

## Pakistan: Coercion and Capital in an “Insecurity state”

In the post-9/11 environment, Pakistan is at the center of many debates dealing with issues such as regional stability - with the enduring conflict in Afghanistan and in Kashmir - or what has come to be known as "global terrorism". But one cannot fully address these sensitive questions without looking at internal dynamics shaping Pakistani political life. In this respect, this *Paris Paper* gives an insightful contribution to the debate, by analyzing the major changes the Pakistan military went through at the political, economical and security levels in the last three decades.

Despite its importance, the army remains above all an ambiguous player. Indeed, what is exactly the nature of the Pakistan army? How can we define its relations with political parties, the bureaucracy, civil society, the economic sector, as well as with the irregular armed groups that have become so powerful in the country?

The author of *Pakistan: Coercion and Capital in an “Insecurity state”* addresses these issues in all their complexity: the result is a powerful analysis of what is really at stakes in Pakistan today.

AMÉLIE BLOM

Research Fellow, Institut d'études de l'Islam  
et des Sociétés du Monde Musulman  
(ISMM/EHESS)



IRSEM

École Militaire

21, place Joffre - 75007 Paris

<http://www.irsem.defense.gouv.fr>

ISSN : en cours

PARIS PAPERS N°1 - PAKISTAN. COERCION AND CAPITAL IN AN “INSECURITY STATE”

## PAKISTAN: COERCION AND CAPITAL IN AN “INSECURITY STATE”

AMÉLIE BLOM



Edited with the demo version of  
**Infix Pro PDF Editor**

To remove this notice, visit  
: [www.pdfediting.com](http://www.pdfediting.com)



# PAKISTAN: COERCION AND CAPITAL IN AN “INSECURITY STATE”

**AMÉLIE BLOM**

AVERTISSEMENT

Les opinions émises dans ce document  
n'engagent que leurs auteurs.  
Elles ne constituent en aucune manière  
une position officielle du ministère de la défense.

**PARIS PAPER DÉJÀ PARUS :**

**1 – PAKISTAN: COERCION AND CAPITAL  
IN AN “INSECURITY STATE”**

# ABSTRACT PARIS PAPER

## **Pakistan: Coercion and Capital in an “Insecurity state”**

In the post-9/11 environment, Pakistan is at the center of many debates dealing with issues such as regional stability - with the enduring conflict in Afghanistan and in Kashmir - or what has come to be known as “global terrorism”. But one cannot fully address these sensitive questions without looking at internal dynamics shaping Pakistani political life. In this respect, this Paris Paper gives an insightful contribution to the debate, by analyzing the major changes the Pakistan military went through at the political, economical and security levels in the last three decades.

Despite its importance, the army remains above all an ambiguous player. Indeed, what is exactly the nature of the Pakistan army? How can we define its relations with political parties, the bureaucracy, civil society, the economic sector, as well as with the irregular armed groups that have become so powerful in the country?

The author of *Pakistan: Coercion and Capital in an “Insecurity state”* addresses these issues in all their complexity: the result is a powerful analysis of what is really at stakes in Pakistan today.



# SOMMAIRE

<b>Introduction.....</b>	<b>7</b>
<b>Militarizing the State: Pakistan’s Praetorianism .....</b>	<b>11</b>
The Socio-Genesis of the State .....	12
The Army and Politics.....	16
The Changing Pattern of the Army’s Political Domination .....	19
Instability as a Norm .....	22
The Colonization of Civil Institutions .....	25
<b>The Military’s Internal Economy: “the who has the stick, holds the Buffalo” .....</b>	<b>29</b>
“Milbus”: A Multi-dimensionnal Process.....	31
From an Accomodating Strategy .....	35
... To a Restructuring Strategy: Military Syndicalism and “disciplinarisation” .....	39
“Milbus” and military Takeovers: the Missing Link.....	42
Milbus, its Supports and its Discontents .....	44
<b>The Militarized Society: A Reassessment.....</b>	<b>49</b>
The Military’s Social Networks and Social Engineering.....	50
Patrimonializing Violence .....	52
Is Pakistan in the Same Dilemma as 19 <sup>th</sup> century western states? .....	58
<b>Conclusion .....</b>	<b>61</b>



# INTRODUCTION

*“You can blame our men in uniform for anything, but you can never blame them for being imaginative.”<sup>1</sup>*

“There are armies that guard their nation’s borders, there are those that are concerned with protecting their own position in society, and there are those that defend a cause or an idea. The Pakistan Army does all three” states Stephen P. Cohen.<sup>2</sup> These multi-dimensional roles are actually intrinsic to the way the Pakistani state came into existence as an “insecurity state [...] on the defensive against a real and present threat, with its survival at stake”.<sup>3</sup> This perceived threat primarily concerns India, its powerful neighbour, from which it seceded in 1947, and on the disputed territory of Kashmir over which war erupted the same year, followed by three further ones (in 1965, 1971, and 1999). The “Indian threat” has also shaped Pakistan military’s doctrine, that of “strategic depth” which got it embroiled for 28 years in

---

1. HANIF, Mohammed, *A Case of Exploding Mangoes*, New Delhi, Random House, 2008, p. 4. This brilliant novel, written by a Pakistani author who had previously trained as an Air Force officer, explores the inner world of the Armed Forces in a darkly humorous way.

