

PILDAT

**International Conference
Civil-Military Relations**

October 21-22, 2008
Hotel Avari, Lahore, Pakistan

**A Comparative Overview
of Civil-Military
Relations around the World**



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Preface

A Comparative Overview of Civil-Military Relations around the World is a paper presented by **Dr. Hasan-Askari Rizvi**, Defence & Political Analyst, at the **PILDAT International Conference on Civil-Military Relations**: October 21-22, 2008, Lahore, Pakistan.

PILDAT International Conference on Civil-Military Relations was held from October 21-22, 2008, at Lahore, Pakistan. The objective of the Conference was to showcase international and regional experiences and best practices in improving civil-military relations. Experts on civil-military relations from India, Turkey, Indonesia & Europe were part of the conference to present case studies and best practices on how to maintain and manage civil-military relations within an established constitutional and legal framework and move towards democratic consolidation. Pakistani Experts and academics, representatives of political parties and a large number of young professionals and students also participated in the two-day conference to discuss and brainstorm issues affecting civil-military relations in Pakistan and to reiterate the parameters of exclusive domains, as well as the overlapping and shared areas, of the civil and the military in Pakistan as a way forward for the country.

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Profile of the Author

Dr. Hasan-Askari Rizvi

Dr. Hasan-Askari Rizvi is an independent Political and Defence Analyst. He obtained an M.A. And Ph.D. in Political Science and International Relations from the University of Pennsylvania, USA, and an M. Phil. in Politics from the University of Leeds, UK. Earlier, he did his Masters in Political Science from the University of the Punjab, Lahore. He was Quaid-i-Azam Professor of Pakistan Studies at Columbia University, New York (December 1995-July 1999), and Allama Iqbal Professor at Heidelberg University, Germany and Research Scholar at University of New Mexico and Sandia National Laboratories, Albuquerque (2002). He was also on the Faculty of Political Science Department, University of the Punjab, Lahore, (1971-2001) where he also served as Chairman of the Department of Political Science.

A Comparative Overview of Civil-Military Relations around the World

There has been a considerable decline in direct military rule in the first decade of the 21st Century and the trend is towards some kind of participatory governance. The major instances of initiation of direct military take of political power during this decade include Central African Republic (2003), Guinea Bissau (2003), Mauritania (2005, 2008), Thailand (2006) and Fiji (2006). The military continues to rule Myanmar. In Bangladesh, the military was instrumental to appointing an interim government in January 2007 for eradicating corruption and violence and to contain the role of the leading political parties - Awami League and the Bangladesh National Party. This government has announced plans to hold general elections in mid-December 2008 after delaying these for about two years. An interesting development took place in Venezuela in April 2002. The military forced President Hugo Chavez to resign and installed a new government under a new civilian President. Two days later a popular uprising in the streets led to the collapse of the military-installed government and brought back Hugo Chavez. In July 2008, two retired generals and other people were arrested in Turkey on the charge of planning to overthrow the civilian government.

Non-Coup Intervention

The decline in coup d'état does not mean that the military has lost the capacity to project force or manipulate the nature and direction of political change. It is still a power bloc in a large number of developing countries where democratic and civilian institutions and processes have not yet developed strong roots or face the crisis of legitimacy and efficacy for one reason or another.

Military take-over of the state power is one extreme manifestation of the military's clout. Other modes of military intervention are also available. These include influence, blackmail and displacement of one government by another or ensuring the survival of a government from the sidelines that pursues the military's politico-security agenda.

A hybrid civil-military system functions in many countries, including Pakistan. The military enjoys sufficient autonomy

in professional and service matters and makes input to the policy areas of its interest. However, it neither directly governs nor controls the civilian leaders. An over-all democratic civilian arrangement is maintained that leaves enough scope for autonomous management of political affairs. However, the civilian leaders and the top brass of the military constantly engage in interaction and bargaining on key policy issues. The balance of power in the bargaining process may shift in one direction or another depending on the stakes of the top brass, the issue in question and the specific context of the interaction. This relationship shuttles between stability and instability because strains emerge in the bargaining process which they try to manage but they may not always be successful.

Still another mode of military intervention is the induction of serving and retired military personnel to key government and semi-government positions, and various civilian sectors, especially the economy. These practices are common in the countries that have experienced long years of direct or indirect military rule. This enables the military to colonize civilian institutions and processes and dilute their autonomy and civilian character.

Modern State and Professional Military

The issue of civil-military relations gained importance with the emergence of modern democratic state and the notion of professional standing military. The political civilian domain and professional soldier are integral to modern state but there are different patterns of their bilateral interaction.

American-British-European model of civil-military relations recognizes the autonomous domain of professional soldier in respect of professional, service and technical affairs within the policy framework set out by the civilian political elite. These two domains – civil and military – enjoy autonomy but there is a constant interaction across their functional boundaries, which shapes the operational equation. However, the primacy and precedence of the civil is well recognized and well-established. The military engages in lobbying, consultation and advice with civilian leadership for professional and allied interests and concerns.

