
Pakistan's 3rd Military Adventure: Consolidating Authoritarianism

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Abstract: *Authoritarianism, in general, and military dictatorships, in particular, lacks serious investigations by researchers. This paper is an attempt to fill this vacuum by focusing on the efforts of General Musharraf's military regime to consolidate after coming into power in October 1999. It is argued here that domestic as well as international conditions were successfully manipulated by the military regime to strengthen its grip on power.*

Key Words: *Military, Pakistan, Authoritarianism*

1. Introduction

Pakistan is a state accustomed with experience of democratic transitions and authoritarian reversals. In its sixty five years of history it experienced three military interventions each lasting for more than ten years. It had been observed that after every military intervention the military regimes were able to consolidate their position by aligning themselves with United States of America at international level while posing a reformist agenda at local level. This article primarily focus on the early period of General Musharraf after October 1999 coup. It is an attempt

to spotlight the strategies adopted by the military regime to consolidate its hold on power. An effort has been made here to juxtapose understanding gained from previous experiences of military regimes, wherever deemed necessary, with Musharraf regime in order to develop a theoretical framework and enrich the argument. The main arguments are supported with data gained from the literature produced during the period in the forms of books, research articles and reports. The main objective of this article is to add to the existing knowledge about military regimes with a special reference to Pakistan.

2. Theoretical Consideration

Consolidation of an authoritarian regime heavily depends on its ability to silence opposition. In order to achieve this objective a number of strategies are adopted by the authoritarian regimes that vary from the use of coercive suppression to the division and weakening of the opposition groups. Every authoritarian regime has the strongest realization that presence of a more legitimate alternative will not allow the regime to consolidate its hold on the state of affairs. Therefore all authoritarian regimes try to contain political opposition to the best of their ability.

Strategies to contain political opposition depend on a number of factors. A society wherein there is low political culture and political opposition is either fragmented or does not have roots in society becomes an easy prey to authoritarianism. Authoritarian regime has greater confidence in using the ruthless coercive measures to silence the political opposition and imposing a complete ban on political activities. Political leaders can be arrested without much resistance and political parties can be disbanded quite conveniently. Pakistan's first experience of Military coup in 1958 and its attempt to consolidate itself through this

mechanism of containing political opposition is a good example of this strategy adopted by an authoritarian regime.

There are societies which have experienced a level of popular politics and egalitarian rule. There exist political parties with popular following. The people, being accustomed to some fundamental liberties and loyal to different political associations are difficult to control. A ruthless coercion may have counter effect. Therefore, when authoritarianism is established in such societies, the newly established regime find it very difficult to completely ban all political activities, disband all political parties and destroy all institutions of freedom and liberty. In such a socio-political environment, the authoritarian regimes adopt selective measures of containing political opposition, through intimidation compelling them to support the regime or to vacate the political scene. Being in control of propaganda machinery of the state the image of political opponents is distorted. In the name of accountability political leaders are trialed. The regime tries to divide opposition and weaken it rather than to eliminate it completely. Diversion theory may also be implied by engaging in an external conflict, limited war or propagating external challenges to the integrity of the state in order to impose more restrictions on the political opposition.

Among a number of similar patterns, found in the three experiences of military dictatorship in Pakistan, one is the establishment of local government and rhetoric of devolution of power to grass root level. A pertinent question that needs to be addressed here is that why all the Military Regimes, with a sense of urgency, went to introduce democracy at local level while disbanding it at national level. There may have been a number of explanations. An analysis of the very first speeches of the three military dictators, General Ayub, General Zia ul Haq and General Musharraf, is made by Zaidi (2011, p. 125) who argued that the content of the three

speeches is similar to such an extent that one feels as they had the same speech writer. All three, parallel to cursing politicians for their corruption and incompetence, promised to bring a 'true' democracy. Thus, quest of this 'true' democracy led them to democratize the state at grass root level by introducing scheme of local government. But to analyze any development on face value does not help in the true understanding of the complex causal relationships of social and political life. Therefore, it is pertinent to develop a more in depth understanding of the said pattern, followed similarly by the three dictatorships. Shafqat (1989, p. 25-26) argued that establishment of BD during General Ayub era and local government during General Zia era were motivated by an attempt to build alliance with middle farmers in the rural areas and middle bourgeoisie in the urban areas. This alliance as a consequence helped the two military regimes to consolidate.

Shafqat's argument can further be explained by arguing that, when political participation at national level is disbanded by the military after the imposition of Martial Law it creates a participation vacuum in the society. In order to fill that gap the Military Regimes had always experimented with the introduction of democracy at local level, because it is less challenging and more inclined to support the Regime because of its economic dependence on the central government. Thus, the Military Regimes had a dual advantage of introducing local governments. A tangible advantage, in the form of a pro-Regime political elites influencing the political process and broadening support base for the Regime, while an intangible advantage, of satisfying the peoples desire to participate and giving them a feeling that their political rights have not been absolutely taken away. But this again partially explains the factors that motivate military dictators to go for introduction of local government as it ignores the international variable.

