



Military Rule and Civilian Politics: A Case Study of General Pervez Musharraf's Government (1999 – 2008)

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Abstract

The complexity of civilian politics and military authority in Pakistan under General Pervez Musharraf (1999–2008) is examined in this paper. It looks at the main political, economic, and foreign policy changes made by his administration and how they affected democratic governance. Musharraf's administration was criticized for stifling democratic institutions, limiting judicial independence, and promoting political divisiveness, even though it also saw significant economic growth, infrastructure development, and strategic realignments in foreign policy. This study adds to the larger conversation on Pakistan's civil-military relations by critically examining important policies and issues, emphasizing the military's ongoing influence on the political course of the nation. The results highlight the necessity of institutional changes to Pakistan's governance structure in order to guarantee democratic stability and civilian supremacy.

Introduction

Pakistan's political history has frequently dealt with the tension between civilian politics and military power. General Pervez Musharraf's administration (1999–2008) stands out among the major military intervention eras due to its complicated legacy of governance, reform, and controversy. This period highlights the ongoing conflicts in Pakistan between authoritarian rule and democratic principles, which are symbolic of larger issues with the nation's institutional growth and political stability. For many years, the military has ruled Pakistan directly, but with very few exceptions, it has also served as a guardian during the majority of civilian periods. Following its formation, Pakistan was confronted with serious threats that forced its leaders to prioritize defense spending over other institutions. As a result, the military established itself as a dominating institution from the day it was founded, and its leaders became influential figures in Pakistan's political structure. Armed forces leader General Ayub Khan established Martial Law in 1958 after becoming an official partner in the corridors of power in 1954 (Ahmad, 2013). In 1969, 1977, and 1999, this pattern of military takeovers was repeated.

On October 12, 1999, Prime Minister Nawaz Sharif's democratically elected administration was overthrown by a bloodless coup led by General Pervez Musharraf. Musharraf cited institutional deterioration, economic incompetence, and political corruption as justifications for this coup. According to scholars, these military operations in Pakistan frequently take advantage of structural

flaws in civilian government in order to justify their presence (Rizvi, 2000; Jalal, 2014). The backing of superpowers, especially the United States, was another important element that led to military engagement in political matters. World powers have historically supported Pakistani military leaders, from General Ayub Khan to General Pervez Musharraf, despite their stated commitment to democracy (Dahl, 1973; Rahman, 2017). The military's political involvement was further enabled by weak civilian institutions and corrupt, inexperienced, and incompetent political leadership; this pattern is still visible today (Khokhar, 2016).

Pakistan had substantial political, economic, and social changes under Musharraf's leadership. On the one hand, his government pushed for modernity by liberalizing the media, enacting economic reforms, and advancing Pakistan's participation in the international "War on Terror" (Fair, 2008). However, his government was criticized for using authoritarian tactics to quell opposition, marginalize political parties, and weaken democratic institutions (Zaidi, 2011). One of the defining characteristics of this era is the dichotomy of progress and repression, which begs the question of how military leadership influenced Pakistan's course. In addition, the military's firmly established business interests in Pakistan made it necessary for them to stay active in the political system in order to protect these interests (Siddiqi, 2007).

Musharraf's government coincided with key global and regional changes, particularly the events of September 11, 2001, which dramatically influenced Pakistan's diplomatic and internal policies. After joining the US in the "War on Terror," Pakistan became a vital strategic partner and received significant financial and military support. But when opposition forces and militant organizations grew more vocal in their criticism to Musharraf's policies, this alignment also contributed to internal unrest (Haqqani, 2010). Increased conflicts between civil freedoms and state security during this time reflected the larger problems of military control in governance. Initiatives to design a controlled democracy characterized the political climate of Musharraf's time. He attempted to decentralize authority in 2001 by introducing the Local Government Ordinance, supposedly to strengthen grassroots governance. Critics counter that these actions were intended to strengthen military influence over civilian institutions and undermine established political elites (Shafiqat, 2004). Effective opposition to military domination was further limited by the continued weakness of civil society and public mobilization as a result of low literacy rates and a lack of political consciousness. The instability of constitutionalism and the rule of law under his administration was highlighted by the contentious removal of the judiciary in 2007 and the declaration of emergency rule. Although Musharraf's resignation in 2008 marked the end of another round of military intervention in Pakistani politics, the effects of his rule are still felt in the nation's political discourse. Musharraf's resignation was triggered by growing domestic and international pressure as well as the rise of civilian political forces.

