

Re-inventing Pakistan: Islam, Security and Democracy---What is changing?

Saeed Shafqat*

Quaid-i- Azam Distinguished Professor and Adjunct Professor of Political Science
Southern Asian Institute, School of International Affairs and Public Policy
Columbia University, New York

This essay analyzes the changing dynamics of Islam, military and democracy .I will argue that the composition and support base of the religious parties, the military and the elected public officials has undergone a transformation and new coalitions are emerging which are changing the face of Pakistani politics and society. The religious parties, the military and the elected public officials are preoccupied with considerations of *power and state security* rather than economic reform. The predicament for the military and Musharraf-Jamali regime is how to reconcile the security imperatives of the state with democratic expectations of its citizens. The new alliances and coalitions that the military has built to charter the course of democratic process in Pakistan do not breed much confidence among Pakistan watchers, why?

In the post 9/11 Pakistan General Musharraf is faced with similar challenges that the civilian government of Zulfikar Ali Bhutto (1971-77) was in 1972, namely, how to ensure the security of the state, deal with the resurgent religious right and build democratic processes? Bhutto softened confrontation with India and built a framework of peace through the Simla Agreement (July 1972). He refurbished the alliance with the US and sought accommodation with the religious right. The challenge then and now is how to reinvent and redefine Pakistan? Bhutto-Musharraf speeches on ‘enlightened moderation’ and on Islamic political discourse, evoke interesting comparisons; Bhutto in the 1970s and Musharraf now have roused expectations about liberal, progressive, forward looking and “moderate Muslim” Pakistan but both did little in building coalitions with the liberal socio- political forces and sought appeasement and accommodation with the religious right. This is the paradox of liberal/modernist leadership in Pakistan.

I will argue three basic propositions; first, on the rise of Muttahida-Majlis-e-Amala (MMA) most of the analysts argue that Military regime manipulated its rise. They argue that Military-Mullah connection has been pivotal in facilitating the rise of the religious groups. The Mullah-military argument, weighty and persuasive as it may be, overlooks an

important fact; the disarray of liberal social-political forces represented by the PPP, PML (N) and ANP. These parties not only failed to make meaningful coalitions but also disintegrated into factions. Despite popular appeal and support base these parties could neither develop a coherent program or an alternate coalition strategy.

Second, the role of military and composition of top military brass has undergone transformation. It has gradually moved away from the Huntingtonian model of professionalism confined to state security and primacy of civilian control to Janowitzian model of “constabulary military”—where inter-state wars have been rare but cross-border insurgency and internal law enforcement have become their key function. In most scholarly studies the political role of Pakistan military has been primary focus of analysis. Its peace keeping, intelligence and counter-intelligence role has not received adequate attention; how that may have transformed the outlook of its officer corps I will provide some conjectural evidence and analysis.

I will argue that in the past three decades a generation of military elites emerged who’s war experience is not that of “war between states” but their world view was deeply shaped by the ‘new wars’—organizing,

supporting, training, equipping Para- military groups (Afghan Jihad) and simultaneously combating/monitoring other Para-military groups (peace missions; Haiti, Somalia, Cambodia, Bosnia and etc.). The military elites who came to dominate decision making power structure appeared enormously confident and convinced that for governance, political control and reform they need not depend on civil bureaucracy but must establish military's hegemony.

Third, Nuclear weapons capability and manifestations of 'radical Islam' have produced a crisis of reputation for Pakistan; whereby Pakistani state's credibility is linked with its capacity to safely protect its nuclear assets and the state's behavior is measured by the degree of Islamic zealotry shown by various segments of Pakistani society. For example, between October 2003 and January 25, 2004, *the New York Times*, *Washington Post* and *Washington Times* carried 20 stories 'demonizing' Pakistan as the primary source of Islamic and nuclear terrorism. In the American perception the citizen and society of Pakistan is increasingly anti-American and unreliable and *Pakistani state is an undesirable but essential ally*. Similarly, in Pakistani media the US appears as unreliable and untrustworthy power—rousing suspicions of 'abandonment'. These perceptions do impact the nature and future direction of U.S Pakistan relations.

