# Why the Pakistan army is here to stay: prospects for civilian governance

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Pakistan's army has governed the country directly or indirectly for much of the state's history, having arrogated the prerogative to set external *and* domestic policies, many of which are deeply intertwined. The most notorious of these twinned policies involves the deployment of Islamist militants as tools of external influence in India, Afghanistan and elsewhere. This has required the Pakistan army and intelligence agencies to instrumentalize Islamism to sustain these varied militant groups.[1] Having instigated four wars with India (in 1947–8, 1965, 1971 and 1999) and waged a low-intensity conflict since 1989 in Jammu and Kashmir, the Pakistan army nurtures the intractable security competition with India. Through its dominance of state affairs, the army has developed immense and ever-expanding economic interests, the protection of which provides compelling incentives to seize power.[2]

Pakistan continues to support the Afghan Taleban and allied networks (e.g. Jalaludin Haqqani), despite receiving more than US$19 billion from Washington in direct aid and military compensation to support the US-led global 'war on terror'.[3] Pakistan also continues to nurture the Lashkar-e-Taiba (LeT) and other so-called 'Kashmir' groups even though it has embarked on a serious fight against its own domestic Islamist militants operating under the rubric of the Tehreek-e-Taleban-e-Pakistan (TTP or Pakistan Taleban).

For these and other reasons, many observers see the Pakistan army as both the best possible remedy for Pakistan's contemporary ills and the root source of them. This has led a raft of analysts and policy-makers to postulate that a genuine civilian transition is a necessary—if insufficient—condition for Pakistan to become more stable internally, abandon its revisionist commitments to Kashmir, become reconciled with India and accept Afghanistan as a neighbour rather than a client.

* A version of this article was presented at a conference organized and convened by Dr Stephen P. Cohen (Brookings Institution) on 'The future of Pakistan' at the Rockefeller Center, Bellagio, Italy, May 2010. The author thanks Dr Cohen and all the participants at the conference who provided comments on an earlier draft. The author also thanks Hasan Askari Rizvi for his helpful comments as well as those of the anonymous reviewers. All remaining errors of fact and interpretation are the author's alone.

1 Farzana Shaikh, *Making sense of Pakistan* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2009); Husain Haqqani, *Pakistan: between mosque and military* (Washington DC: Carnegie Endowment for International Peace, 2005); Rizwan Hussain, *Pakistan and the emergence of Islamic militancy in Afghan*istan (Burlington: Ashgate, 2005).

2 Ayesha Siddiqa, *Military Inc.: inside Pakistan's military economy* (London: Pluto, 2007).

3 K. Alan Kronstadt, 'Direct overt U.S. aid and military reimbursements to Pakistan, FY2002–FY2011', Congressional Research Service, 2 Sept. 2010.

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Washington's interest in democratic transition in Pakistan is of recent vintage.[4] Pakistanis are cynical about this commitment because Washington's past policies buttressed authoritarianism in Pakistan.[5] Indeed, Pakistan's military leaders, from General Ayub to General Kayani, have benefited tremendously from the vicissitudes of history and US strategic interests. US military support allowed these various military leaders to expand and/or re-equip the army and acquire strategic weapon systems while continuing to develop their nuclear weapons programme and prosecute their policies in Afghanistan and India.[6]

With each successive coup, Pakistan's civilian structures become ever more dysfunctional and the army, with its ever-expanding network of corporate financial and political interests and beneficiaries, ever more entrenched. This is a curious equilibrium. Despite Pakistan's parliamentary democratic mooring, the army has—as noted above—governed the country directly or indirectly for most of the state's existence. Yet, while constitutional democracy has never fructified, authoritarianism has never garnered widespread legitimacy. For this reason, the army always comes to power with the connivance and acquiescence of the broad array of civilian institutions and personalities necessary to provide a patina of legitimacy to the seizure of power.[7]

Since the last months of the Bush administration, the US Congress has sought to reverse past US policies towards Pakistan by explicitly supporting civilian institutions and making US security assistance conditional upon the military's non-interference in governance. Several concerns underlie this shift in policy. First, analysts both within and outside the US government believe that the Pakistan military and its intelligence agencies are the forces behind various militant groups acting to further Pakistan's interests, such as the Afghan Taleban and LeT. Second, and by extension of the first, if civilians can exert control over these institutions then it may be possible to bring about a policy shift. Third—and equally related—is the belief that the army is the biggest obstacle to normalizing relations with India as it is the largest beneficiary of this sustained conflict.

To create incentives for moving towards civilian-led governance, the Enhanced Partnership with Pakistan Act 2009 (the Kerry–Lugar–Berman Act) specifically makes military assistance conditional upon the US Secretary of State's certification that Pakistan continues to cooperate to dismantle nuclear suppliers' networks; ceases 'support, including by any elements within the Pakistan military or its intelligence agency, to extremist and terrorist groups'; works to prevent 'al Qaeda, the Taleban and associated terrorist groups, such as LeT and Jaish-e-Mohammed, from operating in the territory of Pakistan'; strengthens 'counter-

[4] Craig Cohen, Frederick D. Barton and Karin von Hippel, *A perilous course: U.S. strategy and assistance to Pakistan* (Washington DC: Center for Strategic and International Studies, 2007).

[5] Institute for Policy Studies (Islamabad), 'US aid to Pakistan and democracy', *Policy Perspectives* 6: 2, July–Dec. 2009, http://www.ips.org.pk/pakistanaffairs/security-a-foreign-policy/1080.html, accessed 26 Jan. 2011.

[6] Hussain, *Pakistan*; Barnett Rubin, *The fragmentation of Afghanistan* (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 2002).

[7] Hassan Askari Rizvi, *The military and politics in Pakistan: 1947–1997* (Lahore: Sang-e-Meel, 2000); Hassan Askari Rizvi, *Military, state and society in Pakistan* (London: Palgrave, 2000); Siddiqa, *Military Inc.*; C. Christine Fair et al., *Pakistan: can the United States secure an insecure state?* (Santa Monica, CA: Rand, 2010).



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terrorism and anti-money laundering laws'; and is ensuring that its 'security forces … are not materially and substantially subverting the political or judicial processes of Pakistan'.[8]

This article examines the prospects for normalized civil–military relations in Pakistan and asks whether a civilian-led Pakistan will be more likely to live at peace with itself and with its neighbours. Ultimately, it finds little reason for optimism. Civilian control over the military is not only unlikely to emerge over the next two decades, but even if it occurs is unlikely to augur substantive changes in Pakistan's reliance upon militant groups operating on behalf of the state in South Asia and beyond.

## Democracy in Pakistan: the army's quarry?[9]

The reasons for the army's dominance are historical and their detailed exposition is beyond the remit of this article. Following the bloody and tumultuous partition of India that created Pakistan, the new state's institutions were weak, thinly staffed and based in a city (Karachi, Pakistan's first capital) that had no history as a locus of government. Kabul rejected the border with Pakistan (the Durand Line). With Kashmir's future in doubt, Pakistan launched a tribal invasion in 1947 to seize the territory by force: this developed into the first India–Pakistan war. That dispute persists to date.[10] Many Pakistanis continue to believe that India does not accept Pakistan as a separate state and seeks to reabsorb it despite the fact that India has long recognized Pakistan and would probably have no interest in the state at all were it not for the fact that groups based in and backed by Pakistan continue to assault India and its citizenry. The Pakistan establishment has nurtured this perception by influencing curricula in Pakistani schools and managing the public discourse about its neighbour.[11]

The army's ability to intervene in Pakistan's governance without immediate public outrage stems from its assumption, well rehearsed in public, that it is the pre-eminent guardian not only of Pakistan's foreign and domestic interests, but

[8] Enhanced civilian control of Pakistan's military is enshrined in the 2009 aid package: see the Enhanced Partnership with Pakistan Act 2009, http://www.govtrack.us/congress/billtext.xpd?bill=s111–1707, accessed 26 Jan. 2011.