Ideological and totalitarian models emphasize the primacy

of an ideology which is represented and enforced by an official party. The notion of interdependent autonomous domain is replaced with an integrated authority pattern under the command of the authority structure legitimized by the ideology or the totalitarian notion of control. The military top brass may be part of the command structure, helping to sustain it along with other coercive apparatus of the state.

Revolutionary armies that have engaged in armed struggle against an established colonial or post-colonial authority or engaged in civil strife are generally politicized and factionalized and find it difficult to adopt strict professionalism and discipline. They claim the right in the formation and management of state and its socio-political disposition. Similarly, traditionally factionalized militaries on ethnic, tribal and regional lines face the challenge of maintaining a balance among these identities in the military. At times, they reflect the societal discontinuities across ethnic, tribal and regional lines which adversely affect their internal cohesion and discipline.

Morris Janowitz identifies four models of politicized military elite: aristocratic, democratic, totalitarian and garrison state. Alfred Stepan talks of a moderator role of the military, direct military rule and a system transformational role

A combination of these patterns of civil-military relations is found in the developing countries whose militaries range from highly professional service on western model on the one end to incoherent, poorly disciplined armed collectivity on the other that falters on processional ethos. Civilian institutions are fragile and equally lack professionalism and functional differentiation. There are examples of one-party state where the party controls the civilian as well as military institutions and processes.

If the military views itself as the guardian of the state and its political order, it develops a tendency to step into non-professional domains and interfere with the functioning of the state. Invariably the militaries that have ruled a country have a tendency to acquire the guardian notion and return to power or indirectly manipulate civilian affairs from the outside in order to pursue their self-perceived guardian role. Militaries also develop an ambition to dominate state power after having tasted power once or even otherwise when the top brass become too ambitious and confident of their

capacity to overwhelm the government. There are instances of the military revolting against the government or overthrowing it if their grievances about pay, perks or related matters are not addressed to their satisfaction.

Divided political leaders may drag military top brass in politics by attempting to win them over to their sides in their brute struggle for power against their civilian adversaries. Some may encourage them to assume a direct or indirect role.

No Grand Theory

The decisive tilt in civil-military relations towards the military and especially military intervention in political and state affairs have historical roots. There were many such instances during 1900-45. However, there were flurry of coups and counter-coups after the Second World War. A large number of Asian and African states experienced military intervention in governance and political management, especially during the late fifties and the 1960s. This created numerous patterns of civil-military relations.

No single factor can explain the decline of civilian institutions and ascendancy of the military because it is a complex phenomenon shaped by a host of factors pertaining to the political and societal institutions and processes, nature and dynamics of the military, interaction between the civil and the military and especially the place of the military in relations to the state and the society. At times, international factors hinder or promote the military's expanded role. Unless a holistic view is taken it may be difficult to understand military's expanded role in nonprofessional fields.

There is no grand theory of comparative politics or civil-military relations that offers a comprehensive explanation of all kinds of military interventions in civilian affairs. One has to adopt an inter-disciplinary and multiple variable approaches to address the divergent patterns of civil-military relations and how they change over time. One can find theories and explanations of military intervention rather than a single theory or explanation.

Civil-military relations vary from country to country. This interaction can change within one country over the years.

Therefore, a study needs to combine general theories of military intervention with the peculiar facets of the situation in the case study. This task is made difficult because the military regimes also vary with reference to their performance and the ways to civilianize military rule either for returning to the barracks or sharing power with civilians. Military rule can also breakdown or collapse under a variety of situations. Another set of issues pertains to the ways and means of the military to influence the nature and direction of politics and society from the sidelines.

There is no concrete evidence available to suggest that the military is a better suited to rule. As there can be a good civilian ruler some military government may perform better than civilian governments. However, there is nothing special in the military that makes the top commanders better rulers. A successful coup or initial successes of a military regime do not guarantee that it will be equally successful in addressing the problems that weaken the political process. The military governments have often faltered in creating viable civilian political institution that command voluntary loyalty of the ordinary people.

Various Explanations

The traditional explanation of military's expanded role highlights professionalism as a constraint. It is argued that a highly professional and disciplined military concentrates on professional security and service affairs and does not step into the political domain. However, experience suggests that professional orientation do not always serve as a restraining factor. Initially, professional disposition and non-political orientations may hinder the expansion of the role but a situation can arise when the military's professional character impels the military to assume political role.

A professional military is a huge machine which tends to develop corporate interests that make it difficult for the top brass to stay non-political in all conditions and circumstances. At times, the top commanders can come to the conclusions that the prevailing political and societal conditions threaten their professional and corporate interests. In this way, professional considerations lead them expand their role. At times, internal security situation and the issues of national development politicize the military, especially when the military views itself as ahead of the civilian society as "an exclusive repository of

modernizing values and devotion to the ideal of the state as opposed to the regime in power".