Security and Governance: An Overview 1972-2004

How religion and security got intertwined and have an impact on governance? War, conflict and perceptions about regional insecurity could bring religious zealots and the military together. Pakistan makes an interesting case study. In the 1970 elections the defeat of the religious political parties were followed by defeat and dissolution of Pakistan. However, in the 'new' Pakistan, neither the role of the military nor that of the religious political parties diminished. Both remained a potent force. The religious groups were in disarray; however they had a clear goal-- to penetrate and maximize their power in Pakistani state structure. To attain this they demanded Islamization of laws and succeeded in securing more Islamic clauses in the 1973 Constitution than any other previous constitution of Pakistan. In a constitutional/ legal sense it was a major victory but in the parliament and power structure, the religious groups remained peripheral. The constitutional changes gave a sense of confidence, legitimized their role and enhanced their power. The religious political parties won on Islamization of the constitutional provisions but their broad thrust has been restricting personal freedoms, subordination of women and minorities and enhancing the role of Ulema in the Pakistani power structure.

The coming into power of PPP under the leadership of Zulfikar Ali Bhutto (1971-77) as the prime minister of Pakistan was a frustrating experience for the religious right, particularly the Jamaat-e-Islami (JI), it was also an unwelcome outcome for the military. The two had fostered a partnership during the military regime of General Yahya Khan (1969-71). The break up of Pakistan shook the very foundations of this partnership. It was a watershed event in Pakistani history. Both accepted the authority of the PPP government reluctantly and grudgingly. While Bhutto was swift in purging the army top brass, however, after appointing General Tikka Khan as chief of army staff (COAS) in March 1972 he felt secure and comfortable but his control over military remained precarious. The religious right was vociferous in attacking the Bhutto government as “unislamic” and demanded enforcement of Shariah laws. Bhutto responded by a twin policy of appeasement and coercion. For example, while adopting the 1973 constitution he showed flexibility in incorporating the Islamic clauses, yet, he resorted to coercive measures and suspended the publication of a number of pro-Jamaat newsweeklies and papers. Despite appeasement and coercion Bhutto could not completely subdue the religious right and it remained a potent oppositional force against the government. In early 1977, when the PPP government held elections but failed to demonstrate the fairness of

these, the religious right provided the lead and banded together and formed the Pakistan National Alliance (PNA). The PNA demanded enforcement of Sharia laws, Bhutto conceded to many of these demands yet; the religious right demanded his government's resignation and incited the army to overthrow the PPP government. The confrontation between PPP-PNA, street protest, loss of life and property encouraged military take over.

The military regime under General Zia-ul-Haq rejuvenated the partnership between the religious right and the military. Besides, domestic factors, changes in external regional environment-- turmoil in Afghanistan, Islamic Revolution in Iran and finally Soviet intervention in Afghanistan galvanize Islamic revivalist movement in Pakistan facilitating the proliferation of Deeni Madarrassah (religious schools) and training camps. Now, there is considerable evidence which explains how United States, Saudi Arabia funneled money, equipment and training to militant Islamic groups who were mobilized to wage a war against Soviet intervention in Afghanistan. These internal and external conditions led to the formation of a nexus between the militant Islamic groups and the military regime.

During the Zia era (1977-88) Pakistan's involvement in Afghan war deepened, while internally the regime launched upon a policy of Islamization of laws, polity, economy and society in Pakistan. Supporting

Afghan war had implications for Pakistan. It not only had to accommodate more than 2 million Afghan refugees but also to harbor various international Islamic groups who were mobilized to wage and sustain Afghan Jihad. These holy warriors began to cultivate relations with Islamic groups who were small in size but deeply entrenched in Pakistan's power structure. Thus Afghan jihad and Islamization of Pakistani state grew simultaneously and supplementing each other. With the signing of Geneva Accords in 1988, the US embarked on a policy of disengagement from Afghan jihad, however, the Pakistan's president Zia-ul-Haq who had vigorously supported the jihad felt that the US disengagement was premature and jeopardized the prospects of installation of a government lead by Afghan Mujahideen. Zia had come to believe that the US had reached an agreement with the Soviet Union and no longer needed Pakistan's support; instead by eliciting the support of the Prime Minister Mohammad Khan Junejo on Geneva Accords, it was aiming to discredit the Pakistan military which had successfully organized the Afghan resistance movement. Zia and his military associates who had engineered and sustained the Afghan war were completely left out in the Geneva Accords. The US disengagement left the Pakistani military, the various Afghan factions and the religious groups to their own devices.