[9] This section draws heavily on C. Christine Fair, 'Pakistan's democracy: the army's quarry?', *Asian Security* 5: 1, Feb. 2009, pp. 73–85.

[10] Shuja Nawaz, *Crossed swords: Pakistan, its army and the wars within* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2008); Haqqani, *Pakistan*; Siddiqa, *Military Inc.*; Ayesha Jalal, *The state of martial rule: the origins of Pakistan's political economy of defence* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1990); Stephen P. Cohen, *The Pakistan army* (Berkeley and Los Angeles: University of California Press, 1984); Veena Kukreja, *Contemporary Pakistan: political processes, conflicts and crises* (New Delhi: Sage, 2003); Rizvi, *Military*; Brian Cloughly, *A history of the Pakistan army: wars and insurrections* (Karachi: Oxford University Press, 1999).

[11] Haqqani, *Pakistan*, pp. 150–51; K. K. Aziz, *Murder of history: a critique of history textbooks used in Pakistan* (Lahore: Vanguard, 1998); A. H. Nayyar and Ahmed Salim, *The subtle subversion: the state of curricula and textbooks in Pakistan–Urdu, English, social studies and civics* (Islamabad: Sustainable Development Policy Institute, 2003); Iftikhar Ahmed, 'Islam, democracy and citizenship education: an examination of the social studies curriculum in Pakistan', *Current Issues in Comparative Education* 7: 1, 15 Dec. 2004, pp. 39–49; Rubina Saigol, *Becoming a modern nation: educational discourse in the early years of Ayub Khan (1958–64)* (Islamabad: Council of Social Sciences, 2003); Marie Lall, 'Educate to hate: the use of education in the creation of antagonistic national identities in India and Pakistan', *Compare* 38: 1, Jan. 2008, pp. 103–19.

also of the nation's 'ideology', variously construed.[12] Equally important, the army's willingness to intervene politically and economically stems from its own enduring belief that it is such a guardian and is the single most capable entity to undertake both state- and nation-building.[13] Despite the polity's cyclical disgruntlement with the mis-steps taken by military leaders when they directly hold power, the citizenry generally greets its assumption of authority with enthusiasm or relief at first.

This assumption of authority on the part of the army, which has generally broad support among the populace, has a number of ramifications apart from the sustained enervation of democracy. The army has a revisionist agenda, seeking to change the regional status quo in Kashmir, and it has created a stove-piped decision-making process with little space for rigorous national security debate or competent civilian input. This combination of factors explains in some measure how the army has come to pursue a variety of problematic policies at home and abroad. These policies have both sustained the Indo-Pakistan security competition and confirmed the reality of the Indian threat among Pakistanis, who are often ignorant of their army's activities, including its culpability in commencing hostilities, fostering proxy elements and failing to achieve victory in its varied efforts.[14]

These historical factors explain in part why the army sees itself and is seen by many Pakistanis as the guarantor of an inherently insecure state. Pakistan's civilian institutions are unable to constrain the army in part because of their own weaknesses but also because they ultimately embrace or at least tacitly accept this narrative. During the army's various tenures, it has expanded its grip over ever larger economic interests; cultivated and coopted bureaucratic, industrial and political elites; weakened the capacity of political actors; diminished opposition to the concept of military intervention by accumulating ever greater numbers of stakeholders; and secured strategic partnerships with the United States, which have been very lucrative for the army.[15] With each round of failed military government, the political system has become less capable of governing once the army leaves.

## The army: from and among Pakistanis

As argued above, the army's domination of the state stems from its success at portraying itself as the sole institution capable of securing Pakistan against myriad domestic and external threats both to itself and to Pakistan's citizenry.[16] Pakistanis'

[12] Yahya Khan introduced the notion of the army as protector of Pakistan's 'ideological frontier': Haqqani, *Pakistan*, pp. 51–86. General Zia ul Haq vigorously expanded this concept and is most commonly associated with the army's efforts to take up the defence of Pakistan's ideological frontiers; however, the concept first emerged during Yahya Khan's tenure.

[13] See Pakistan Army General Headquarters, *Pakistan Army Green Book 2000: role of Pakistan army in nation building* (Rawalpindi: Pakistan Army GHQ, 2000).

[14] Most Pakistanis did not and do not believe that their country began the wars in 1947 and 1965, or that Pakistani soldiers killed Bengalis in the 1971 war. Pakistani media incorrectly characterized the Pakistanis as winning and many Pakistanis believed they had won the conflict until the various terms of the armistices revealed otherwise. See Nawaz, *Crossed swords*.

[15] Siddiqa, *Military Inc.*; Nawaz, *Crossed swords;* Dennis Kux, *The United States and Pakistan, 1947–2000: disenchanted allies* (Baltimore, MD: Johns Hopkins University Press, 2001); Fair, *The counterterror coalitions*.

[16] On the perceived threats to the army itself, see Pakistan Army General Headquarters, *Pakistan Army Green Book 2000*.



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belief that the army is the most competent institution to govern is somewhat counterintuitive given that they routinely express high values of support for living in a country governed by *elected* representatives. In this author's April 2009 survey (with Jacob N. Shapiro and Neil Malhotra), 78 per cent of respondents said that they 'highly value' living in a country governed by elected representatives. However, only one in two believed their country was in fact so governed 'completely' or 'a lot'. Similarly high expectations are held and disappointed about the importance of courts independent of political and military authorities.[17] Other polls, such as those conducted by the International Republican Institute (IRI), the Program on International Policy Attitudes (PIPA) and the United States Institute of Peace (USIP), routinely find that Pakistanis sustain high levels of support for democratic forms of governance.[18]

The April 2009 poll referred to above found that while electoral democracy holds deep legitimacy, Pakistanis are fundamentally divided about the preferred nature of governance in their country. When asked 'How much control should civilians have over the military?' 55 per cent said that the civilians should have 'complete' or 'a lot of' control over the military, *but* 41 per cent believed that civilians should have a moderate amount of control, little control or even no control at all.[19]

While there is general support for the *notion* of civilian control over the military, there is considerable variation in views about the modalities of this control. When asked 'Who should control the military: the president, the chief of army staff, or the prime minister?' 14 per cent responded that the president should control the army. (It is important to remember here that in Pakistan, when the generals have taken over the government, the chief of army staff eventually seizes the presidency. This may temper support for the president, who was a sitting general most recently from 1999 to 2007.) Another 24 per cent believed this to be the job of the prime minister. However, the largest portion (60 per cent) believed it to be the job of the chief of army staff.[20]

When respondents were asked 'Under what circumstances should the military be able to take control from civilian government?' only one in five believed that the military should *never* be able to take control over the state. An overwhelming 69 per cent believed the army could do so 'in an emergency'. Only 7 per cent believed that it could do so 'whenever it wants'.[21]

[17] C. Christine Fair, Neil Malhotra and Jacob Shapiro, 'Islam, militancy, and politics in Pakistan: insights from a national sample', *Terrorism and Political Violence* 22: 4, 2010, pp. 495–521.

