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CIVIL MILITARY RELATIONS – A WAY FORWARD

Table of Contents

Acknowledgments.....	3
EXECUTIVE SUMMARY:	4
Contagious issues between Civil and Military Establishment:	5
Historical Account of Civil-Military Relations	6
The Transition to civilian Rule	6
Major shift in power structure	6
The Military and Intelligence Agencies	7
Zulfiqar Ali Bhutto and the Military	7
Benazir Bhutto and the military	8
Nawaz Sharif and the military	9
People’s party government from 2008 to date and the military	10
Guidelines for regulating civil military relationship in future endeavors	11
References	13

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY:

Democratic dispensation is a continuous process which demands cordial relationship between military and civilian government defined under constitution for its smooth execution. Hiccups in civil military relationships are not only detrimental to democratic system but also bring grave consequences for the state and the society. Unfortunately, civilian leadership in Pakistan is at loggerhead with the military since independence. Upsets in Civil-Military relation has greatly damaged Pakistan's social, political, economic, cultural fabric and most importantly the process of democratization.

The clash of interest between the Civilian leadership and military has greatly dented Pakistan's image in global forums. It has led to chaos and anarchy. It is the need of the hour to bridge the gap between the Civilian leadership and Military establishment. The sovereignty and integrity of Pakistan lies in the smooth functioning of all state institutions in their respective domains prescribed in the constitution of Pakistan, 1973. Currently, Pakistan is facing a lot of internal and external challenges. Terrorists, anti-state elements and non-state actors are getting advantage of ongoing controversy between the civilian and military leadership.

According to Pakistan Institute of Peace Studies (PIPS) survey law and order situation is worsening since the ongoing controversy over memo gate scandal. Military intervention has greatly hurt democratic set up and doctrine of rule of law. Military has always undermined the mandate of civilian government. Whenever military came into power by unconstitutional means, it established fake democratic system and political parties which led to clash of institutions. Civilian leadership on the other hand needs to ensure rule of law so that military must not be given any chance to interrupt the civilian government.

Supremacy of constitution is the panacea to solve this menace. There are three aspects of rule of law which are legislators, executives and the judiciary. Political parties must be strengthened to contain military quest for power. Media and civil society needs to play their role in strengthening the democratic system. The prime job of military is to secure the frontiers from outside dangers. There is no place for military in political system.

Civil Military Relations – A Way Forward

Pakistan has been passing through grave security and economic challenges. Prospects of prosperity, integrity and sovereignty are directly related to the smooth working and constructive civil military interactions prescribed under the constitution. *Practical and pragmatic approach is required to set the civil military equation.* There is no room for military in domestic politics. Military interferes only during emergency times or during natural calamities on the call of civilian government under constitutional provisions. On the other hand it is the duty of the civilian government to ensure rule of law, to control and consolidate law and order situation, to check for corruption, to ensure meritocracy and undertake steps to mitigate all outstanding issues. Realization and responsiveness to the responsibilities and limits chalked out by constitution of Pakistan is the key potential driving force of institutional reinforcement and reconciliation. Henceforth, the way forward, discussed in this policy guideline, is built on the blue prints of constitution to address the issue of institutional trespassing by strengthening the underdeveloped institutions i.e. democracy.

Contagious issues between Civil and Military Establishment:

Following are the apparent contagious issues between the military and civilian leadership

- Role of military in national politics
- Military influence over foreign policy affairs
- Unilateral role of military in designing defense policy
- Scrutiny of Military defense budget
- Issues on domain of intelligence agencies
- Military demand for non interference in their promotions
- Military resistance to civilian leadership in their command and control system
- Differences of opinion over nuclear policy
- Issue of military industrial complex like FWO, FFC, Askari Bank, Askari housing Societies and Fauji foundation
- Differences over land and cantonment boards
- Issues over control of ISI and other intelligence agencies by the civilian leadership

Historical Account of Civil-Military Relations

The Transition to Civilian Rule

Transition to civilian rule started right after the inception of Pakistan in 1947 from the colonial rule. Jinnah took hold of the civilian rule as governor general. During his short span of time as a governor general, democratization in newly founded country could not get strengthen enough to sustain under the strong feeling of regional insecurity .After Quaid, Liaqat Ali khan became the prime minister and contributed towards the continuation of democracy as a strong leader. He presented the objective resolution which is considered as Magna Carta in our political history. Unfortunately he was shot dead in 1951 and consequently Pakistan got into chaos and anarchy. As a result military took opportunity to assert itself as a savior of Pakistan.