Being a dependent economy Pakistan heavily relies on the Western democratic world, where a commitment to democratic values is also found. This commitment of the democratic societies had compelled the military rulers to coin words as 'real democracy'¹, as in the words of General Ayub Khan, and 'genuine democracy', as General Musharraf (2006, p. 155) used the term. In order to gain international legitimacy, military dictators had always gone for the introduction of local bodies, so that they could prove to the Western world that they had not rejected the idea of democracy rather they were trying to socialize the society at grass root level and to evolve it from there so that a consolidated democratic ideal could be achieved. Thus, one of the major motivations behind introduction of local bodies, in urgency, remained to be the utmost desire of the military regime to gain international legitimacy as soon as possible.

The main cause of all military interventions, in Pakistan, had been to protect the institutional economic interests, therefore, after every coup the newly established regime focused primarily on consolidation of its position by guaranteeing the institutional interests of its primary constituency, the Military, that ultimately helps in strengthening the internal unity of the institution

3. Institutional Concessions

After successful coup in October 1999, General Pervez Musharraf focused on consolidation of the institutional economic interests of the military. This process was carried on through the mechanism of facilitating the penetration of military in civil sector, a constant increase in the budgetary allocation of the military, expanding the process of land

¹ The term was used by General Ayub Khan in his speeches while propagating his idea of Basic Democracy.

distribution among military officials, establishment of institutional supremacy through NSC, and helping the business adventures of military. All these mechanisms are discussed in detail as under:

The penetration of military in the civil sector that started during Zia Regime in the 1980's faced a reverse trend during the next decade of democratic governance. Although quota for the military in civil service remained intact yet the presence of military officials, working in the key positions of major civilian institutions, decreased gradually. The coup of October 1999 opened yet another chance of serving and retired military officials to penetrate in the civil sector. An expert on civil-military relations, Siddiq (2007, p. 169), noted that a number of military, serving as well as retired officials were inducted in the key positions of civil institutions during the early years of General Musharraf, and the act was justified by claiming that military had a greater capability of resolving problems, managing the institutions and enhancing efficiency of these institutions than the civilian sector. She referred to the inductions of a dozen of retired military officials in Punjab University at key positions. But Punjab University was not the only exception such inductions were made in almost all the universities as well as other civilian institutions. Some of the newly established institutions like NAB, NRB, and ERRA were dominated by military officials, both serving and retired. Zaidi cited a report from the daily Dawn which suggested that one thousand and twenty seven (1027) military officers were inducted in different civilian ministries, divisions and Pakistani embassies abroad after the October 1999 coup till March, 2003 (p. 127).

As for as induction of military in the educational sector was concerned, Siddiq noted that this development negatively affected the performance of these institutions. She pointed to a wide spread discontent in the teaching faculty of

Punjab University against these inductions. The military officials were charged with allegations of nepotism, favoritism, and undue interference in the academic activities of the institution (p. 169). Although the penetration of military in civil sector had not improved their performance, sometimes even negatively affecting it, yet it helped the military regime to gain the confidence of its primary constituency by opening greater job opportunities for its retired officials.

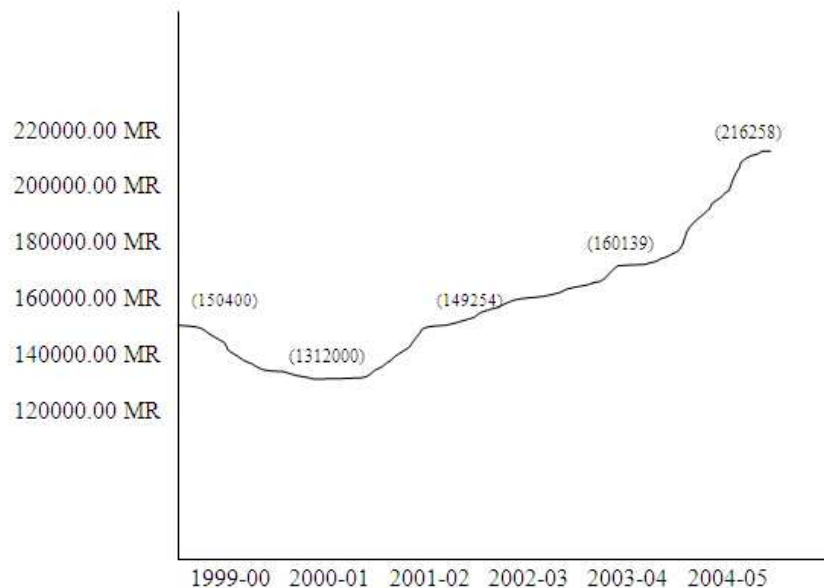
Along with the expansion of military in civil sector, through direct appointment of military officials in different civilian institutions, Maluka (2004, p. 64-65) identified another mode of military's penetration in the civil sector that was used by the Military regime in order to establish its supremacy over civilian institutions. He referred to the formation of monitoring teams of military officials who were given the responsibility of visiting different civilian institutions and submit reports about their performance to the military top brass. These monitoring teams had their great say in the issues of departmental appointments and transfers. They were given authority to launch enquiries and investigation about the conduct and performance of civilian officials. According to Maluka during the first year of Military rule, twenty five thousand (25000) enquiries were launched against civil servants of different ranks, and one thousand (1000) officials of CBR were suspended on the charges of corruption. Thus, the task assigned to military officials to monitor the civilian sector further established their supremacy on the civilian institution as well as it helped to satisfy the lust of power in the lower ranks of military. While, on the other hand reports published about the activities, of these monitoring teams, communicated to the people the commitment of the military regime to eradicate corruption and malpractice in public offices which helped in building the image of the regime among common masses.