This study looks at how General Pervez Musharraf's rule affected politics, society, and the economy, with a particular emphasis on how military and civilian institutions interacted during his tenure. This study aims to comprehend how his government influenced Pakistan's political course and added to the continuing discussion regarding the role of the military in civilian governance by critically analyzing his policies.

Literature Review

Civil-Military Relations: A Theoretical Viewpoint

An important topic in the study of Pakistani administration has been the relationship between the military and the civilian population. Huntington's (1957) idea of objective civilian control offers a theoretical foundation for comprehending the role of the military in politics. However, in Pakistan, the military's view of itself as a defender of national stability and the country's weak political institutions have frequently weakened this control (Jalal, 1995). According to academics like Rizvi (2000), the military's strategic importance and the failure of civilian administrations to provide efficient governance are the main causes of its dominance in Pakistan. Siddiq (2007) goes on to explain the military's firmly established position by pointing out its corporate interests, which demand that it remain active in the democratic system.

Historical Trends in Military Domination

Periods of military and civilian authority alternate throughout Pakistan's political history. While Zia-ul-Haq's rule (1977–1988) introduced Islamization as a political tactic, Ayub Khan's period (1958–1969) set the standard for military-led development (Jalal, 1995). Particularly with regard to economic policies and attempts to legitimize military authority through constitutional revisions, General Musharraf's reign is frequently contrasted with these earlier eras (Haqqani, 2005). Historical research shows a recurrent pattern in which the military, frequently aided by superpowers such as the United States, takes advantage of civilian governance's inability to establish control (Dahl, 1973; Rahman, 2017).

Musharraf's Reforms and Governance

The administration of Musharraf has generated a great deal of scholarly discussion. His biography, *In the Line of Fire* (2006), provides light on his governance style by outlining his economic policies, seven-point reform plan, and reaction to the events that transpired globally after 9/11. While Musharraf depicts himself as a visionary leader, experts like Aziz (2008) and Cheema (2010) critique his concentration of power and suppression of judicial independence. Additionally, Haqqani (2010) and Abbas (2013) place his policies within the historical framework of Pakistan, while Zahid Hussain and Ahmad Rashid have examined the emergence of militancy during his reign. This study aims to fill in the knowledge gaps about the long-term effects of Musharraf's rule on Pakistan's democratic institutions, which have been identified in a number of analyses.

Research Gaps in Current Studies

Although a lot of research has been done on Musharraf's policies, nothing is known about how his rule would affect Pakistan's democratic institutions in the long run. In order to fill in these gaps, this research offers a thorough examination of his foreign policy, economic, and political changes.

An Historical Analysis of Pakistan's Military Engagement

Military Participation in Politics: An International and Regional Perspective

Beginning in the Roman era and continuing into the medieval era, military participation in political matters is still common in contemporary constitutional systems, particularly in developing nations (Igwe, 2005). Despite being constitutionally limited to defense matters, the military frequently has significant influence over government policies, even in democracies (Onder, 2010). Historical elements pertaining to state creation and nation-building have significantly influenced civil-

military relations in the Asian environment. During colonial authority, numerous Asian militaries were essential, and they later played a key part in post-independence administration systems (Alagappa, 2001). Ethnic fragmentation, low socioeconomic development, and weak political institutions have all contributed to ongoing military interventions in politics in a number of developing countries, including those in Africa, Latin America, and Asia (Al-Hamdi, 2014). In nations with authoritarian inclinations, the idea of "guided democracy," in which the military is seen as an integral component of the democratic system rather than an outside force, has been especially noticeable (Kuehn, 2011).

Pakistani Military Coups: Historical Patterns

Numerous military interventions have occurred throughout Pakistan's history as a result of political unrest, poor administration, and disputes between military and civilian authority. In 1958, General Ayub Khan dismissed the civilian administration on the grounds of corruption and inefficiency, marking the first military coup (Jalal, 1995). General Zia-ul-Haq's 1977 and General Pervez Musharraf's 1999 takeovers further solidified the military's hold on Pakistani politics (Aziz, 2008). Musharraf's 1999 coup was especially noteworthy because it brought to light Pakistan's long-standing civil-military conflicts. Relations with the military deteriorated as a result of Nawaz Sharif's government coming under increasing fire for economic incompetence, nepotism, and corruption. Tensions were further heightened by the Kargil conflict in 1999, when the military saw Sharif's decision to leave under pressure from abroad as a betrayal of national interests (Shafiq, 2011). The coup immediately began by Sharif's October 12, 1999, effort to remove General Musharraf from his position as Army Chief and stop him from returning to Pakistan by denying him the ability to land his aircraft. The military quickly seized power, arrested Sharif, and took over without encountering significant opposition (Musharraf, 2006; Moskalenko, 2013).