Major shift in Power Structure

Military intervened in 1958 and changed the power politics of Pakistan. Ayub khan seized the control of civilian government and brought first martial law. Ayub transferred power to another military dictator Yahiya khan. In this way democratic system could not flourish, got weaken and military rule straightened. Senior analyst Hassan Askri Rizvi stated that “The Army Chief is a pivot in Pakistan's post-1988 power structure. Together with the President and the Prime Minister, he constitutes one-third of the 'Troika' -an extra-constitutional arrangement for civilian-military consensus-building on key domestic, foreign policy and security issues. The Troika meets periodically; senior military and civilian officials are summoned to give briefings relating to the issues under discussion. The Army Chief also holds meetings separately with the President and Prime Minister on political and security affairs. Another institution that has gained prominence is the Corps Commanders' meeting. Presided over by the Army chief, this conference includes top commanders, Principal Staff Officers at the Army Headquarters and other senior officers holding strategic appointments. Its members not only discuss security and organizational and professional matters, but also deliberate on domestic issues such as law and order, and general political conditions and especially when the government and the opposition are engaged in intense confrontation. These discussions are intended both to underline senior

Civil Military Relations – A Way Forward

officers' political concerns and to develop a broad-based military consensus. Executing the consensus decisions is left to the Army Chief, thereby strengthening his position when he interacts with the President and the Prime Minister.” The practice of meeting with prime minister and president by the army chief is still continuing which reflects the weakening of civilian rule

The Military and Intelligence Agencies

ISI,MI is equipped with political wings which actively interfere in political system of Pakistan in order to protect particular interests of Military. ISI and MI specifically established their political cell during Zulfikar Ali Bhutto government. Close ties with America during cold war, Proxy war in Afghanistan, close working relationship with C.I.A of America and billions of dollar aid had strengthened their operational capacity, resources and institutional role. As a result ISI and IB have been actively involved in every political move. Some people in political circle regarded ISI as a “king maker”. It is an open secret that intelligence agencies and the military are behind the political turmoil. From the establishment of Islamic Jamhoori Ittehad (IJI) in 1980’s to Difaai Pakistan council in 2012, military and intelligence agencies are asserting their pressure on civilian government.

Zulfiqar Ali Bhutto and the Military

Z.A Bhutto got the opportunity to dismantle military role in the politics. He succeeded in the making of 1973 constitution. But Z.A. Bhutto lost that opportunity as he considered himself above the law. He excessively used military and other law enforcement agencies to deter his political rivals. As a result military and intelligence agencies reinvigorated it and enabled enough to topple civilian government with the support of urban middle class and right wing elements. Zia ul haq seized the power from the elected prime minister and hanged him. As chief of army staff he started reign of terror under the cover of his Islamic agenda which slackened the foundations of the state and democratic system.

Benazir Bhutto and the Military

Benazir Bhutto was in power twice - from December 1988-August 1990 and from October 1993-November 1996 - in each case heading a coalition government. Despite the military's distrust of the PPP, Bhutto was allowed to assume power in December 1988 (following Zia's death that August) after the PPP emerged as the largest party in the parliamentary elections. Every time Benazir Bhutto faced resistance from the military.

Hassan Askari Rizvi shared his opinion about Benazir Bhutto government relations with the military in the defense journal in these words

“Bhutto's relations with the military soured, mainly because of her government's political and economic mismanagement and bitter confrontation with her political adversaries that virtually paralyzed the administration. Senior commanders also bridled at what they took to be civilian interference in the military's internal and organizational affairs.” (Askari)

He further stated that “The military considered its internal autonomy to be challenged by the civilian government's interference with appointments and transfers. The first dispute arose in May 1989, when the government changed the ISI's Director-General to reduce the ISI's involvement in domestic politics. Army Chief General Mirza Aslam Beg reluctantly agreed, but was annoyed by the Prime Minister's decision to appoint a retired Major-General instead of a serving officer, as was traditional. General Beg also resented the government's efforts to persuade the Army not to press punitive action against the officers who had been removed from service for indiscipline after the execution of Benazir Bhutto's father, former President and Prime Minister, Zulfikar Ali Bhutto. A more serious row developed when the government unsuccessfully attempted to retire Admiral Iftikhar Ahmad Sirohi, Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff Committee, in 1989. Similarly, the government's attempts to interfere with retirement and extension of some senior officers in June-July 1990 further strained civil-military relations. The military was also wary of Bhutto's keenness to cultivate India's Prime Minister, Rajiv Gandhi, during his visits to Pakistan in December 1988 and July 1989. Army intelligence sources

Civil Military Relations – A Way Forward

collected enough evidence on the dialogue between the two leaders to lead the Army commanders to view her as unreliable on security matters.”