During 1988-1994, Afghanistan underwent civil war as various factions struggled to establish their control over Kabul; the military and religious groups in Pakistan began to reposition themselves for the installation of a pro Pakistan government in Kabul. Besides, Afghan civil war another factor, the uprising in Indian held Kashmir in 1989, contributed towards reinvigorating the partnership between the military and religious groups in Pakistan. Confident of success in Afghan resistance, the military found it convenient to mobilize the religious groups to support the Kashmir uprising. They encouraged the religious groups to provide sanctuary, training and built connections with the militant religious groups. During 1980's and 1990's Pakistan witnessed the proliferation of militant religious groups. These groups hardened in Afghan war built extra territorial connections and indulged in transnational wars. Afghanistan war and Kashmir uprising deepened the already stable connection between the military and the Jihadi groups in Pakistan.

In the wake of infamous terrorist attacks on the World Trade Center, Pakistan was compelled to revise and reformulate its Afghan and Kashmir policy. After joining the international coalition against terrorism in October 2001, governance is no longer an internal issue for Pakistan; it has acquired international overtones and salience. Pakistan embarked upon a policy of

providing logistical support, air space use and intelligence cooperation with the US. This has given new meaning to governance, where the US law enforcing agencies like the Federal Bureau of Investigation (FBI), Special Services Group and Central Intelligence Agency (CIA) have launched programs of cooperation and training for Pakistani counterparts. The collaboration between Pakistan and US on issues of governance and counter terrorism has had two consequences, first, it strained and severed the linkages between the religious groups and the military and second it has evoked fierce resistance from the Jihadi groups and remnants of Taliban. In the light of these circumstances, the challenge before the Musharraf military regime was, how to redefine relations with the religious groups and the parameters of security.

Coalitions of Religious Parties: Why and how?

As noted above in the last three decades politics of coalition building, interest aggregation has replaced politics of mass mobilization/ mass agitation in Pakistan. This is best reflected in voter turnouts, political apathy, decline/death of party worker (jiala) leading to de-institutionalization of political parties. Ironically, political parties fragmented at a faster rate during 1985-99, as Pakistan made transition to electoral democracy. During this period domestic conditions and external environment proved conducive for

the religious political parties who devised new methods to expand the political role of Islam in Pakistani society and culture. The religious political parties and groups expanded support base among the trader –merchant classes in the Punjab, NWFP and Karachi.

The roots of recent successful coalition building efforts of religious political parties can be traced from the formation of Pakistan National Alliance (PNA) in 1977- an alliance that comprised of nine political parties-, which was dominated, by Jamaat-e-Islami (JI) Jamiat-ul-Ulema-Islam (JUI) and Jamiat-ul-Ulema-Pakistan (UP). The 1977 PNA movement against Z.A.Bhutto government was a catalyst in strategizing the coalition politics of religious parties. During this movement, the Juma Prayers (Friday congregations) were used as an effective tool to mobilize the population; Masjid (mosque) was transformed into a focal point of networking and mass mobilization. The Masjid began to be increasingly used as vanguard for political message while Madrassa's developed into sanctuaries of religious indoctrination and training. From the PNA movement the religious parties learnt that for instrumentalizing Islam politicization of the mosque is essential. In the urban center Jamaat-e-Islami spear headed the movement and built coalitions with the JUP and the JUI—both had effective control over the mosques.

During 1979-89 the religious parties, particularly JI collaborated with the military regime in the “Afghan Jihad”. During the 1990’s sectarian conflicts compelled the religious parties to address the problem. This led to the creation of another coalition dominated by the religious parties in March 1995—the Milli Yakjehati Council (MYC), a coalition of over 15 religious parties. However, the Council fell apart when JUI (F) and JUI (S) developed differences. It had limited success in curbing sectarian violence. During the 1997 elections the JI made an unsuccessful attempt to convert MYC into an electoral alliance. In 2000, led by JUI (F) 29 religious groups formed yet another coalition—Islamic Muttahida Mahaaz (IMAM). This was regional in character, focusing on NWFP and Baluchistan. IMAM was vociferously anti - American, attacked, the NGO’s particularly the women groups and indulged in destroying and disrupting the satellite and cable networks in the NWP and Baluchistan.