[18] World Values Survey, http://www.worldvaluessurvey.org/, accessed 26 Jan. 2011; Christine Fair, Clay Ramsay and Steve Kull, 'Pakistani public opinion on democracy, Islamist militancy, and relations with the U.S.', Washington DC: USIP/PIPA, 7 Jan. 2008; IRI, 'IRI index: Pakistan public opinion survey, July 15–August 7, 2009', http://www.iri.org/sites/default/files/2009%20October%201%20Survey%20of%20Pakistan%20Public%20Opinion,%20July%2015-August%207,%202009.pdf, accessed 26 Jan. 2011.

[19] Unpublished tabulations from the 2009 Fair, Malhotra and Shapiro dataset. IRI, using a different set of questions and survey methodology, query beliefs about civilian control over the military. In July 2009 IRI asked respondents how much control civilian leadership should have over the military. While 44 per cent said 'total', 40 per cent said 'some' and another 10 per cent said 'none'. See IRI, 'IRI index'.

[20] Unpublished tabulations from Fair, Malhotra and Shapiro, 'Islam, militancy, and politics'.

[21] IRI's July 2009 poll produced similar findings, despite different samples and methodologies. IRI asked respondents: 'Some people believe the military has the right to take over from civilian leaders when they have become too corrupt or fail to govern. Under what circumstances should the military be able to do this?'

Taken together, these polling figures suggest that while Pakistanis feel that democracy is important, many of them do not fundamentally object to the intervention of the army in government.[22] Presumably any movement towards genuine civilian control over the military will require demand for the same, which has yet to develop robustly.

## Blaming the army?

While the army generally takes most of the blame for its various intrusions into state governance, it *always* comes to power with the assistance of virtually every civilian and political institution in the country, including the judiciary, elements of the various political parties which are coopted to form a pro-regime party, and the parliament that ultimately ensues from flawed elections.[23] Equally important, the army returns to power with the support of the citizenry, who are often relieved that whatever kleptocratic government preceded it has been ousted.[24] This arrangement sustains itself until the public grows exhausted with army rule, at which point the army moves against the president in an effort to protect its own institutional standing and resumes its watchful role as an invariably problematic and ineffective democracy emerges, until once again the public turns against the political class and welcomes the army into power. With each round of military intervention, the political and bureaucratic institutions become ever more ineffective and consensus around the modalities of government (prime minister versus president, presidential versus parliamentary) becomes ever more elusive.

Pakistan's political parties are very much a part of this problem. With the exception of the 2002 National Assembly, no government has ever served its full term; and while that assembly *did* serve its term, there were two prime ministers and one interim prime minister during that period.[25] Consequently, political parties have few reasons to believe that they will serve their full terms in office. This expectation conditions party elites to maximize rents during their tenure because thereafter they are likely to spend several years in opposition or, in the event of a military coup, in jail. In the past, parties in opposition—whether the Pakistan Peoples Party (PPP) or the Pakistan Muslim League-Nawaz Sharif (PML-N)—used extra-constitutional means to dissolve the government and win in early elections rather than wait for the government's term to expire. The army is willing to intervene because it ensures the fractious political nature of politics

Three out of four said 'only in an emergency', 16 per cent said 'never' and 6 per cent said 'whenever it wants': IRI, 'IRI index'.

[22] Unpublished tabulations from Fair, Mahotra and Shapiro, 'Islam, militancy and politics'.

[23] International Crisis Group, *Authoritarianism and political party reform in Pakistan*, Asia Report 102, 28 Sept. 2005, http://www.crisisgroup.org/en/regions/asia/south-asia/pakistan/102-authoritarianism-and-political-party-reform-in-pakistan.aspx, accessed 26 Jan. 2011.

[24] Siddiqa, *Military Inc.*; Nawaz, *Crossed swords*.

[25] In early January, one of the PPP's coalition partners (MQM) withdrew from the coalition, resulting in the PPP-led coalition losing its majority in the government. However, no party was willing to declare the no confidence vote which was necessary to bring down the government. Moreover, the MQM was reconciled with a week, with important caveats probably intended to keep the PPP on tenterhooks.

and minimizes the likelihood of serious efforts to deprive the army of its various sources of power. Because the army can destabilize elected governments, most prime ministers or civilian presidents are wary of antagonizing the military by challenging its preferred policies at home or abroad.

What prospects exist for change? Pakistan's civil society institutions have historically been weak. In recent years, more have evolved, but not all are forces for liberalism. Islamist militant groups have commandeered social networking sites such as Facebook and are also spreading their message through SMS texts among other social media.[26] Arguably, the ways in which civil society organizations and formations are evolving augur greater—not less—division across Pakistan.

There are human rights organizations and civil society organizations (CSOs) that have pressed for greater adherence to democratic practices, but they enjoy a very limited support base across Pakistan.[27] But CSOs that are anti-liberal and/or pursue an explicitly Islamist agenda also exist. These CSOs include Islamist parties such as Jamaat Islami, evangelical revival movements, and women-targeted movements such as al Huda.[28]

The wild card in mobilizing Pakistanis is the press. At first glance Pakistan's private media appear vibrant and diverse; however, on issues of national security and contentious domestic affairs they are heavily self-censored and strongly influenced by establishment commentators with strong ties to the military and intelligence agencies. Such compromised media may have little ability to help resolve fundamental questions about Pakistan's future and in many cases may actually exacerbate the problems. Indeed, many popular media outlets (particularly Urdu papers and television channels) agitate for violence against religious minorities and people considered to be 'kafirs' or 'infidels'. Following the horrific slaughter of Ahmadis in Lahore in May 2010, some prominent media personalities declared that Ahmadis were 'liable to be killed' as kafirs. On 16 June 2010 Mubasher Lucman, a host of *Point Blank* on Pakistan's Urdu channel Express News, assembled three 'learned Muslim scholars' to explain to his listeners why Ahmadis were not Muslim. The panel of scholars declared Ahmadis to be '"dajjal" (anti-Christ), liars, worse than kafirs, and to be considered murtad'. The clerics concluded that 'murtads are worthy of slaying'. The host offered his 'full agreement, no dispute' with this and further commented that the Ahmadis were indeed 'worthy of slaying' as he moved to a commercial break.[29] In 2008 Dr Amir Liaquat Hussain, a prominent television anchor on a popular Pakistani private television channel, told his viewers on air

[26] Issam Ahmed, 'Newest friends on Facebook? Pakistan militants', *Christian Science Monitor*, 8 July 2010, http://www.csmonitor.com/World/Asia-South-Central/2010/0708/Newest-friends-on-Facebook-Pakistan-militants, accessed 26 Jan. 2011.

[27] While Washington may want to invest in these institutions, studies of CSOs find that they become less effective when they receive international aid as they cease being accountable to their members and become increasingly oriented towards the demands of their funders. See Masooda Bano, 'Dangerous correlations: aid's impact on NGOs' performance and ability to mobilize members in Pakistan', *World Development* 36: 1, 2008, pp. 2297–313.

[28] Sadaf Ahmad, *Transforming faith: the story of al-Huda and Islamic revivalism among urban Pakistani women* (Syracuse: Syracuse University Press, 2009).

[29] Imran Jattala, 'A call to kill Ahmadi Muslims in Pakistan … again', *Examiner*, 17 June 2010, http://www.examiner.com/islam-in-los-angeles/a-call-to-kill-ahmadi-muslims-pakistan-again, accessed 26 Jan. 2011.