As the military commanders come to the conclusion that some professional and technological skills at their disposal can be used for societal modernization, they tend to see them as an agent of modernization and that they can manage governance affairs as effectively as they manage professional and military organizational matters. Morris Janowitz argues: "Changing technology creates new patterns of combat and thereby modifies organizational behavior in the military. The more complex the technology of warfare, the narrower are the differences between military and non-military establishments, because more officers have managerial and technical skills applicable to civilian enterprise." (Morris Janowitz, *Military Institutions and Coercion in the Developing Nations*, Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1977, p.103). Thus, a high degree of professionalism does not necessarily preclude politicization.

One set of factors that determine the political disposition of the military are to be located in the military itself. Its organizational resources, discipline, hierarchy and esprit de corps distinguish it from other state institutions. A cohesive and disciplined officer corps can act swiftly and decisively which strengthens the military's ability to pursue political goals. Above all, the monopoly of instrument of violence gives the military a clear edge which is the ultimate sanction of its authority

The size of the military is not necessarily crucial to determining its political role. What matters most are the military's internal dynamics and its position with reference to other elite and institutions. Even relatively small armies have staged coups, although the size of the military may affect its capacity to govern after the assumption of power.

Once the military assumes power its top commanders have a tendency to develop stakes in power management or protection of the privileges they enjoy as the rulers. This can influence their political disposition subsequently and may cause their return power. If they are convinced that their professional and corporate interests are unnecessarily threatened by the policies of civilian government, they may use their political clout to protect these interests by various options available to them in a given situation.

The military is a force that is difficult to control. It is a force that is often used to suppress dissent and to maintain the status quo. In Pakistan, the military has played a significant role in the political process. It has often intervened in the government and has been a major force in the country's development. The military's role is often seen as a double-edged sword. On the one hand, it can provide stability and order, but on the other hand, it can also be a source of oppression and repression. The military's role is often a result of the country's political and social structure. In Pakistan, the military has been a major force in the country's development since the 1970s. It has often intervened in the government and has been a major force in the country's development. The military's role is often seen as a double-edged sword. On the one hand, it can provide stability and order, but on the other hand, it can also be a source of oppression and repression. The military's role is often a result of the country's political and social structure.

Military Regimes and Withdrawal from Direct Rule

The experience of a large number of military governments suggests that these regimes cannot successfully play a transformational role and often fail to remove the root causes of fragility of civilian institutions and processes. Their political institutions and processes often reflect their professional ethos of discipline, hierarchy and management rather than political participation. Therefore, these regimes as well as their political arrangements cannot move with the participatory pressures and suffer from the legitimacy crisis. As the support base of the political elite weakens and they are unable to evoke voluntary support of the political segments of the society, they become vulnerable to a military coup. The military top commanders face another dilemma. They know that they cannot hold on to power for ever. They have to transform military rule into an acceptable civilian rule. On the other hand, most military rulers do not intend to give up power altogether either due to self-cultivated 'savior' emotions. That is, how do the above-discussed factors (the considerations override other issues and thus make it difficult for the military rulers to create viable political institutions and processes) determine the balance of power between the two. A weak government presiding over a fragmented political system characterize the army's composition over the military. Such implications when the military brass support to improve political power. Their distaste for participatory governance and intolerance towards dissent makes it difficult to understand the negative implications of regional and ethnic imbalances in the ruler-military. This deficiency in the military dominated power structure further weakens the prospects of establishing the political arrangements that seek functional effectively support through people,

especially among the politically active circles. Internal political and social harmony, political and economic stability and stable law and order situation strengthens civilian leaders and institutions.

If a country is afflicted by civil strife and insurgency and the government cannot assert its authority except by coercive methods it has to rely on the military and other security apparatus. This undermines the credibility of the government and assigns greater precedence to the military, the intelligence agencies and paramilitary or special security forces.

International focus on fighting militancy and terrorism also works to the disadvantage of civilian institutions in the developing countries where these institutions are already weak and democracy as well as civilian primacy has not developed strong roots. All this goes to the advantage of the military and other security forces that are in the forefront of the war on terrorism. The military also benefits if the country faces external security challenges on its borders. If these challenges cannot be dealt with at the diplomatic level, the military acquires salience for external security.

The military's prospects for role expansion are reduced if social and economic formation become complex with industrialization, urbanization and prosperity. The military finds it difficult to manage political affairs if strong and assertive political groups like labor, students, business and industry, intellectuals, the media and other professional entities become assertive in seeking political participation. The proliferation of social and political formations and the rise of politically active circles that have developed a broadly shared consensus to challenge the ascendancy of the military in the political domain contributes to restraining the role of the military in the political domain.

The military's political role is also influenced by the developments outside the territorial boundaries of the state and its international connections. International environment has implications for the internal dynamics of the military and its interaction with other domestic players. International developments like the Cold War and the post-Cold War had implications for the militaries of a large number of developing countries and influenced their interaction with civilian institutions and processes in their respective countries. Similarly, the U.S. led war on terrorism has reinforced the role and position of the

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