Maulana Fazal-ur-Rehman JUI (F) at Peshawar organized the Deoband Conference 2000 June 2-4. The conference was attended by many scholars from a number of Muslim Countries- reportedly over a million people from all over the Pakistan attended it. The MYC, IMAM, Deoband Conference were precursor to the Pak-Afghan Defense Council (PADC) formed in October 2001—a coalition of 30 religious parties. Events

subsequent to the World Trade Center attacks provided a rallying point for the religious parties to band together in opposition to actions taken by Musharraf and later by the US. For a variety of reasons the PADC could not act in a unified manner or define a coherent agenda against the military regime. Ultimately, a trimmed down PADC became MMA election alliance (Qazi Hussain Ahmed claims it was formed at his residence in June 2002).

While participating in the October 2002 elections the MMA demonstrated greater flexibility and pragmatism while making seat adjustments. It was skillful in cultivating an image among the voters that since it's a coalition of six Sunni and Shii, religious parties its victory may curb sectarianism, and to a limited degree it did. In the past one year after joining the ruling coalition at the national and provincial level it has demonstrated that it aims to stay in power and is willing to make bargain and compromise.

New Social Groups:

These are the groups, social classes and leaders who emerged during Zia years and expanded their power base during the decade of 1990's as Pakistan struggled with consolidation of electoral democracy, These groups banded together for ideological, social class and attitudinal reasons.

These groups have generally opposed the politics of mass mobilization and shown preference for coalition building and interest protection.

In collaboration with the military they found it prudent to pursue and protect the interests of their support groups through coalition formation—increasing reliance on Briadari (clan), tribal affiliations and religious right. The PML (Q) and MMA coalition needs to be seen in that context. My preliminary research on the outcome of 2001 Local Bodies and 2002 Election results, seems to suggest that the socio-economic and educational base of the elected representatives has undergone some change. The landowning groups and tribal leaders continue to dominate but trader-merchant classes, business groups and middle class representation has marginally increased. More significant is the emergence of a younger generation of elected representatives from the old established political families. The introduction of educational qualification clause has contributed to the rise of a small but new breed of elected public officials. Do changes in socio-economic base and education promote liberal democratic values? The conduct, behavior and performance of parliamentary politics do not show a positive correlation.

Changing composition of the military and bureaucratic elites

The generation of officers who have emerged as the decision makers in the post 1999 period, entered service in early and mid 1960's. As young officers, they got the opportunity to participate in the September 1965 war. These officers were yet in the formative phase of their careers, when they saw another war. In a way the top rank of the current military regime and officers were recruited into service between the two wars 1965 and 1971. Most of the Corps Commanders are urban based, educated in the colleges of Lahore, Peshawar, Rawalpindi, and Karachi. It must also be kept in view that the period between two wars was a very turbulent period in the history of Pakistan. Therefore their worldview is shaped by events and circumstances of that period. However, their professional advancement, operational skills and interaction with higher levels of security policy making shaped during Zia regime. Most of the current corps commanders, staff officers were serving as Major and Colonels, the Zia years deep involvement of Pakistan army in Afghanistan war had enormous impact on thinking, outlook orientation of the officers and ranks.

During these years closer involvement in Afghan affairs although confined to a limited number of officers, but the over all involvement of the

army was such that professional skills were merged with motivational dimensions (Islamic ideology/the Jihad Syndrome).

The Afghan war considerably diffused the pattern of martial, non-martial race generals. The pattern begin to tilt towards urban, “non-martial race”, breed of officers. A change that has considerably diluted the dominance of the so-called ‘martial races’ in the higher command and could be regarded a major transformation in the traditional composition and outlook of the army’s high command. Evidently, the urban-based generals have shown greater pragmatism in making a transition from professional role to a constabulary/managerial role. However, the worldview of these officers, particularly, on issues related to security, appears to have been considerably influenced by the policies and legacies of Zia years.

The regime has been more than enthusiastic in appointing military officers in top administrative positions. Over 800 hundred retired and serving officers above the rank of Brigadiers appointed to various senior civil administration positions *Three methods through which military officers are inducted into civilian position; first, serving officers are given prize posts in government corporations, semi-autonomous organization (PIA, WAPDA, NSC, universities, think tanks). Second, retired officers recommended by the service head quarters for re-employment, third, since 1980,through*

induction, each year 6-11 officers are recruited in three elite CSS services, the DMG, Police and Foreign Service. In addition, in the lower level government jobs (grade 1-15), the retired ex—servicemen are given jobs.