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that killing members of the Ahmadi sect is the religious duty of devout Muslims. Two Ahmadis were murdered within 48 hours of this call.[30]

## General Kayani: a new beginning for democracy or a false start?

Pakistan watchers were heartened by the events of the summer of 2008 and cautiously optimistic that a genuine step towards civilian control of the military had been taken. On 7 August the faltering and short-lived coalition government of Asif Zardari's PPP and Nawaz Sharif's PML-N declared its intention to impeach President Pervez Musharraf. On 18 August Musharraf announced his resignation. This development was unprecedented. But impeachment was never likely for at least two reasons. First, the government did not have the required support of two-thirds of the legislators in both the senate and the national assembly. Second, the army as an institution would never tolerate impeachment proceedings against Musharraf as this would be likely to undermine irreversibly the fundamental interests of the army. Despite the army's vexation with Musharraf, impeachment would be tantamount to censuring the army itself and its presumed *obligation* to intervene in Pakistan's political affairs when it deems necessary. Ultimately, Musharraf did what was expected of him: once the charge sheet was released, he refuted all accusations as he resigned his post in defiant indignation.

Musharraf's fall had been long anticipated. Since 2004, when he reneged on promises to resign as army chief, his domestic predicament had become ever less tenable as he simultaneously sought to appease disparate stakeholders. In March 2007 he made a fatal mistake when he dismissed a popular Supreme Court justice, Iftikhar Mohammad Choudhury, who challenged several of Musharraf's policies (such as dubious privatization of public assets, illegal detention of citizens and rendering them to the United States). Musharraf feared that the activist court would challenge the legality of his planned re-election in early October 2007. His extra-constitutional removal of Choudhury galvanized a limited but effective mobilization of civil society that became known as the 'Lawyers' Movement'.[31]

Under Musharraf, Pakistan's army became increasingly demoralized through being forced to fight a war against the country's own citizens in support of Washington's war on terror. As Pakistan's own citizenry turned against the army, the army turned on Musharraf.[32] Musharraf's final error was his declaration of a state of emergency on 3 November 2007 to pre-empt the Supreme Court's nullifying his re-election as president. As he did so in his capacity as army chief, the move was legally tantamount to a declaration of martial law.[33] The emergency

[30] See Declan Walsh, 'Ahmadi massacre silence is dispiriting', *Guardian*, 7 June 2010, http://www.guardian.co.uk/commentisfree/belief/2010/jun/07/ahmadi-massacre-silence-pakistan, accessed 26 Jan. 2011.

[31] However, the Lawyers' Movement subsequently demonstrated that it is not a force for liberalization when some of its members took contentious positions in support of a fanatic who killed the governor of Punjab, Salman Taseer, in January 2011 because of his interest in amending the blasphemy law.

[32] Fair, Ramsay and Kull, 'Pakistani public opinion'. For figures demonstrating Pakistani fears about the 2008 elections and their non-military preferences, see IRI, 'IRI index: Pakistan public opinion survey, 19–29 Jan., 2008', http://www.iri.org/mena/pakistan.asp; IRI, 'IRI index: Pakistan public opinion survey, June 1–15, 2008', http://www.iri.org, accessed 26 Jan. 2011.

[33] See Human Rights Watch, *Destroying legality: Pakistan's crackdown on lawyers and judges* (New York: HRW, 2007).



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was short-lived. Musharraf hand-picked a presumed ally, General Ashfaq Pervez Kayani, to supersede him as army chief and stepped down from that post on 29 November 2007. Confident that he had the army's support, and having worked out a Washington-negotiated power-sharing deal with Benazir Bhutto, Musharraf declared that a general election would take place in early January 2008 with the expectation of remaining president for another five years. When Ms Bhutto was killed, elections were postponed to February 2008.[34] In February 2009 Pakistanis voted for change and ousted Musharraf's political allies. Proponents of democracy were elated by that sequence of events and optimistic that they heralded a new dawn for civilian rule in Pakistan.

Kayani inherited a deeply demoralized army. Up to the spring of 2009, Pakistan's polity despised the army's military operations in the Federally Administered Tribal Areas (FATA), generally preferring negotiation and peace deals.[35] Army officers complained to the present author on a visit to Pakistan in April 2008 that they were instructed not to wear their uniforms in civilian areas. One officer serving in Baluchistan complained that 'he had joined the Pakistan army to kill Indians not Pakistanis'. Civilian administrators interviewed by the author referred to the army as 'collaborators'.

Kayani masterfully restored the people's confidence in the army and convinced international actors that he was a 'dedicated democrat'. While proclaiming his democratic credentials, he nevertheless maintained that the country's four military interventions since 1947 had been required to ensure Pakistan's stability. He 'likens coups to temporary bypasses that are created when a bridge collapses on democracy's highway. After the bridge is repaired, he says, then there's no longer any need for the detour.'[36]

He acted swiftly to address the army's demoralization, which probably stemmed in part from the public's anger at the army under Musharraf. He declared 2008 to be the 'Year of the Soldier' and directed all formations to undertake steps to address troop morale, including allocations to improve the standard of living of the enlisted (*jawans*).[37] Within the army, he further declared 2009 a 'year of

[34] According to a national poll taken by Gallup Pakistan, nearly half the sample suspected government agencies (23%) or politicians allied to the government (25%) to have been behind her death. See Gallup Pakistan, 'Press release: Benazir Bhutto's assassination', 11 Jan. 2008, http:// www.gallup.com.pk, accessed 26 Jan. 2011.

[35] C. Christine Fair, 'Pakistan's own war on terror: what the Pakistani public thinks', *Journal of International Affairs* 63: 1, Fall–Winter 2009; Fair, Malhotra and Shapiro, 'Islam, militancy, and politics'. 'Additionally, as Hassan Askari Rizvi noted in a personal communication, the popular discontent over these operations may also be tied to the fact that the Islamist political party coalition, the Muttahida Majlis-e-Amal (MMA), formed the provincial government in the then NWFP, not KPK. Components of the MMA (for example, Jamait Ulema-e-Islamfactions) enjoy extremely tight ties with many militant groups. The MMA supported policies of appeasement such as peace deals rather than military operations. The MMA helped to foster popular discontent with the operations. The MMA was routed in the 2008 elections that brought the left-of-centre Awami National Party to power in the province.'

[36] 'Kayani 20th most powerful person in world', *The Nation*, 22 Dec. 2008, http://www.nation.com.pk/pakistan-news-newspaper-daily-english-online/Politics/22-Dec-2008/Kayani-20th-most-powerful-person-in-world, accessed 26 Jan. 2011.

[37] See Inter-Services Public Relations, press release 'Concerted efforts are being made to improve quality of life of soldiers', PR29/2008-ISPR, 18 March 2008, http://www.ispr.gov.pk/front/main.asp?o=t-press_release&date=2008/3/18, accessed 26 Jan. 2011; '2008 "Year of the Soldier", declares Gen Parvez Kayani', *Pakistan Tribune*, 12 Dec. 2007, http://www.paktribune.com/news/index.shtml?195452, accessed 26 Jan. 2011.

training'.[38] To increase soldiers' ownership of and commitment to Pakistan's internal security duties, Kayani made numerous 'battlefield circulations' to encourage them to embrace the war as their own.[39] Musharraf, by contrast, had characterized these operations as a 'favour' to Washington.