Perceived threat of Indian aggression since Pakistan's independence had diverted the major part of budgetary allocations for defense purpose. Each budget, with very few exceptions, witnessed an upward trend in the defense allocations since 1947. Military's emergence as dominant elite in the political power structure, as well as its previous two direct involvements in politics, had ensured the flow of resources to it. Military's alliance with Religious and Nationalist Right had successfully been utilized in evolving a culture of insecurity among dominant urban classes. This culture of insecurity, always believing that anti-Islam and anti-Pakistan forces like India and Israel and sometimes troika of India, Israel and America are conspiring to sabotage the integrity of Pakistan had made it almost impossible for any government to propose any major cuts in the budgetary allocations of military. Similarly, increase in defense budget had never faced severe criticism from the bulk of population in Pakistan. This diversion of resources to Military had helped military to dominate in the power structure of Pakistan. Air Martial (retired) Asghar Khan (2005, p. 252) while describing this internal external links of Pakistan's defense economy and its implications for the weakening of other institutions of the state, argued that key to consolidation of democracy in Pakistan lies in India. As long as there would exist perceived threat of Indian aggression, huge flow of resources to armed forces could not be stopped, which had consolidated the military institution at the expense of others. The consequent imbalance created between more developed military and weak and decaying political institutions was responsible for hampering the smooth evolution of political process and consolidation of democracy in Pakistan.

The Military Regime established in October 1999, carried on with the same tradition of increasing budgetary allocations for its primary constituency, thus consolidating its position in the power structure. Although, in the post

coup scenario Pakistan was facing severe economic problems, due to economic sanctions levied as a consequence of disbanding democratic government till 9/11, 2001, yet the regime showed unwillingness to sacrifice its defense expenditures.

An analysis of the budgetary allocations to military from the year 1999 to 2005 is presented in the graph (1). These defense expenditures do not include amount paid as pension to the retired military officials, which is paid from civilian's budgetary allocations.



Graph (1)

Source: All figures of defense budgets are taken from Ayesha Siddiq's book *Military Inc.* MR refers to Pakistani Rupee in million.

The upward trend in the graph clearly manifests the constant and consistent increase in the budgetary allocation for military during the early years of General Musharraf. During the year 2000-2001 there had been a slight decrease

in the defense budget due to international sanctions, levied by United States and Common Wealth but in the post 9/11 scenario Pakistan's emergence as a frontline state in war against terrorism diverted huge flow of foreign aid to Pakistan, which ensured a consistent increase in the defense budget. The detail of the foreign aid flow to Pakistan in the post 9/11 scenario is discussed separately.

In order to ensure internal unity of the institution, one of the mechanisms adopted to benefit military officials was distribution of agricultural and commercial lands to military personnel during Zia years. Like his predecessor General Musharraf also went for the distribution of land among military officials in order to secure support for his regime. Siddiqi noted that the process of land distribution was going on throughout 1980's and 1990's, but it multiplied significantly in the post coup period of October 1999 (pp. 174-176).

According to a report, published in daily The News (7 October, 2002, p. 3) during the early period of Musharraf, one hundred and eleven serving and retired military officials were sold thousands of *Kanals* of agricultural land for only 47.56 PKR per *kanal* in Bhawalpur and Rahim Yar Khan, while the market value of this land was 15000 to 20,000 PKR. General Pervez Musharraf, General (R) Mueen o Din Haider, General (R) Aziz Ahmad Lt. General Khalid Maqbool, Lt. General Usmani, and Lt. General Afzal Janjhooa got 400 kanals of land, each. The report further stated that ten (10) Generals, four (4) Lt. Generals, Admiral and Air Chief, 18 Brigadiers, three Colonels, and five Lt. Colonels got 400 kanals each. Siddiqi observed in her article in The Friday Times (January 25, 2002, p. 5) that 568 acres of Lahore Cant was used for housing project, where retired military officials were allotted plots for very cheap rates, below the market price. Siddiqi (2007) mentioned another report, presented in the Senate in 2003, which said that one

hundred and thirty (130) plots of 16.3 acres of land were distributed among military officials of various ranks, from Generals to Captain, in different cities like Karachi, Lahore, Rawalpindi, Jehlum and Khariyan from 1999 to 2003(p. 188).