Both times Benazir Bhutto became the victim of military intervention in political affairs. President Ishaq Khan dismissed the government of Benazir Bhutto in 1990 on the behest of military high command. Benazir Bhutto's government was sacked again by his own party president Farooq Ahmed Leghari who then got the support of military in toppling civilian government.

Nawaz Sharif and the Military

Nawaz Sharif took office of the prime minister in 1990. Sadly Nawaz Sharif had the support of military in assuming the high office of the government machinery. Initially his government enjoyed cordial relations with the military establishment. But situation started bad to worse over issues involving civilian role in the appointments of top military brass and use of intelligence agencies for personal interests'. Nawaz Sharif allocated huge funds to military viz a viz increased reliance on military. Military was becoming political and someone called it as a military on rent. Differences grew bitter between the prime minister and the president over military appointments and over president discretionary powers. As a result president sacked the elected civilian government in 1993 with the support of the military. In 1997 Sharif again returned to the office with two thirds majority. Civilian government succeeded in establishing its writ over all institutions. Nawaz Sharif government passed 13th and 14th amendment to cut the powers of president to dissolve the parliament and strengthened the head of political party respectively. Military was unhappy over these amendments because every time they used the president to overthrow the civilian regime. The appointment of Pervez Musharraf as new chief of army staff while ignoring the seniority of other generals once again soured the relationship. Kargil episode added fuel to fire to already tense relations between the civil and military leadership. Military staged a coup in 1999 and again civilian government became the victim of military dictatorship.

People's party government from 2008 to date and the Military

Pakistan people party earned majority in 2008 general elections. Syed Yusuf Raza Gilani assumed the office of prime minister and Asif Ali Zardari assumed of of the President of Pakistan. Relationship between the military and the civilian government were not as good as expected. There is an impression in the country that military is behind the assassination of former prime minister Benazir Bhutto who was also the chairperson of Pakistan people party. Civilian government tried to put ISI under the control of ministry of interior but that decision met greater resistance from the military .ultimately decision was reversed due to threat to democratic system. There were hiccups in the relationship over domestic issues, suspension of Judges Issue and in foreign policy spheres. Swat operation and security related issues saw unanimity of policies between the both U.S raids on Abbot Abad hideout of Usama bin laden created a debate about the responsibility of state security and its connections with the terrorists. Civilian government came to rescue and defended well the position of military and state intelligence agencies at all fronts comprising UNO and other international forums. But memo gate scandal has badly hurt the relationship of military and civil government. Military establishment mistrust the civilian government. Once again relationship between the military and civilian government are at lowest ebb.

Guidelines for regulating civil military relationship in future endeavors

In order to establish sustainable civil military relationship following guidelines are proposed by the youth minister of Interior:

1. National security strategy must involve civilian leadership and professional military officials
2. A new counter terrorism force is established under ministry of interior which undertakes operations against terrorists and non state actors thus giving an opportunity to military to concentrate on national defense.
3. Political parties need to initiate party elections and democracy within their ranks so that democratic culture is developed and the roots of democracy be strengthened among the masses.
4. Military budgets must be scrutinized by the civilian leadership.
5. Foreign policy must be under civilian control and a comprehensive mechanism being established for smooth decision making process under foreign office in collaboration with the think tanks.
6. In order to secure the sanctity and discipline in military apparatus there would be no political appointments in military command and control system.
7. Rule of law and good governance must be ensured by the civilian governments.
8. Political activities and political cells of intelligence agencies must be dismantled on war footing.
9. Media, civil society, philanthropists and writers need to take on board in diffusing mistrust between the civilian and the military establishment.
10. Recruitments in the military must be ensured from all over Pakistan therefore the impression of Punjabi security establishment be removed.
11. Paramilitary forces such as Frontier constabulary and frontier corps must be placed under civilian control.
12. Frontier works organization (FWO), national logistic cell (NLC), canteen store department (CSD) and other military industrial adventures must be under civilian check.

Civil Military Relations – A Way Forward

13. Parliamentary committee on national security must be strengthened and all major steps by the military will be ratified by this forum.

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