Kayani has been very much a part of Pakistan's political machinery even while cultivating meticulously the impression at home and abroad that he is a professional officer waiting for the civilian leaders to lead. In June 2008 US analysts were exhilarated when General Kayani submitted to the senate a two-page budget for all services, broken down under six separate headings. When the PPP came to power, it promised that it would demand a more detailed budget from the military. The army, appreciating the domestic and international environment, obliged. Previously, the military had submitted a single total, representing the overall funding request, which would be approved without scrutiny. In fact, while anxious American observers interpreted this move as a magnanimous genuflection towards incrementally increasing democratic control of the army, the submission of a more complete budget to the senate had little more than symbolic importance.[40]

In March 2009 Kayani brokered a *rapprochement* between President Zardari and Nawaz Sharif over the reinstatement of Chief Justice Choudhury. Kayani had been present at the infamous meeting at Army House two years earlier between then President Musharraf and the chief justice when the former informed the latter that he was dismissed. At the time Kayani was the head of Pakistan's intelligence agency, the ISI. In Kayani's own accounts of that meeting, he was the only one among Musharraf's aides present who sat quietly during the meeting and did not file an affidavit against the Chief Justice. Some analysts have read this as retrospective proof of the apolitical nature of this general.[41]

President Zardari and Nawaz Sharif had been locked in an intractable dispute over the status of the judge. Indeed, the early PPP–PML-N coalition government collapsed over this issue, with Zardari opposing Choudhury's reinstatement and Sharif insisting upon it. Zardari, who had inherited the PPP leadership from his wife Benazir Bhutto, was the beneficiary of the Musharraf–Bhutto power-sharing deal. This arrangement was codified as the National Reconciliation Order (NRO) of 2007, which among other things, suspended the various corruption charges pending against Zardari and other PPP activists and thereby allowed them to hold public office.[42] Zardari feared that Choudhury would seek to reverse a suite of extra-constitutional presidential orders issued by Musharraf—including

[38] See Inter-Services Public Relations, press release, PR 101/2009-ISPR, 22 April 2009, http://www.ispr.gov.pk/front/main.asp?o=t-press_release&date=2009/4/22, accessed 26 Jan. 2011.

[39] See among others 'Key objectives achieved in South Waziristan: Kayani', *The Dawn*, 15 Feb. 2010, http://news.dawn.com/wps/wcm/connect/dawn-content-library/dawn/news/pakistan/03-key-objectives-achieved-in-south-waziristan-kayani-ss-04, accessed 26 Jan. 2011; 'COAS Gen. Kayani visits south Waziristan, Kurram Agency', Sama.com, 13 Oct. 2010, http://www.samaa.tv/News26509-COAS_Gen_Kayani_visits_South_Waziristan_Kurram_Agency.aspx, accessed 26 Jan. 2011; Anwarullah Khan, 'Kayani visits Bajaur; 15 killed in clashes', *The Dawn*, 29 Sept. 2008, http://www.dawn.com/2008/09/29/top3.htm, accessed 26 Jan. 2011.

[40] Mumtaz Alvi, 'Senate debates defense budget for first time', *The News*, 18 June 2008.

[41] Shaan Akbar, 'Kayani's next role and renewed negotiations', *Insider's Brief*, 23 Sept. 2009, http://www.pakintel.com/2007/09/23/kayanis-next-role-and-renewed-negotiations/, accessed 26 Jan. 2011.

[42] See 'National Reconciliation Ordinance', Islamabad, 5 Oct. 2007; as of 28 Aug. 2009, http://www.pakistani.org/pakistan/legislation/2007/NationalReconciliationOrdinance.html, accessed 26 Jan. 2011.



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the NRO—rendering him vulnerable to prosecution again. No doubt this is one of the reasons why Sharif demanded his reinstatement.

As the second anniversary of the justice's ouster by Musharraf loomed, large crowds rallied to support Sharif's position on the question.[43] The final straw was a large convoy that Sharif led from his home in Lahore to the nation's capital, despite a ban on protests imposed by Zardari.[44] Nawaz Sharif's actions had two principle motivations. On the one hand, he sought to challenge Zardari purportedly on moral grounds. On the other hand, he was motivated by partisan interests to support the ousted justice and other dismissed associates because Chief Justice Dogar disqualified his brother, Shahbaz Sharif, from membership of Punjab's provincial assembly thereby stripping Shahbaz Sharif of chief ministership.[45] Ostensibly to prevent further political instability, Kayani intervened to secure Zardari's acquiescence in the judge's reinstatement. In December 2009 the Supreme Court did indeed strike down the NRO and determined that all of the cases disposed of by the ordinance were considered to be revived as of 5 October 2007.[46] Since then Zardari has lived under this sword of Damocles, with criminal cases against him and his inner circle re-emerging and providing opportune fodder for the military to remind him of his vulnerability.[47] By December 2009 Pakistani analysts were contending that the military had already concluded that Zardari was a 'national security hazard'.[48] He even 'made preparations for a coup or assassination, according to leaked US diplomatic cables'.[49] While Zardari was weakened by the move, Sharif benefited from his 'principled stand' in support of the judiciary. Sharif had been deemed unable to stand for election owing to his alleged attempt in October 1999 to murder then General Musharraf, which moved other generals to seize the government and save Musharraf. In May 2009 the Supreme Court declared that Sharif could stand for election.[50]

Kayani's swift diplomatic initiative staved off further instability, weakened Zardari and rendered him ever more vulnerable to army pressure while paving the way for Sharif to stand in as a (suboptimal) political alternative.[51] Not all observers

[43] See Nick Schifrin, 'Pakistani Chief Justice Iftikhar Chaudhry reinstated: government caved to protestors' demand after threat of march to Islamabad', ABC News, 16 March 2009.

[44] 'Pakistan protest crackdown widens', BBC News, 13 March 2009, http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/south_asia/7941122.stm, accessed 26 Jan. 2011.

[45] The author thanks Hasan Askari Rizvi for this observation.

[46] Zahid Hussain, 'Zardari has "no moral authority"', *Newsline*, 1 Dec. 2009, http://www.newslinemagazine.com/2009/12/zardari-has-no-moral-authority/, accessed 26 Jan. 2011.

[47] Farhan Sharif and James Rupert, 'Pakistan's Supreme Court delays graft case threat to Zardari's government', *Bloomberg News*, 27 Sept. 2010, http://www.bloomberg.com/news/2010–09–27/pakistan-s-supreme-court-delays-graft-case-threat-to-zardari-s-government.html, accessed 26 Jan. 2011.

[48] Talat Hussain, 'Hanging by a thread', *Newsline*, 20 Dec. 2009, http://www.newslinemagazine.com/2009/12/hanging-by-a-thread/, accessed 26 Jan. 2011.

[49] 'Gen. Kayani wanted to kick Zardari out': WikiLeaks, *The News*, 2 Dec. 2010, http://www.thenews.com.pk/TodaysPrintDetail.aspx?ID=2421&Cat=13&dt=12/26/2010, accessed 26 Jan. 2011.

[50] Declan Walsh, 'Pakistan lifts election ban on Nawaz Sharif', *Guardian*, 26 May 2009.

[51] Given the army's aversion to Nawaz Sharif, the reviewer of this article suggested that Kayani might prefer to stage a coup rather than see him return to power. Shahbaz Sharif may be a more palatable alternative. It is the judgement of this author that a coup remains unlikely—but not impossible. The current US President and Congress are deeply critical of Pakistan and less convinced that it is a true ally. Kayani may (rightly) assess that under such conditions US security assistance would be strictly curbed under US law. The likelihood of such a move increases as aggressive US military operations begin to wind down in 2011. Finally, the army has no 'government in waiting'.