Thus Military as an institution consolidated its economic interests by acquiring thousands of acres of agricultural and commercial lands. The mechanism of land distribution among military officials was, thus, successfully utilized to strengthen the internal unity of the institution that helped the regime, consequently, to consolidate itself.

It was since the coup of 1977 that military had been looking for establishing a formal role in the running of the polity. General Zia ul Haq in March 1985, through addition of Article 152-A in the constitution went for the establishment of National Security Council. Through the said article the military tried to establish a formal role of military in policy making process in the future course of action. But it was severely criticized by the political circles and even his self structured legislature refused to accept it. As a result the idea had to be dropped in a bargain for giving legal sanctity to the revised version of RCO as 8th amendment in October the same year. During the whole decade of 1990's the military indirectly had its influence in the political process, but it lacked a formal legal role in the policy making.

When General Jahangir Karamt proposed for the establishment of permanent political role for military in politics through NSC, it was actually the reflection of will of the Military to establish its supremacy through this institution on parliament. Believing it to be the personal desire of General Karamat, he was forced by the government of PML (N) to resign. His replacement with General Musharraf did not improve the relations between the Military and Nawaz government as military's desire for the

supremacy was now reflected through the new COAS. The conflict, ultimately, led to the coup of October 1999.

After successful coup the military regime decided to materialize its desire of establishing a constitutional role in politics. On the fifth day of the coup the Chief Executive and Chief of Army Staff announced for the establishment of National Security Council (NSC). The NSC was established on 30th of October 1999. Its members included the Chiefs of the three forces, Navy, Army and Air Force, and others appointed by the Chief Executive and responsible to him. After getting mandate from judiciary, to amend constitution, the Regime decided to incorporate NSC in Legal Framework Order (LFO). Later on when LFO was incorporated in the constitution through 17th amendment, NSC also got legal sanctity through the National Security Council Bill 2004. General Musharraf, being the Army Chief as well as the President and having power of dissolving the legislature through another amendment in the constitution, emerged as the most powerful person in NSC. International Crises Group reported that General Musharraf justified the establishment of NSC by arguing that it was established to bar military from launching another coup. But the act was severely criticized by the political activists and political parties on the ground that it would not only ensure the permanent formal role of military in policy making but also convert parliament into an impotent body (2002, p. 23-24). The supremacy of the NSC can be judged by the mandate given to it, which included security related issues as well as matters of governance, inter provincial harmony and monitoring of parliamentary performance, judiciary and free press.

Rizvi (2005, p. 9-11) argues that the institution of NSC is not an exception for Pakistan as such institutions exist in other parts of world, like Turkey, India, Iran and United States, as well. But the role of such institutions in democratically consolidated states is very limited, for

example in India and United States such institutions are dominated by civilians and have a very restricted role. Siddiqa noted that the establishment of NSC was aimed to broaden the scope of authority to other services chiefs as well as to share responsibility with them (p. 167). Thus inclusion of other services chiefs helped in strengthening the internal bonds among the three services.

The political dominance of military had helped it to pursue its economic interests throughout Pakistan's history. Its business interests had increased its stakes in the polity, which was one of the main reasons for its continuous intervention in politics. Every direct intervention resulted in the consolidation and expansion of its business interests. Military coup, of October 1999, also created greater chances for the military to expand its business activities as well as to consolidate its economic interests. As detailed discussion on the business activities of military under Musharraf is beyond the scope of this article, therefore, a brief overview of these activities is given here.

After the coup of October 1999, military's business adventures expanded to build partnerships with private business classes, both at domestic and international level. The notable examples of building partnerships at domestic level was Lahore and Faisalabad Construction Company (LAFCO); a partnership built between Frontier Works Organization (FWO) and some private construction companies like Sachal Construction and Habib Rafique Group for the construction of 115.5 km Lahore-Sheikhupura-Faisalabad road. Siddiqa argued that private business companies ambitiously run for such partnerships with military business institutions in order to get benefits of the latter's influence in getting contracts and earn more profits. The business adventures of military went beyond the territorial borders in building partnerships during the Musharraf regime. The examples included partnerships built

between National Logistic Cell (NLC) and Qatari Company and DHA's joint ventures with various construction companies in Middle East (p. 171-172).

Along with expanding business activities of Mil-bus, Siddiq further reported that the Regime also helped some of the business organizations to pull them out of deficit. The leading example is that of Army Welfare Trust (AWT). It was given 5.4 billion rupees of financial assistance from public money to overcome its deficit of 15 billion rupees in 2001. Along with these business concessions to its primary constituency Musharraf regime facilitated the military to invest in CNG pumps, petrol pumps, commercial plazas, and education like establishment of AEB and Beharia University as well as various naval colleges in different cities, and expand its activities in manufacturing and service sectors of economy (p. 167-173). A striking departure from the tradition, during Musharraf regime, was co-option of Navy and Air force in the business adventures of military and allowing them more room to operate in business activities. This cooption helped in eliminating feeling of alienation among the other two parts and strengthened the internal unity of all the three parts of the Military.