Military Rule Civilization (1999–2008)

General Pervez Musharraf implemented emergency rule under the Provisional Constitutional Order (PCO), suspended the Constitution, and disbanded the legislatures after seizing power in 1999 (Mahmood, 2015). He initially pledged a speedy restoration to democracy, but instead used institutional and legal techniques to secure control. Although his seven-point strategy placed a strong emphasis on accountability, economic recovery, and governance improvements (The Nation, 1999), his authority progressively resembled military tyranny. Globally, Pakistan was sanctioned and suspended from the Commonwealth, but Musharraf's position was reinforced after 9/11 when Pakistan joined the United States in the War on Terror (Bennett-Jones, 2002; Moskalenko, 2013). At home, he obtained Supreme Court approval for his coup under the 'Doctrine of State Necessity' in 2000, and he removed judges who did not comply with the law by requiring them to take a new judicial oath (Khan, 2009). In June 2001, he succeeded President Rafiq Tarar and took over as president himself, further solidifying his hold on power (Khan, 2009).

Although a pro-military government led by Prime Minister Zafarullah Khan Jamali was formed after the 2002 general elections, Musharraf maintained ultimate control and amended the Constitution through the Legal Framework Order (LFO) to formalize his military presidency (Mahmood, 2015). Musharraf further solidified his political position in 2004 when he received a vote of confidence from parliament, extending his tenure until 2007. His suspension of Chief Justice Iftikhar Chaudhry in 2007 triggered a growing judicial and political unrest that resulted in protests across the country. Musharraf further undermined democratic institutions in November 2007 when, under tremendous pressure, he declared emergency rule. Musharraf's hold loosened

after a Supreme Court decision declared his reelection illegitimate, growing opposition, and Benazir Bhutto's murder in December 2007. He was threatened with impeachment and resigned in August 2008, officially ending his administration, when the Pakistan Peoples Party (PPP) and Pakistan Muslim League-Nawaz (PML-N) won a parliamentary majority in the 2008 elections (Talbot, 2012).

Important Reforms and Policies under Musharraf

Musharraf Political Reforms

The Devolution Plan of 2000

As part of his larger governance reforms to decentralize administrative authority, General Pervez Musharraf presented the Devolution of Power Plan in 2000. By creating a three-tiered local government structure with district, tehsil, and union councils, this proposal transferred authority from the federal and provincial levels to local legislators (Aziz, 2008). This reform's main goal was to strengthen grassroots democracy by giving local governments more financial and administrative authority. Responses to the reform, however, were not uniform. According to Cheema et al. (2005), some experts saw it as a step toward bolstering participatory governance, while others denounced it as a means of undermining long-standing political elites and solidifying Musharraf's hold on power.

On October 17, 1999, General Musharraf declared his desire to devolve authority at the grassroots level. On August 14, 2000, the Local Government Plan 2000 was introduced in order to carry out this objective. This new system was developed in large part by the National Reconstruction Bureau (NRB), which was chaired by Tanvir Naqvi (Cohen, 2005). In order to establish a more effective and democratic governance structure, the devolution plan sought to remove the excessively centralized bureaucratic system that had long failed to deliver. By guaranteeing their participation in the decision-making process, especially with regard to basic facilities at the local level, it aimed to empower ordinary individuals (Khan, 2004).

In contrast to earlier administrative models, the plan aimed to replace the British-instituted magisterial system, which had consolidated authority in the hands of the civil bureaucracy following the 1857 mutiny (Waseem, 1994). Powers that had previously been divided among several governmental departments were consolidated under the new system, which placed the Nazim (mayor) at the center of governance. In order to provide checks and balances at all levels, the system was also built with accountability and transparency measures (Musharraf, 2006). Following orders from the federal government, all four provincial governments promulgated the Local Government Ordinance in August 2001, which resulted in local elections in 96 districts. The federal capital, however, was not subject to this procedure. Although the idea was marketed as an effort to further the interests of regular people, detractors drew attention to the fact that municipal elections were held without regard to party affiliation. This made it harder for anybody without substantial financial support to run for office by effectively marginalizing political parties and diminishing the middle class's influence in governance. As a result, the majority of elected Nazims were members of aristocratic political families, businessmen, tribal chiefs, or traditional feudal lords, which restricted the involvement of professionals and intellectuals. Additionally, it is believed that the military manipulated election results in order to install its favorite candidates (Iqbal, 2003).