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read General Kayani's intervention as inappropriate. According to Jane Perlez, 'one encouraging sign for Washington was the role played in the crisis by the army chief, Gen. Ashfaq Parvez Kayani, who let Mr. Zardari know that he could not rely on soldiers to confront the protesters who were threatening to descend on Islamabad to demand the return of Chief Justice Chaudhry'.[52] The retired general Jehangir Karamat, whom Sharif dismissed from the post of army chief in 1998 and who later served as Pakistan's ambassador to the United States, explained that 'the military acted to avert, to correct and to clear the way for full democracy with the center of gravity where it should be—in Parliament and the people'.[53] Karamat went as far as to call this 'new' military approach 'the Kayani Model', in which Kayani had been 'invisible but around, fully informed and acting through well-timed and effective influence in the right quarter', during the crisis.[54]

In October 2009 Kayani planted himself in the centre of foreign and domestic policy affairs by issuing a strongly worded press release after chairing a day-long conference of the army's corps commanders. This press release asserted the generals' collective repudiation of the Kerry–Lugar–Berman legislation and its insistence that there be a 'Semi-Annual Monitoring Report' that includes among other items

> an assessment of the extent to which the Government of Pakistan exercises effective civilian control of the military, including a description of the extent to which civilian executive leaders and parliament exercise oversight and approval of military budgets, the chain of command, the process of promotion for senior military leaders, civilian involvement in strategic guidance and planning, and military involvement in civil administration.[55]

The military understood this language, along with other conditions in the bill, as tantamount to granting Washington the prerogative to micromanage Pakistan's civilian and military institutions.[56]

Zardari's powers were reduced further when the National Assembly unanimously passed the 18th Amendment. The senate approved the bill and the beleaguered President signed it into law on 19 April 2010. The legislation transferred several presidential powers back to the parliament, enhanced provincial autonomy, and formally repealed Musharraf's own 17th Amendment which gave the president sweeping powers while rendering the prime minister a figurehead. With the passage of the 18th Amendment, the president became unable to dismiss the prime minister or dissolve the parliament. The law also declared that neither the Supreme Court nor any High Court will validate an 'act of treason' such as a military coup.[57]

[52] Jane Perlez, 'Pakistan avoids pitfall, but path ahead is unclear', *New York Times*, 16 March 2009.
[53] Perlez, 'Pakistan avoids pitfall'.
[54] Perlez, 'Pakistan avoids pitfall'.
[55] Enhanced Partnership with Pakistan Act 2009, pp. 18–19.
[56] Ahmed Quraishi, 'General Ashfaq Parvez Kayani strong message to US Ambassador Anne W. Patterson & its Pakistani loyalists', *TheCurrentAffairs.com*, 10 Oct. 2009, http://thecurrentaffairs.com/general-ashfaq-parvez-kayani-strong-message-to-us-ambassador-anne-w-patterson-its-pakistani-loyalists.html, accessed 26 Jan. 2011.
[57] See text of the 18th Amendment, http://www.scribd.com/doc/30269950/18th-Amendment-in-the-Constitution-of-Pakistan-Complete-Text, accessed 26 Jan. 2011.



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The day on which the law was passed was hailed as a historic moment. The Law Minister Babar Awan declared before dignitaries assembled at the presidential offices: 'For the first time in the history of this country, a democratically elected president has voluntarily given up his power back to the parliament of this country.'[58] Prime Minister Yousaf Gilani, a beneficiary of the bill who has often been at odds with the President, hailed the bill as 'an unprecedented event in the political history of Pakistan' in that 'a leader has willingly transferred power in such a smooth process' and asserted that 'Pakistan would definitely emerge stronger after the enactment of this bill'.[59] A weakened Zardari opined: 'It is my hope that the doors of dictatorship are closed forever.'[60]

The legislation has its critics, who are sceptical about its salutary effects for renewed democracy. The law jettisoned Musharraf's (flouted) requirement that 'every political party shall, subject to law, hold intra-party elections[61] to elect its office-bearers and party leaders'.[62] It also restricts 'floor-crossing' or a parliamentarian voting against his or her party's political position. If the 'party head' objects to such breaking of the ranks, he or she can write to the Speaker of the Assembly and have the individual removed.[63] While some measure is needed to limit the 'horse trading' that pervades the parliament, this measure is unlikely to be productive and ensures that no one parliamentarian can alter party politics. The Supreme Court is reviewing the bill's various provisions.

The enthusiasm for this 'democratic' milestone was further dampened by the suspicion that it too was a compromise forced by the military to strip Zardari of more of the extensive powers he inherited from Musharraf. Zardari's interference in army business no doubt bemused General Headquarters: Zardari proclaimed a 'no first use' nuclear policy, sought to put the ISI under civilian leadership, and offered to dispatch the ISI to India in the wake of the November 2008 LeT assault in Mumbai.

On 22 July 2010, Kayani received an unprecedented three-year extension of his term, announced by Prime Minister Gilani on national television.[64] Gilani explained that Pakistan was passing through a difficult time and praised the successful operations carried out by the civilian government and armed forces in Swat. Gilani further asserted that Kayani's leadership was key to the success in the fight against terrorism and that 'to ensure the success of these operations, it is the

[58] 'President Zardari signs 18th Amendment bill', *Dawn.com*, 19 April 2010, http://www.dawn.com/wps/wcm/connect/dawn-content-library/dawn/news/pakistan/03-president-zardari-signs-18th-amendment-bill-ss-07, accessed 26 Jan. 2011.

[59] 'President Zardari signs 18th Amendment bill'.

[60] 'President Zardari signs 18th Amendment bill'.

[61] Hasan Askari Rizvi noted when reading the draft of this article that while this clause was struck down from the 18th Amendment, a similar provision persists in the Political Parties Act. However, by excluding it from the constitution, its status has been downgraded.

[62] '18th amendment: looking beyond the rhetoric', Express Tribune Blog, n.d., http://blogs.tribune.com.pk/story/89/18th-amendment-looking-beyond-the-rhetoric/, accessed 26 Jan. 2011.

[63] See text of the 18th Amendment, http://www.scribd.com/doc/30269950/18th-Amendment-in-the-Constitution-of-Pakistan-Complete-Text, accessed 26 Jan. 2011.

[64] See Ibrahim Sajid Malick, 'US wants General Kayani to stay for another year', *Examiner*, 17 May 2010, http://www.examiner.com/pakistan-headlines-in-national/us-wants-general-kayani-to-stay-for-another-year, accessed 26 Jan. 2011.