4. Constitutional Maneuvering

After the successful coup of October 1999, the main issue before the newly established regime was to tackle with the constitutional problems that had emerged as a consequence of the coup, as according to the constitution of 1973, the act fall under the category of treason. Like his predecessors, General Musharraf also issued Provisional Constitutional Order (PCO) on 14th of October 1999. The PCO declared that the constitution of 1973 would remain held in abeyance, all the national and provincial legislatures would stand suspended, the presiding and deputy presiding officers of all

legislative bodies as well as all federal and provincial ministries including Prime Minister, Governors of provinces and Chief Ministers would cease to hold offices. The president was allowed to hold office in the meanwhile. When Zafar Ali Shah a parliamentarian of Muslim League (N) challenged the legality of the October coup, the newly established regime asked the judges of Supreme Court and High Courts to take a fresh oath under PCO. On this matter judiciary was divided and almost half of the judges including the Chief Justice of Supreme Court refused to take fresh oath under PCO, which ultimately lead to the resignation of these judges (Ahmed, 2010, p. 41). In this way judiciary was purged of the anti-regime elements. The president of Supreme Bar Council, in an interview with International Crisis Group, claimed that the main purpose of the newly established regime was to get rid of the strong judges and then to seek legitimacy through the pro-regime judges (2002, p. 12-13). The left over judicial set up after taking a fresh oath under PCO on 26th of January 2000, gave verdict on Zafar Ali Shah case on 30th of May 2000. The outcome was more than expectations. Supreme Court in its judgment not only conferred legitimacy on the action of General Musharraf through the Doctrine of Necessity, but also empowered him to make any amendment in the constitution of 1973 as well. Supreme Court, in its decision, gave a three (3) year time to the Military Regime for the holding of next election. Encouraged by the verdict of Supreme Court, the Military Regime assigned National Reconstruction Bureau (NRB) to prepare a draft for the proposed amendments in the constitution of 1973. As a consequence, on 26th of July 2002, NRB issued proposed amendments in the constitution which was later, on 21st of August 2002, validated by General Musharraf as Legal Frame Work Order.

LFO proposed fundamental changes in the constitution of 1973. The parliamentary spirit of the constitution was lost tilting the balance in favor of the President. It validated all

the actions and orders of the Military Regime after the October 1999 coup. Twenty nine (29) articles of the constitution were amended. In an interview with ICG the president of ARD Nawabzada Nasarullah Khan (2002) argued that these amendments have altered the parliamentary federal spirit of the original constitution. He stated that, after these amendments, the constitution had empowered president infinitely. (p. 21).

LFO empowered the President to a great extent. He was given supremacy over the Parliament. He could dismiss the Prime Minister along with his cabinet without dissolving National Assembly. Nomination of any National Assembly member could be made for the Premiership by the President and similar course would be followed by Governors in the provinces. As authority of appointment of the provincial Governors rested with the President, therefore, he could effectively use his influence in the formation of provincial governments. NSC was set up and the President was to be the chairman of this body that was only responsible to the President. National and Provincial legislatures could be dissolved by the joint action of NSC. All the important appointments of Joint Chief of Staff Committee, the Chiefs of the three Armed Services were to be made by the President as well as he had the power to veto the appointments of judges in the High Courts and Supreme Court. Thus the elected Prime Minister was made responsible to the military, represented by the President, in the future course of action. It also determined the nature of civil-military relations wherein the military would enjoy a dominant formal role in the political system.

Along with tremendous increase in presidential powers other significant amendments included the increase in the number of seats in national and provincial legislatures. Number of seats, in National Assembly was increased from 207 to 357 and in Senate from 87 to 100. In Punjab

Assembly membership rose from 240 to 390, in Sindh from 100 to 171, in NWFP from 80 to 130 while in Balochistan from 40 to 67. The educational qualification for becoming a member of the national and provincial legislatures was set to minimum of bachelor's degree. Reserved seats for *ulema*, women and technocrats in the national legislatures were also increased. Independent candidates were barred from taking part in the elections of Senate, while, loan defaulters were barred from taking part in any legislature's election. Voter's age was decreased from 21 years to 18 years. Election commission was made autonomous institution while the term of Chief Election Commissioner was increased from 3 to five years. LFO validated the presidential referendum, wherein General Musharraf became the President for next five years, as well as the local bodies were given constitutional cover.

The constitutional maneuvering by the Military Regime was severely criticized by the mainstream political parties like PPP and PML (N), Sindh based MQM and regional parties in NWFP and Balochistan. Maluka argued that LFO had converted a parliamentary constitution into a "quasi-presidential-cum-quasi-military" constitution wherein the supremacy of the parliament was lost and COAS had become all powerful

(p. 71).