The social class, educational background, professional experience and ideological orientation of the military top brass have also been undergoing changes. First, the Afghan war expanded Pakistan military's Intelligence and Insurgency/counter insurgence role and experience. This resulted in deepening its already well-entrenched position in domestic politics as 'policeman'. Second, the collapse of Soviet Union provided yet another opportunity to enhance the peacekeeping role and functions of Pakistan military. It is recognized as the largest UN Peace keeping military in the UN operations. The UN peacekeeping exposure established the professional reputation of its soldiers and officer corps. Third, lack of trust and absence of consensus among the political parties and allegations of corruption during civilian rule 1988-99 tarnished the image and functioning of political parties. All these developments led to the expansion of 'policing' role of the military.

The over-stretch in the policing functions of the military has eroded the credibility of military as an institution. In 1997 the USIA Lahore through a consultancy firm sponsored a survey and evaluated the public

confidence in different institutions—judiciary, bureaucracy, political parties, and military. Not too surprisingly over 80% of the respondents held military in the highest esteem and considered it the most credible institution. However, if a survey were conducted today to measure the credibility of military in public eye, it would certainly be low, if not totally disappointing. Media reports of job grabbing and financial corruption by the military have considerably tarnished its image and reputation in public eye.

The composition of the higher bureaucracy (the Civil Services of Pakistan) has undergone considerable transformation. Four, unrelated developments are changing the character and composition of higher civil service in Pakistan. First, the Local Bodies Plan 2001 and its implementation; second, foreign training opportunities, third, the UN peace keeping and policing postings in Balkans, Sierra Leon, East Timor, etc; fourth NGO's have provided Consultancy opportunities to the civil servants, encouraging many to take temporary leave and deputation from the service. The District Management Group (DMG) has been adversely affected by the Local Bodies 2001 Plan. Its prestige, power and glory has been undermined by the dissolution of the office of the Deputy Commissioner-district was the lynchpin of administration. After initial dismay and resistance the DMG officers have found alternate ways to enhance their professional skills and restore lost power by seeking foreign scholarships and training abroad. The trend had begun in the early 1990s when the British government expanded the Cheavening training program for Civil Services and professionals in Pakistan. Since 1996 on an average 25-30 officers under the age of 40 have acquired some kind of training—

resulting in a segment of the civil servants better educated and professionally qualified but not necessarily satisfied with work conditions and environment. In the post 2001, the expansion of Humphrey Hayes and the revival of US AID and other programs have provided fresh opportunities of training to the higher civil services. The IMF sponsored PIFFERA project with the Central Board of Revenue (CBR), has been functioning for some years. For example in 2003, 25 officers from grade 18-20 received short-term training in Canada.

Conclusion

The foregoing analysis of the changing composition of the military- bureaucratic elites and elected public officials and the ascendancy of the religious parties demonstrates that the dynamics of politics are undergoing transformation. The role and relationship of Islam, electoral process and democratic practice and security is changing. However the dynamics of these changes are not necessarily facilitating a balanced institutional development, thus constricting the prospects of democratic governance. The future of democracy and consolidation of democratic institutions in the country hinges on the disengagement of the military from civil sectors; revival, sustenance and restoring the legitimacy of mainstream political parties and professionalization of civil bureaucracy. A process of disengagement now would contribute towards resuscitating the already shrunk and torn liberal social and political space in Pakistani society. It

could also help restore a healthy balance between the religious/fundamentalist and liberal/progressive social groups and give legitimacy to party system—a credible and legitimate party system is a prerequisite for any democratic order. In turn, such a change could give momentum to social and political forces that espouse “enlightened moderation” and hold the promise of transforming Pakistan into an enlightened, development and democracy driven modern Muslim nation state. That was the original spirit and vision that got mutilated beyond recognition by state sponsored Islamization. Would Pakistanis (at home and abroad) seize this moment to revive and re-invent that vision of Pakistan for the challenges and opportunities that 21st century offers? Time is running out.

* This is a slightly revised version of my chapter, “*Re-inventing Pakistan: Islam, Security and Democracy—What is changing?*” in **Islamization and the Pakistani Economy**, Edited by Robert M. Hathaway and Wilson Lee (Washington, D.C, Woodrow Wilson Center, 2004) Chapter 9, pp119-129.