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need of the hour that the continuity of military leadership should be maintained and keeping this in light it was mandatory to extend his tenure'.[65] He further explained that this decision was undertaken after consultations with Zardari. [66]

The extension of Kayani's term was not unexpected as it was preceded by another in March 2010: that of Lieutenant-General Ahmed Shuja Pasha, Director General of the ISI. At the time, commentators speculated that Pasha's extension would 'pave the way for a longer term' for Kayani.[67] Shuja Nawaz, who is personally close to Kayani, explained:

> This is the first time a civilian government has extended an army chief for a full term. In the past, extensions have been either short, given by military rulers to themselves or, in the case of the first military ruler, Ayub Khan, to an ineffectual army chief with no independent power base. Benazir Bhutto sought to break with tradition when she offered an extension to General Abdul Waheed in 1996 but he refused it. Kayani took pains to convey the impression that he would not seek an extension nor negotiate for one. It appears that the government made him an offer he could not refuse.[68]

Nawaz acknowledged that the move was controversial and noted that, while some welcomed it as providing 'continuity and stability at a time of a raging insurgency and the rise of militancy inside Pakistan', others interpreted it as a 'retrogressive move away from institutionalizing the selection and promotion system by linking it to personalities'.[69] Ultimately, he concluded that 'above all, it is a political move since the final decision was made by a politician'.[70]

However, many Pakistani interlocutors explained to the present author, who was in Pakistan at the time of the announcement, that no matter what the commentators (like Nawaz) have said, Kayani himself demanded this extension. Abdul Nishapuri sums up this view, arguing: 'Obviously, the decision of General Kayani's extension was not made by but enforced upon the civilian government by our gods in khaki. A bad decision nonetheless.'[71]

In short, after Musharraf's ignominious fall from grace and the concomitant restoration of democracy, it is far from clear that the army has departed from its historical role of managing political feuds and orchestrating domestic as well foreign policy when not directly governing the state. Ironically, Kayani's term will expire in the autumn of 2013, about the time when the current government's five-year term will expire. Whether Kayani will step away gracefully as his

[65] Saeed Shah, 'Pakistan extends powerful army chief's term for 3 years', *McClatchy*, 22 July 2010. Read more at http://www.mcclatchydc.com/2010/07/22/98003/pakistan-extends-powerful-army.html#ixzz10yBZ7M9c, accessed 26 Jan. 2011.

[66] Iftikhar A. Khan, 'Kayani to stay on as COAS till 2013', *The Dawn*, 23 July 2010, http://www.dawn.com/wps/wcm/connect/dawn-content-library/dawn/news/pakistan/06-govt-announces-extension-of-gen-kayanis-tenure-rs-06, accessed 26 Jan. 2011.

[67] Jane Perlez, 'Spy chief in Pakistan to stay on another year', *New York Times*, 10 March 2010, http://www.nytimes.com/2010/03/11/world/asia/11islamabad.html?ref=ashfaq_parvez_kayani, accessed 26 Jan. 2011.

[68] Shuja Nawaz, 'Kayani', *The Atlanticist*, 23 July 2010, http://www.acus.org/new_atlanticist/kayani-and-pakistans-civil-military-relations, accessed 26 Jan. 2011.

[69] Nawaz, 'Kayani'.

[70] Nawaz, 'Kayani'.

[71] Abdul Nishapuri, 'General Kayani's extension as army chief: a bad decision', LetUsRebuildPakitsan.com, 22 July 2010, http://criticalppp.com/archives/19675, accessed 26 Jan. 2011.



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reputation suggests, or whether he will be persuaded by his own indispensability, remains to be seen.

The Pakistan military has also benefited from public perceptions that the civilian government handled Pakistan's devastating 2010 monsoon-related floods ineptly. While Pakistanis suffered en masse, President Asaf Zardari was seen alighting from his helicopter at his Normandy chateau.[72] Zardari defended his trip by arguing that, after the passage of the 18th Amendment, it is the prime minister (that is, Gilani) who is responsible for handling such government affairs, not the president. In contrast, the Pakistan army was widely reported as doing the heavy lifting to alleviate Pakistanis' misery.[73] With hindsight, this castigation of Pakistan's civilian leadership is not entirely justified. Pakistan's management of the flood is actually rather commendable, given the scale of the disaster: fewer than 2,000 people died, no second wave of deaths occurred, no pandemics broke out and food insecurity has been averted.[74]

General Kayani again demonstrated his importance in the US–Pakistan Strategic Dialogue of October 2010. This, the third ministerial-level meeting in 2010, was ostensibly convened by US Secretary of State Hillary Clinton and Pakistan's Minister for Foreign Affairs, Makhdoom Qureshi,[75] and intended to bring to the fore US engagement with Pakistan's civilian leadership. However, this declared priority was undermined by the presence of Kayani, who met both military and civilian leaders, including President Obama.[76] At that meeting the United States unveiled its most recent disbursement of aid to Pakistan: US$2 billion in security assistance.[77]

## Conclusions: what are the prospects for civilian control of the military and will it matter?

In the short term, Pakistan's civilian institutions are unlikely to have the required incentives, capabilities or even interests to exercise genuine control over the military. Yet a coup seems unlikely in the near future. Kayani and his generals have no interest in taking political ownership of the various compound crises besetting Pakistan. Nor does Nawaz Sharif have any interest in bringing down the government, which would put him or his party in the awkward position of having to govern Pakistan. It is thus likely that army General Headquarters will

[72] Simon Tisdall, 'Pakistani president: "Britain's a friend, David Cameron's a friend"', *Guardian*, 6 Aug. 2010, http://www.guardian.co.uk/world/2010/aug/06/pakistan-president-zardari-cameron-summit, accessed 26 Jan. 2011.

[73] Saeed Shah, 'Pakistan floods: army steps into breach as anger grows at Zardari', *Guardian,* 8 Aug. 2010, http://www.guardian.co.uk/world/2010/aug/08/pakistan-floods-army-popular-zardari-anger, accessed 26 Jan. 2011.

[74] Christine Fair, 'What Pakistan did right', ForeignPolicy.com, 18 Jan. 2011, http://afpak.foreignpolicy.com/posts/2011/01/18/what_pakistan_did_right, accessed 26 Jan. 2011.

[75] US Department of State, 'Joint statement on U.S.–Pakistan strategic dialogue', press release, 22 Oct. 2010, ttp://www.america.gov/st/texttrans-english/2010/October/20101025120241su2.977717e-02.html#ixzz14c5QcHYA, accessed 26 Jan. 2011.

[76] Inayatullah, 'US–Pak strategic dialogue concludes', *The Nation*, 24 Oct. 2010, http://www.nation.com.pk/pakistan-news-newspaper-daily-english-online/Opinions/Columns/24-Oct-2010/USPak-Strategic-Dialogue-concludes, accessed 26 Jan. 2011.

[77] Inayatullah, 'US–Pak strategic dialogue concludes'.



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put pressure on the Supreme Court to avoid action that would spell the end of this government. That said, any incremental steps taken by the Supreme Court to remind Zardari and his coteries of their vulnerabilities would be beneficial.[78] However, under prevailing conditions, this hobbled government is likely to complete its five-year term.

Despite current US musings about the value of civilian control and legislative efforts to foster it, the Kerry–Lugar–Berman legislation includes various waivers that can be executed to render the 'bite' of its powers little more than a 'bark' should conditions require. Pakistanis are justifiably dubious that Washington's interest in promoting Pakistan's democracy will endure. As one editorial in the left-of-centre paper, *The Dawn*, opined:

> In our case America's response to military coups has followed a strikingly similar pattern: initial condemnation or criticism, then endorsement and finally whole-hearted support for the junta in question. Mr Berman is no doubt sincere when he says that the US wants to strengthen democratic institutions in Pakistan. *But what guarantee do Pakistanis have that the self-styled champion of democracy will not play the same old game if the tide somehow turns? Can the US confirm in no uncertain terms that it will never support a Pakistani dictator again irrespective of circumstances*?[79]

The history of US–Pakistan relations provides no evidence that this author's wariness is anything but justified.