In the end, the local government system undermined regional authority, despite Musharraf's initial pledge to balance federal-provincial relations by shifting functions to the provinces. The new arrangement strained relations between the federal, provincial, and municipal governments rather than bolstering the provinces. District administrations frequently ignored provincial authorities because they were directly funded by the federal government. This concentration of power was similar to earlier military dictators that employed local government structures for political scheming. Musharraf used the new district governments to solidify his position through a contentious referendum in May 2002, much how General Ayub Khan and General Zia-ul-Haq took advantage of local bodies to keep political control (Laporte, 2005). Notwithstanding its ambitious goals, the Devolution Plan encountered a number of operational obstacles, such as a shortage of qualified staff and inadequate funding. Its ability to achieve genuine local empowerment was hampered by these circumstances (Siddiqui, 2011). Conflicts over governance power became worse by the administrative restructure, which separated districts from provincial supervision. The Devolution Plan's eventual effects are still up for debate since, despite introducing a new local governance framework, it fell short of its claims of institutional transformation and genuine democratic empowerment.

Legal frame work order (LFO) 2002

General Pervez Musharraf amended the constitution with the Legal Framework Order (LFO) 2002, which greatly increased presidential power and weakened legislative supremacy. The return of Article 58(2)(b), which gave the president the authority to dissolve the National Assembly at his discretion and elevated the executive over the legislative, was one of its most contentious clauses (Haqqani, 2005). Additionally, the LFO blurred the distinction between military administration and democratic governance by institutionalizing the military's involvement in civilian issues (Malik, 2008). In May 2000, the Supreme Court of Pakistan gave Musharraf three years to carry out his reform program and gave him the power to propose constitutional changes that he believed would help him accomplish his goals. This ruling was heavily criticized since it gave a military ruler broad legislative authority even though the court itself lacked the authority to change the constitution.

A 58-page draft document titled "Establishment of Sustainable Federal Democracy in Pakistan" was released by Musharraf's National Reconstruction Bureau (NRB) in August 2002, just before the general elections. It argued that unbridled executive power had historically accrued in the prime minister's office and proposed 78 revisions to 29 provisions of the 1973 Constitution (Hussain, 2007). The president was given a wide range of powers by the proposed LFO, including the ability to name the prime minister, dissolve the government without consulting the prime minister, and designate province governors with comparable discretionary powers.

The National Security Council (NSC), which was established under the LFO and is presided over by the president, was a significant institutional shift that formally included the military in political decision-making (Niazi, 2002). Through a contentious referendum, Musharraf also extended his term as Chief of Army Staff and proclaimed himself the winner of the five-year presidential election. According to Asghar (2003), the reforms also gave the president the power to name Supreme and High Court justices as well as all service heads.

By converting the 1973 Constitution into a quasi-presidential/military administration, the LFO significantly changed its legislative nature. By reducing parliament to a subordinate entity, the

reforms undermined democratic traditions and strengthened the presidency's hold on power (Khan, 2009). There was significant rejection of the LFO. By consolidating authority in the presidency, the revisions undermined parliamentary democracy, according to the European Union (EU) observation group. Musharraf came under fire from Human Rights Watch for sabotaging legislative power and tampering with election results. In a critical analysis, the International Crisis Group (ICG) claimed that Musharraf's purported "roadmap to democracy" was actually a plan for ongoing military control (ICG, 2002). The LFO remained extremely contentious, with opposition parties challenging its legality even after it was approved by parliament in 2003. Critics saw it as a way for Musharraf to hold onto power and further solidify military involvement in Pakistan's democratic system, while advocates said it was intended to consolidate government.