In December 2003, 17th Constitutional Amendment was passed by assemblies elected in the October 2002 elections. Through this amendment, LFO was incorporated in the constitution. MMA, despite its strong anti Musharraf rhetoric, supported the regime for this amendment, thus validating all the actions of the Military Regime in the post October 1999 coup period.

5. Containment of Political Opposition

After taking over power in October 1999, the newly established military regime went for containing political opposition in order to consolidate its position. To the good fortunes of her political leader of Pakistan Peoples Party, Benazir Bhutto, was already living in exile due to political victimization of the previous regime. The Prime Minister Nawaz Sharif along with some others of his party members was arrested. He was trialed in a number of cases including Plane Conspiracy Case, treason and engaging in criminal conspiracy. Nawaz Sharif was declared guilty of the alleged charges levied against him by the court and was given a twenty five years of life imprisonment. But later on as a result of an agreement Nawaz Sharif was exiled to Jeddah on the condition that he would not take part in politics for ten years (Ziring, 2003, pp. 267-269). Absence of the leadership of PPP and PML (N) greatly relieved the Military Regime.

In order to contain political opposition on 16th of November 1999, National Accountability Bureau (NAB) was established through an Ordinance. It was headed by a serving Lieutenant General Syed Amjad Ali. It was claimed that NAB was established to eradicate corruption, punish defaulters of public loans and recover the public money. NAB was allowed to detain accused for ninety days. Military officials were excluded from the jurisdiction of NAB. The establishment of NAB was challenged in Supreme Court by a number of political figures. Supreme Court primarily decided in favor of the ordinance suggesting few changes in it regarding the term of chairman of NAB, consultation with judiciary in his appointment, special treatment to women accused and auditing of NAB accounts by the Auditor General of Pakistan (Maluka, pp. 62-63).

NAB was used as a very effective tool of containing political opposition. A number of political leaders belonging

to opposition camps were alleged of corruption charges and trialed while those who showed their willingness to join hands with the Military Regime were either not touched or bailed out. Politicians of PPP and PML (N) were especially targeted while turning a blind eye to the pro-regime PML (Q). Waseem (2006, p. 58)) noted that in the month of August 2002 there were about fifty seven (57) politicians, twenty four (24) of PPPP and thirty three (33) of PML (N), charged with different cases of corruption and subsequently tried by NAB, while not a single case was initiated against PML (Q). He referred to a White Paper published by PPPP that claimed that till 2003 out of 117 politicians tried by NAB sixty five (65) belonged to PPPP and thirty six (36) to PML (N). The White Paper accused that NAB was engaged in harassing the families of those opposition leaders who openly denounce rule of the Military.

Another effective tool that was employed by the military regime was the condition of bachelor degree for contesting elections, which barred a number of seasoned politicians to participate in the 2002 election, while, facilitating members of religious parties to contest election by accepting their *Muddrasah* degrees equivalent to bachelor and master. The gap thus created, due to absence of mainstream political parties' leadership and trial of some of the second rank leadership of PML (N) and PPP, was partially filled by the alliance of religious parties, which won considerable number of seats in 2002 elections.

6. Media Regulation

In modern day life media plays a very significant role. It is a very important tool of interest articulation, public opinion formation and pressure building on state institutions. Freedom of media is directly linked with democratic norms and culture. Conducive environment for authoritarianism,

always, rests in closed societies; therefore like other institutions of freedom and liberty, free media is also undesirable for authoritarian regimes. Therefore every Military dictatorship tried to regulate media in order to control the channels of propaganda and silence voices of dissent in Pakistan.

After the establishment of Military Regime in October 1999, electronic media fell under the strict control of the regime. It was quite natural also because the only television channel PTV was run by the state itself. It was used quite effectively in distorting the images of political elites and communicating pro-Regime propaganda. Fischer and Fischer (2004, p. 164-165) argued that the influence of electronic media had a greater influence on Pakistani society as for the majority of the illiterate people it is a great source of entertainment and information. They further argued that though electronic media was in strict control of the Military Regimes during its early days, yet print media enjoyed a greater liberty, especially English newspapers. But Fischer and Fischer's view is strongly contested by Maluka. He referred to four ordinances regarding press which were used by the Military Regime for restricting freedom of Press. These ordinances included Press Council of Pakistan Ordinance 2002, Freedom of Information Ordinance 2002, the Defamation Ordinance 2002, and The Press, Newspapers, News Agencies, and Books Registration Ordinance 2002. These ordinances were declared as black laws, by All Pakistan Newspaper Society, The Pakistan Federal Union of Journalists and the Council of Pakistan Newspapers Editors (p. 94).

7. Economic Reform

The consolidation of any regime heavily depends on its economic performance. Especially in the poor countries like

Pakistan, economic relief works as an alternative to political participation. Therefore every military regime tried to consolidate its position by introducing a variety of economic reforms. In post October 1999 period, the Military Regime tried to address the economic challenges posed to it.