Recent events continue to fuel Pakistanis' apprehensions about the US commitment to Pakistan's democracy and enhanced civilian control over the military and intelligence agencies. Prime Minister Gilani announced Kayani's extension of term immediately after a visit by Secretary of State Clinton, motivating speculation that Washington supported the move. Whether or not the US administration actively pushed for the extension, it no doubt welcomed the outcome. Kayani has a solid working relationship with Admiral Mike Mullen, the Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, as well as General David H. Petraeus, Commander of the International Security Assistance Force (COMISAF) in Afghanistan. Generals Kayani and Petraeus forged their working ties while the latter was Commander, US Central Command.[80]

Ikram Sehgal, a military analyst based in Karachi, summed up the motivations of Pakistani and American observers who support the decisions: 'You don't change horses in midstream … You want to keep the momentum going.'[81] Of course, a truly professional army should be able to retain continuity of effort irrespective of individual appointments, thus undermining any corporate reason to extend any general's term. In truth, Washington does not fully trust Pakistan's civilians

[78] Shahid R. Siddiqi, 'Pakistan, Zardari & the military', *Foreign Policy Journal*, 4 Oct. 2010, http://www.foreignpolicyjournal.com/2010/10/04/pakistan-zardari-the-military/, accessed 26 Jan. 2011.

[79] 'America & dictators', *The Dawn*, 6 July 2010, http://www.dawn.com/wps/wcm/connect/dawn-content-library/dawn/the-newspaper/editorial/america-dictators-670, accessed 26 Jan. 2011, emphasis added.

[80] Mohammed Hanif, 'In Pakistan, echoes of American betrayal', *New York Times*, 31 July 2010, http://www.nytimes.com/2010/08/01/opinion/01hanif.html?ref=ashfaq_parvez_kayani, accessed 26 Jan. 2011.

[81] Quoted in Saeed Shah, 'Pakistan extends powerful army chief's term for 3 years', *McClatchy*, 22 July 2010. Read more at http://www.mcclatchydc.com/2010/07/22/98003/pakistan-extends-powerful-army.html# ixzz10yBZ7M9c, accessed 26 Jan. 2011.



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to be competent stewards of security policy in part because the civilians have no such policy role. For this reason, congressional delegations visiting Pakistan are less interested in meeting their civilian parliamentarian counterparts than they are in meeting the true broker of power: the chief of army staff.

Finally, it is worth considering whether a civilian-led Pakistan would pursue a fundamentally different suite of policies. The prospects for this are slim. Zardari and his PPP have gone to great lengths to burnish their anti-terrorism credentials. Sharif's commitments to the same end have foundered upon his controversial support of sectarian groups such as the Sipah-e-Sahaba-e-Pakistan (SSP) which, along with the Lashkar-e-Jhangvi, is responsible for numerous anti-state, communal and sectarian terrorist attacks throughout Pakistan. His party, the PML-N, has been loath to alienate the SSP and its allies because it has a strong political following in the Punjab, the PML-N's stronghold.

The past record of *all* Pakistan's civilian leaders suggests that US hopes for civilian leadership may be misplaced, at least in the short term. Key civilian leaders—including Benazir Bhutto and Nawaz Sharif—have engaged in political deals with the SSP and other Islamist parties with ties to Islamist militant organizations, such as the Afghan and Pakistani Taleban and Deobandi militant organizations. In fact, Pakistan increased state support for the Taleban in Afghanistan during Benazir Bhutto's second term in office. Her Interior Minister, retired General Nasrullah Babar, was the inspector general of the Frontier Corps and later the governor of the Northwest Frontier Province and oversaw ISI operations in Afghanistan for her father, Zulfiqar Ali Bhutto. Under her government, the Taleban received training, financing and other forms of support through the military and intelligence services.[82] These practices continued under Nawaz Sharif.

Civilian governments have generally supported the Kashmir jihad as well. Because civilian governments are even more sensitive to public sentiment than their military counterparts, they would be unlikely to move decisively away from a policy of appeasement of the Afghan Taleban or jihadi groups, unless popular sentiment rallied around opposition to them. While the policy of raising and using Islamist militants is likely the bailiwick of the ISI and the army, neither Bhutto nor Sharif was either willing or able to oppose the policy and may have even tacitly approved of it.

Astonishingly, Nawaz Sharif and his brother Shahbaz Sharif, the incumbent chief minister of the Punjab, currently protect the Jamaat-ul-Dawa (JuD, the 'charity wing' of the LeT). Under Shahbaz Sharif's governance, the Punjab provincial government took over JuD's operations, essentially rendering its workers employees of the provincial government.[83] This hardly suggests that a PML-N government in Islamabad would tackle the growing domestic and international Islamist militant threat based in and from Pakistan.

Admittedly, politicians may have adopted these noxious policies to appease or at least avoid antagonizing the military and thereby prolong their always fragile

[82] See Ahmed Rashid, *Taliban: militant Islam, oil and fundamentalism in Central Asia* (New Haven, CT: Yale Nota Bene, 2001).

[83] Umer Farooq, 'Sleight of ban', *The Herald*, Dec. 2009.



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tenure. It is difficult to discern how likely it is that civilians—under the heroic assumption that they can wrest power from the military—would pursue different policies. Given that Pakistan's support of militants is based in good measure upon Pakistani strategic interests and security competition with India, it is difficult to imagine that civilians would have the capacity and creativity to resolve their outstanding troubles with India and thereby pave the way for a Pakistan that could eventually disengage from these dangerous militant proxies.

India is no help in this respect. Like Washington, New Delhi is ambivalent about civilian leadership and lacks any vision of the kind of future Pakistan it would prefer to live with. Not surprisingly, it has failed to forge a set of policies that will make one future more likely than another. Nor has the Indian government been able to resolve its festering conflict with its own Kashmiris, although finding a resolution to that conflict would diminish Pakistan's self-proclaimed space to operate in the zone on behalf of the Kashmiris. India seems utterly indifferent to the possibility that resolving its internal issues with its deeply disaffected Kashmiri populations could, over time, diminish the Pakistan army's ability to justify its resource monopolization and domination of the state.

Nevertheless, it is difficult to argue that civilian control over the military is anything but a fundamentally *necessary* step in a future Pakistan that is stable, or at least not chronically unstable. In principle, civilian leadership could pursue policies that could gradually reverse the popular support that some militant groups enjoy.[84] Civilian leaders, should they democratize their parties and pursue policies instead of patronage, may over time become more responsible to popular demands for economic growth, investment in human capital, and diversion of budgetary allocations from the military towards social services.[85] If the population is to put pressure on the politicians to trim the military's budget, it must move away from the popular belief that the army—not civilian institutions and leaders—can best protect Pakistan. This will no doubt require some resolution of the conflict with India.

Even if the army were to decide—for its own institutional reasons—that continued political intervention corrodes morale, discipline and professionalism, without a simultaneous increase in the civilians' political will and capacity to govern any future withdrawal from politics will be transient. Moreover, given the army's massive economic interests, the compulsion to stage future coups is likely to persist. It would appear that untying these various Gordian knots will remain well beyond the capabilities of Pakistan's civilian leaders and institutions for the foreseeable future.

[84] Fair, Malhotra and Shapiro, 'Islam, militancy, and politics in Pakistan'; Jacob N. Shapiro and C. Christine Fair, 'Why support Islamist militancy? Evidence from Pakistan', *International Security* 34: 3, Winter 2009–2010, pp. 79–118; Fair, Ramsay and Kull, 'Pakistani public opinion'.

[85] Zahid Hasnain, 'The politics of service delivery in Pakistan: political parties and the incentives for patronage, 1988–1999', *Pakistan Development Review* 47: 2, 2008, pp. 129–51; John R. Schmidt, 'The unraveling of Pakistan', *Survival* 51: 3, 2009, pp. 29–54.