NRO 2007 (National Reconciliation Ordinance)

One of General Pervez Musharraf's most contentious political moves was the October 5, 2007, promulgation of the National Reconciliation Ordinance (NRO). Thousands of politicians, government employees, and businesspeople who were charged with corruption and other crimes between January 1, 1986, and October 12, 1999, were granted amnesty by the decree (Lieven, 2011). In order to help Benazir Bhutto and the Pakistan People's Party (PPP) reintegrate into the political system, Musharraf presented it as a step toward political reconciliation. Many, however, saw it as a political tactic to forge coalitions and extend his authority (Jalal, 2014). On October 18, 2007, Benazir Bhutto was allowed to return to Pakistan by the NRO. It stated that any cases filed against public office holders during the designated time frame would be dropped, and such individuals would not be subject to further legal action for actions taken in good faith (Hussain, 2002). Both Musharraf and Bhutto profited from this agreement, but the ordinance was widely criticized for institutionalizing corruption rather than eradicating it. Many politicians' corruption investigations were reopened when the Supreme Court of Pakistan ruled in 2009 that the NRO was unconstitutional (Khan, 2013).

Musharraf simultaneously ran for re-election as president for the 2007–2012 term while remaining Chief of Army Staff, a move that violated constitutional provisions and his earlier pledge to step down from military service by December 2004. The Supreme Court conditionally allowed the presidential election but withheld the final results until a decision on Musharraf's eligibility was made (Naqvi, 2007). In response to political party opposition, Musharraf declared a state of emergency on November 3, 2007, suspending the judiciary and detaining judges who did not support his rule (Dawn, November 5, 2007). To quell dissent, news channels were banned for a month (Hussain, 2007).

On November 28, 2007, worldwide pressure compelled Musharraf to resign as army head, even though he had secured a second term with the Supreme Court's support. After Benazir Bhutto was assassinated, the general elections that were initially planned for January 5, 2008, were postponed until February 18, 2008. Observers, including the Free and Fair Election Network (FAFEN), questioned the fairness of these elections (Schmid, 2009). The new parliament, which Musharraf found difficult to manage, eventually attempted to remove him from office. Musharraf chose to quit on August 18, 2008, in response to increasing criticism, rather than face impeachment procedures (The News, August 19, 2008). After years of military domination, his departure signaled the end of his nine-year dictatorship and the shift to parliamentary democracy. Following his departure, there were nationwide celebrations, demonstrating the public's yearning for democratic administration (Dawn, August 22, 2008).

Musharraf Economic Reforms

Stability of the macro-economy

Pakistan's economy grew significantly under Pervez Musharraf's rule (1999–2008), with the GDP rising at an average annual rate of 6%. International aid, growing foreign remittances, and budgetary restraint were the main drivers of this economic boom. Pakistan carried out important economic reforms under Musharraf's direction with the help of his finance minister Shaukat Aziz in an effort to stabilize the macroeconomic climate. Consequently, foreign reserves increased, inflation was well contained, and a significant increase in foreign direct investment (FDI) added to the growth of the economy (Aziz, 2008). Nevertheless, detractors said that the advantages of this expansion were not shared fairly in spite of these encouraging economic data. Rural and impoverished areas continued to experience economic stagnation, despite notable financial improvements in major hubs like Karachi and Lahore. Growing income inequality and regional economic imbalances were exacerbated by the unequal distribution of wealth (Lieven, 2011).

Foreign Investment and Privatization

The privatization programs started by earlier administrations, especially those headed by Benazir Bhutto and Nawaz Sharif, were carried out by the Musharraf administration. Reducing the government's financial burden, increasing institutional effectiveness, and producing income to pay off foreign debt and support social welfare programs were the main goals of privatization. Numerous important state-owned businesses, such as fertilizer plants, telecommunications firms, and large banks, were privatized. In December 2004, United Bank Limited (UBL) was privatized for Rs. 13 billion, while Habib Bank Limited (HBL) was sold for Rs. 22 billion. Additionally, Etisalat, a business based in Dubai, received 26% of the shares of Pakistan Telecommunication Company Limited (PTCL). The sale of Pak-Arab fertilizer in Mirpur Mathelo for Rs. 8 billion, Pak-Arab fertilizer in Multan for Rs. 13 billion, and Pak-American fertilizer for Rs. 16 billion were among the other significant privatizations. Pakistan's financial situation was improved by the \$2.5 billion in revenue that Musharraf's privatization initiative produced annually. However, opposition parties and labor organizations criticized these agreements due to their lack of transparency and the resulting employment losses (Haqqani, 2005).