In the post nuclear test scenario, Pakistan was facing economic sanctions from international community. There was a continuous pressure from international agencies for the repayment of loans and Pakistan's foreign exchange reserves had reduced considerably that led the previous regime to confiscate \$11 billion held by Pakistani public. It had on one hand imposed restrictions on the conversion of foreign exchange while on the other it was negotiating for rescheduling of loans with international lenders. The overall economic situation was very discouraging and the economy was at the brink of a default (Ahmad & Bari, 2004, pp. 132-133). In order to tackle these grave problems of economy, the Military Regime went for some economic reforms which met with a level of success during the early years of Military Regime. The primary concern of the Regime remained to fulfill the conditions of International Financial Institutions so that rescheduling of loans could be made possible.

In order to increase the tax base a process of tax survey and documentation of tax payers was started in 1999-2000, which considerably increased the number of tax payers in the country. According to Ishrat Hussain (2003, p. 25), the Governor of State Bank of Pakistan at that time, these surveys and documentation drive was successfully able to add 134,000 tax payers along with 30,000 new sales tax payers. The Military Regime's commitment to increase tax base helped it in building its image in IMF and other IFI's.

Hussain further stated that in the same drive the Military Regime went for liberalizing trade, reducing tariffs on international trade unilaterally and eradication of

quantitative import restrictions. New laws were promulgated to conform to the WTO regulations, like anti-dumping and countervailing measures and intellectual property rights. Privatization of some key public sector corporations like United Bank Limited, Pakistan Tele Communication, and 20% sale of National Bank of Pakistan, deregulation of petroleum products and removal of all restrictions on import and export of agricultural products greatly helped the Regime to negotiate with international monetary agencies and survive during the early years of its taking over the power (p. 26-28).

Whereas the above mentioned reforms helped the Regime to consolidate its economy and enter into a better dialogue position with international monetary agencies, the Regime went for some other reforms in order to improve the living conditions of the poor as well as to control inflation; which might intensify the relative sense of deprivation as well as anti-Regime feelings, if not addressed. Two of the most important steps in this regard were initiation of Khushal Pakistan Program and establishment of Khushali Bank to lend loans to micro enterprise. According to Hussain from January 2000 to December 2001, Khushal Pakistan was able to produce 0.5 Million job opportunities (pp. 36-37). Inflation remained at 3% to 6% during the first three years of the Military Regime (Ahmad & Bari, p. 136). It kept the prices of items of daily use in control avoiding the breeding of intense discontent among the masses.

After surviving through the difficult early times the major break through in the economy took place after the disastrous events of September 11, 2001. The Military Regime after accepting role of a front line state in war against terrorism got not only international legitimacy but it was able to divert huge flow of foreign aid to Pakistan. There were three paths of inflow of foreign exchange in Pakistan. Firstly, a tremendous increase in the United States economic

assistance to Pakistan, Secondly, remittance and lastly, release of foreign aid from international donor agencies. Economic aid from US jumped up from \$3.5 million to \$1061 million, from the financial year 2001 to 2002, and it remained at an average of \$560 million for the next four years (Kronstadt, 2011).

In the post September 11, period Pakistanis working in United States of America and elsewhere in the Western World were compelled to remit foreign exchange through official channels because of the crack down against money laundering and informal money markets. Thus remittance through official channels allowed the government to buy \$3 to 4 billion from market (Ahmad & Bari, p. 137). It consequently helped to increase foreign exchange reserves of the state. Parallel to these two sources of foreign exchange flow to Pakistan, it was able to reschedule its loans as well as US influence in International Monetary agencies had helped Pakistan to go for new loans on good conditions from IMF, WB, and ADB (p. 136). For example in December 2001, Pakistan got a reschedule of \$12.5 billion in repayments from the Paris Club of creditor countries. Thus, post September 11, scenario helped the economy to observe a short boom, where exports exceeded to \$9 billion and inflation reduced to the lowest level of the past thirty years at 3%. Pakistan was able to service its debts and the total debt burden reduced from \$38 billion to \$36 billion (Kronstadt, 2011).

8. Filing Participation Gap

When General Musharraf took over the charge of government, as a result of October 1999 coup, it was severely criticized by the Western world. As discussed earlier, Pakistan faced economic sanctions for some time also. Perceiving the response of West, General Musharraf, while announcing his seven point agenda, on October 16, 1999,

placed the introduction of “genuine” democracy through devolution of power at sixth number (LaPorte J, 2004, p. 156). Later NRB was established to chart out a plan for the introduction of local bodies and devolution of power to grass root level. The Local Government Plan, as proposed by NRB, was, thus promulgated in the year 2000. The LGP 2000, claimed to achieve the following 5 D's (p. 158):

1. Devolution of political power.
2. Decentralization of administrative authority.
3. De-concentration of management functions.
4. Diffusion of the power-authority nexus
5. Distribution of resources to district level.

