakistan, several congressmen issued statements which threatened the establishment of Pakistan. Sardar Patel stated that a time might come when India and Pakistan both, realizing the unfold harm caused to them by partition, would be re-united (Khan, 2008).

Consequently, both countries have fought four wars since 1947 i.e. war on Kashmir 1948, operation Gibraltar and war of 1965, 1971 war, and 1998 Kargal war. Pakistani defence policy towards India has been the area of influence of military since the establishment of

⁸Pakistan always seeks a pro-Pakistani set up in Afghanistan.

⁹Indian National Congress had accepted the idea of Pakistan as an independent state only a transitory

one and the Congress still adamant to the idea that there would be one independent nation on the subcontinent in the form of united India. For more information see Aziz, M. (2008). *Military control in Pakistan: The parallel state*. London & New York: Routledge, 10-11.

Pakistan (Chambers & Croissant, 2010). Any miscalculation with India produces a hitch in the interaction of civilian and military institutions in Pakistan. The conflagration with India provides an opportunity to the military in expanding its area of influence and it may even take reins of the government that is proved during the Nawaz Sharif's second government in 1999 (Paris, 2010: 21-25).

Hence, military dominate foreign policy of Pakistan towards India and Afghanistan. It is a fact and a norm that military in the developed democracies are often consulted in the formation of defence policies, but the case in Pakistan is different. The civilian in Pakistan are bound to follow the directions of the armed forces about her foreign policy on Afghanistan and India.

Conclusion

Civil-military relations have remained instable and imbalanced since 1950s. No doubt, the military of Pakistan derives strength from the failure of civilian institutions, weak socio-economic conditions, and post-colonial state structure. This research article demonstrates that state ideology, internal and external threats to the state ideology and national integrity of Pakistan, and relations with Afghanistan and India justify claim of the armed forces of Pakistan to intervene in the political affairs. In order to keep army detached from the politics, the civilians are required to become true democrats to obtain greater mass support. Moreover, political parties as well as the military shall abstain from using religion in politics.

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