Development of Infrastructure

Investing in infrastructure, especially in the energy and transportation industries, was a key component of Musharraf's economic strategy. In order to increase trade and communication, a number of significant projects were started to update Pakistan's infrastructure, such as building roads, bridges, and highways. In order to alleviate Pakistan's persistent energy problem, investments were also made in the construction of power plants. Pakistan now has one of the fastest-growing telecom markets in the area thanks to the development of IT and telecommunications infrastructure, which fueled the digital and telecom sectors' explosive growth. Critics noted that although the goal of these initiatives was to boost industrial growth and enhance business settings, the majority of the advantages went to metropolitan areas, leaving rural people behind (Aziz, 2008).

Development and Growth of Industry

Significant industrial growth occurred during Musharraf's rule, and the emergence of multiple new industries aided in economic diversification. The manufacturing of chemicals and pharmaceuticals, sugar production, and the assembly of cars and motorcycles were among the major industries that saw expansion. Additionally, the steel and cement sectors grew, contributing significantly to the advancement of infrastructure. Significant advancements were also made in the electrical equipment industry, increasing the capability for home production. These changes bolstered Pakistan's industrial base and produced new job possibilities. However, several industries experienced job losses as a result of greater automation and industry privatization, which exacerbated worries about rising unemployment (Lieven, 2011).

Effects of Privatization and Industrialization

The effects of Musharraf's policies of industrialization and privatization were mixed. On the plus side, privatization increased government revenue, decreased the state's financial burden, and attracted private sector investment; on the minus side, industrial efficiency increased, resulting in better-quality products and a more competitive market; on the negative side, job losses occurred as state-owned businesses were privatized, which raised unemployment rates; and on the plus side, privatization caused a transfer of economic control from the public sector to private investors, concentrating wealth among a small number of people. Additionally, the cost of goods and services went up, making it harder for those with lower incomes to acquire necessities. Additionally, because job security declined in many industries, workers experienced instability and uncertainty as a result of privatization.

The dynamics of foreign policy during the Pervez Musharraf administration

Partnership with the US after 9/11

Partnership with the United States following 9/11 Global geopolitics was profoundly changed by the events of September 11, 2001, which had an especially big effect on Pakistan's foreign policy. After the attacks, Pakistan quickly severed its connections with the Taliban regime in Afghanistan and joined the U.S.-led "War on Terror" (Ahmad, 2013, p. 313). The main strategic goals of this choice were to guarantee U.S. military and economic assistance and prevent international isolation (Haqqani, 2005). Musharraf's decision to form an alliance with the United States was motivated by several factors: first, the absence of a constitutionally legitimate government at the time meant that Musharraf was the only one who could decide the direction of foreign policy (Khan, 2009, p. 483); second, the alliance brought significant financial and political support from the United States, reinforcing Musharraf's rule and stabilizing Pakistan's economy (Talbot, 2012, p. 177); and third, Pakistan agreed to reversing its Afghan policy, exchanging intelligence, providing airbases, and providing logistical support for U.S. military operations in the region (Mahmood, 2015, p. 248).

The decision to support the U.S. was strongly opposed by many sections of society, especially religious and conservative groups, who saw it as a betrayal of Pakistan's previous position on Afghanistan. Nevertheless, this alliance had a price: although Pakistan benefited from U.S. political and economic support, it also faced increased domestic militancy and security challenges as a result of its cooperation with Washington (Haqqani, 2005).

Relations between India and Pakistan

Relations between India and Pakistan. The relationship with India was complicated and changed under Musharraf's rule. In order to settle the Kashmir problem, he first sought diplomatic contacts, including backchannel diplomacy (Aziz, 2008). However, significant occurrences like the Kargil conflict and the 2001 attack on the Indian Parliament soured bilateral relations. Musharraf was the mastermind of the Kargil operation prior to taking office, hence the Indian government was suspicious of his policies. Musharraf remained realistic in the face of these obstacles, promoting communication and peace-building initiatives to reduce hostilities with India (Aziz, 2008).

Combating Extremism

Combating Extremism through a number of initiatives, Musharraf's government also aimed to combat extremism and portray Pakistan as a moderate Islamic state. In order to present a progressive image of Pakistan abroad, these initiatives included cultural diplomacy, madrassa control, and educational reforms (Musharraf, 2006). Nevertheless, conservative groups in the nation fiercely opposed these proposals. Furthermore, there were claims that some members of the state apparatus had secret connections to some extremist groups while repressing others, indicating that Pakistan's policies toward these groups were still uneven (Haqqani, 2005).