For the achievement of these objectives a three tier structure was proposed; Union Council, Tehsil Council and District Council. Union Council was the lowest of the three levels which was to be elected directly by a grouping of small villages with total electorates of around 25000. The total membership of a Union Council was set to be 21 members. It was to be headed by a Union *Nazim* and *Naib Nazim*. The elections for the local government were to be held on non-party basis. *Tehsil* Council was the second tier of the local government falling in between the District Council and Union Council. The *Naib Nazims* of all Union Councils, within the administrative boundary of that *Tehsil*, were to form membership of *Tehsil* Council. It again had its own *Nazim* and *Naib Nazim*. It also had reserved seats for women, minorities and peasants/laborers. At the highest level of the three tiers scheme was the District Council. All the *Nazims* of the Union Council were the members of the District Council. One third seats of the District Council were reserved for women, minorities and peasants/laborers. The four capitals of the provinces were declared as City Districts. The major

sectors devolved to district level were education and health. For the financial needs of the local government, they were authorized to levy taxes as well seek financial support from the provincial government. For the distribution of resources to District Councils Provincial Finance Commission was set up in each province (Zaidi, 2011 pp. 128-141). In December 2000, elections for the local bodies were held in five phases on non-party basis.

Devolution of Power Plan was criticized from different circles of intellectuals and political parties on different grounds. Khan (2004, pp. 12-20) argued that there were inherent flaws between the rhetoric of devolution of power and structure of local government. According to him power was devolved to District level, where it shifted again in the hands of elite classes, rather than to grass root level that was Union Council. He further asserted that no local body reform could bring radical change in the society until it was accompanied by the radical land reforms. Without land reforms the power would circulate among the feudal classes in rural areas, without bringing any change in the socio-economic status of the poor classes. Despite this criticisms levied against Devolution of Power Plan, the Military Regime quite successfully entered into an alliance with the newly emerging leadership at District level of local bodies. District *Nazims*, during the Presidential Referendum in 2002, were reported to be arranging rallies for General Musharraf and later in the election same year running the election campaigns of PML (Q), which was formed by General Musharraf. At the same time it helped the Military Regime to build a better image in the international community. Thus, introduction of local bodies filled the participation gap created due to disbanding of political activities at national level, helped the regime in broadening its support base and softened its image in international community.

9. Legitimacy through Referendum

The quest to seek legitimacy at international level, and to give an impression that they enjoyed the support of majority of the people, had motivated the three military dictators, General Ayub, General Zia and General Musharraf, to hold Presidential referendums. In all the three referendums the self structured institutions of local bodies of the Military Regimes were effectively utilized. Following the foot steps of his predecessors General Musharraf announced holding of referendum before the general elections in 2002. Soon after the announcement, it was challenged in the Supreme Court of Pakistan by Zafar Ali Shah, a leader of Muslim League (N), and Qazi Hussain Ahmad, leader of Jama't e Islami. The court also followed its tradition and validated holding of the referendum. General Musharraf addressed huge rallies arranged for him by the District Nazims and PML (Q) (Maluka, pp. 67-68). The question asked in the referendum was:

For the Survival of the local government system, establishment of democracy, continuity of reforms, end to sectarianism and extremism, and to fulfill the vision of Quaid e Azam, would you like to elect President General Pervez Musharraf as President of Pakistan for five years? (Musharraf, 2006, p. 167)

The regime claimed for high turnout but according to independent sources the turn out remained very low. Maluka referred to HRCP report which suggested that total voluntary turnout was not more than three to five percent (p. 69). Musharraf himself confessed, in his book, *In the Line of Fire*, that some incidents were observed where people were compelled forcefully to cast their votes in his favor. But he blamed opposition parties for it who wanted to make the whole process doubtful (p. 168). When the result was announced Musharraf got 98% support of the voters. After

the declaration of results the Election Commission disposed off all record related to the Presidential referendum (Maluka, p. 69).

Despite all criticism at home and reports challenging the validity of the process Musharraf was able to prove the United States of America and other Western powers that he enjoyed the support of the majority of the people in Pakistan. He received congratulations from the heads of different states. American official statement on this occasion termed the referendum as free and fair. Thus, General Musharraf, successfully maneuvered the situation in his favor and the Military Regime was able to consolidate during the early years of coup.

10. Conclusion

On the basis of above discussion it can be concluded that Military Regimes employed a number of strategies to consolidate authoritarianism. After the establishment of authoritarian regime in October 1999, in Pakistan, it has to face challenges from two fronts; local and international level. In order to neutralize domestic pressures the regime relied on containing opposition through accountability drive, enhancing interests of its primary support base i.e. military, establishing institutional supremacy of the military through constitutional maneuvering and regulating media. While, on the other hand, international pressures were neutralized by posing a reformist posture. Devolution of power at gross root level, legitimizing itself through referendum and offering the Regime's support for international projects of United States of America were the steps that greatly helped the Military Regime to consolidate itself during its early phase of capturing power.

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