Critiques and Obstacles to Musharraf's Domination

There were many difficulties under Musharraf's rule, especially with regard to democratic administration. His removal of Chief Justice Iftikhar Chaudhry in 2007 and the following declaration of emergency rule demonstrate his democratic shortcoming during his tenure. Because they weakened judicial independence and stifled criticism, these policies were strongly denounced. Public fury against authoritarian actions that aimed to extend the Chief Justice's power was reflected in the large-scale protests that followed his dismissal (Aziz, 2008). Perceptions of a deteriorating democratic system under his direction were strengthened by these events. Another significant problem under Musharraf's leadership was political manipulation. One example of how the government manipulated political events to its advantage was the formation of his party, the Pakistan Muslim League-Quaid (PML-Q). The electoral process was criticized for its lack of openness, and opposition parties were regularly harassed. The legitimacy of Pakistan's democratic institutions was seriously harmed by such acts. In addition to undermining fair competition, political process manipulation fueled political unrest and mistrust in the electoral process (Haqqani, 2005).

Furthermore, Musharraf's strategy for countering extremism had conflicting outcomes. Although he presented himself as a partner in the worldwide fight against terrorism, the emergence of militancy in tribal regions raised questions about the coherence of his counterterrorism strategies. Domestic instability was exacerbated by the 2007 Lal Masjid operation, which was intended to suppress extreme forces. Musharraf's selective approach to dealing with militant groups, according to critics, undermined long-term security goals by permitting some factions to continue operating while repressing others. This strategy increased unrest and sparked doubts about how successful his counterterrorism efforts were (Lieven, 2011).

Conclusion

In Pakistan's political history, the years under General Pervez Musharraf (1999–2008) were both revolutionary and controversial, marked by a complicated interaction between civilian government

and military authority. Significant infrastructure development, economic growth, and foreign policy realignments under his leadership made Pakistan a vital ally in world geopolitics, especially in the wake of 9/11. The privatization of state-owned firms, improvements in macroeconomic stability, and infrastructure projects contributed to overall economic growth. However, growing income inequality, doubts about the openness of economic policy, and the reforms' lack of long-term viability overshadowed these successes. By reorganizing local government, consolidating authority, and amending the constitution, Musharraf aimed to formally establish his reign. Although the Devolution Plan was introduced with the intention of decentralizing power, it was heavily criticized for being a means of undermining established political elites and enhancing the military's hold on civilian governance. The controversial Legal Framework Order (LFO) and the National Reconciliation Ordinance (NRO) further highlighted the regime's deliberate maneuvering to maintain control over the political landscape. His removal of Chief Justice Iftikhar Chaudhry and the declaration of emergency rule that followed in 2007 revealed the authoritarian inclinations of the regime, which in turn sparked massive public protests and a loss of political legitimacy.

Musharraf's foreign policy had a similar impact. Although his support for the United States in the War on Terror resulted in financial and military support, it also increased instability at home. His administration's uneven tactics regarding militant groups were a direct cause of the rise of extremism, especially in Pakistan's tribal areas. Although he presented Pakistan as a moderate Islamic state, his administration found it difficult to strike a balance between the rise of extreme forces and counterterrorism initiatives. Although tensions between the two countries remained during his administration, his attempts at peace talks with India, especially with reference to Kashmir, demonstrated a practical approach to regional diplomacy. Musharraf claimed to be advancing "true democracy," but in the end, his tenure undermined Pakistan's democratic institutions. Public unhappiness and political divisiveness were exacerbated by press freedom restrictions, judicial independence reduction, and political party manipulation. Another period of military rule in Pakistan came to an end in 2008 when he resigned due to a steady decline in support from both domestic and foreign sources. Musharraf's government serves as a case study for larger issues in Pakistan's civil-military ties, where the military still has a big say in political matters. His term is a crucial illustration of the difficulties military-led governments encounter in striking a balance between political legitimacy, economic growth, and democratic governance. Pakistan's democratic stability in the future hinges on the rule of law, the development of civilian institutions, and a decrease in military meddling in political matters. The pattern of military interventions in Pakistan's political landscape is likely to continue in the absence of structural reforms and a dedication to true democratic values.

This study supports the claim that judicial independence, institutional resilience, and civilian rule over military rule are necessary for Pakistan's political development to be sustained. Although Musharraf's time was marked by both advancements and difficulties, it ultimately emphasizes the need to develop a political structure in which democratic institutions may operate independently guaranteeing stability over the long run and popularly elected rule.

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