2. COHEN, Stephen P., *The Pakistan Army*, Oxford, OUP, 1998 (1994), p. 105.

3. THORNTON, Thomas P., “Pakistan: Fifty Years of Insecurity” in S. Harrison et. al., *India and Pakistan. The First Fifty Years*, Washington: Woodrow Wilson Center Press, 1999, p. 171.



wars in Afghanistan. The United States, despite long-lasting yet shaky military cooperation, also came to be seen as a potential threat after sanctions against Pakistan’s nuclear program in the 1990s, as well as after credible threats to attack the country were it not to sever links with the Afghan Taliban just after 9/11 and to authorize drone attacks against their Pakistani support on its north-western frontier. It is only since the mid-2000s, and especially since 2007, when the state’s more active collaboration in the US-led “war on terror” resulted in a wave of suicide-bombings and fedayeen attacks in the country itself, that Pakistani generals have started to refer publicly to an “internal threat”, i.e. terrorism, as the main threat imperilling the country’s survival, a shift in perception which has had deep consequences on the army’s political and social roles.

Unsurprisingly, this “insecurity state” soon became a militarized state. The Pakistan military, a volunteer force, grew from an estimated 215,000 men on independence to the world’s seventh largest armed forces, with about 620,000 personnel in 2007.<sup>4</sup> In the same time, the defence budget jumped from 600 million Pakistani rupees to 276 billion in 2007 (4.5% of the country’s GDP and half of the country’s export revenue). With defence spending swallowing up about 70% of total public expenditure in 1947, and still more than 20% today, the military exerts undeniable financial pressure on Pakistan’s feeble economy. In addition to this, generals have directly ruled the country for more than 30 years since 1958. Whenever elected governments interfered too closely in its internal affairs and areas it regarded as its prerogative (defence, nuclear, and foreign policy) or tried to politicise the officers, the army took over and removed the elected Prime Minister (as it did in 1977 and 1999). In 2008, and under tremendous internal and external pressures, the military eventually oversaw a return to civilian rule after reaching a deal with the most popular political party, the Pakistan People’s Party (PPP) of the late Benazir Bhutto (1953-2007). The Chief of the Army Staff (COAS) remains nonetheless the “kingmaker” and chief arbitrator between various contenders for political power.

The militarization of the state goes well beyond the increased levels of labour and resources allocated to defence, even well beyond the fact that it is the army which wields state power and exerts

---

4. To which should be added about 250,000 Paramilitary forces and Coast guards. There are also about 400,000 reserve personnel.

behind-the-scenes control of key political decisions during democratic interludes. It also encompasses the wide network of non-security related and profit-making activities carried out by the Pakistani armed forces, including industry, trade, and land, what Ayesha Siddiqi calls “milbus”<sup>5</sup>. It is true that “military business” has deep roots in history and exists elsewhere: the Pakistan armed forces are no exception compared to their counterparts in Russia, China, Turkey, Algeria, Jordan, and Indonesia, amongst others.<sup>6</sup> What makes the Pakistani case unique is that whereas in China and Central America, for instance, military business declined in the 1990s under civilian pressures, in Pakistan it is thriving: “whoever becomes COAS in Pakistan”, states the brother of one of them, also “becomes, so to speak, the CEO of a huge industrial and commercial conglomerate”.<sup>7</sup> This is a phenomenon that the vulnerable security environment alone fails to explain.

Militarization also has a frequently overlooked societal dimension: it is “a discursive process, involving a shift in general societal beliefs and values in ways necessary to legitimate the use of force”.<sup>8</sup> This description fits Pakistan well. Anecdotal evidence abounds, from Urdu alphabets for children which never fail to include military items, to the very division of urban spaces between military and non-military areas.<sup>9</sup> Intriguingly, this process of militarizing society did not coincide with a period of large-scale wars and mobilisation, but instead with one of limited and sub-contracted wars, which were increasingly fought by irregulars, such as that delegated to Pakistan-based Jihadist groups in Indian-administered Kashmir in the 1990s. These “armies without states” are generally analyzed as an outcome of the end of the Cold War.<sup>10</sup> But in many developing states, such as Pakistan, it is in fact a structural pattern: the army has used irregulars in all wars against its neighbours since 1947. It is only recently, as a counter-effect of the state’s collaboration in the “war on terror”, that irregulars

5. SIDDIQA, Ayesha, *Military Inc. Inside Pakistan’s Military Economy*, Karachi, Oxford University Press, 2007.

6. See for a comparative perspective on this: BRÖMMELHÖRSTER, Jörn and PAES, Wolf-Christian, “Soldiers in Business: An Introduction”, in Brömmelhörster and Paes (eds.), *The Military as an Economic Actor. Soldiers in Business*, Houndmills, Palgrave Macmillan-BICC, 2003.

7. NAWAZ, Shuja, *Crossed Swords. Pakistan, Its Army and the Wars Within*, Oxford, Oxford University Press, 2008, p. 445. His brother, General Asif Nawaz, was COAS from 1991 to 1993.

8. LUTZ, Catherine, “Making War at Home in the United States: Militarization and the Current Crisis”, *American Anthropologist*, 104 (3), 2002, p. 723.

9. The letter “F” inevitably stands for fauji (army), “i” for iuniform, etc.

10. MANDEL, Robert, *Armies Without States. The Privatization of Security*, Boulder, Lynne Rienner Publ., 2002.

groups have gained an unprecedented level of autonomy, while new ones have appeared, and that both have turned against the state. The Pakistani state’s trajectory indeed shows how important it is to reassess the role of alternative agents of armed struggle, and so rethink the nexus between waging war and national political development, as contended by Diane Davis and Anthony Pereira in another context.<sup>11</sup>

This paper investigates the enduring militarization of Pakistan’s polity, economy and society. Perceiving it as being mainly an indirect result of its involvement in US-led military alliances, in other words as an “externally-driven” or “dependent” militarization, is actually misleading. There is no doubt that foreign aid plays a crucial part in the army’s rent-seeking process. The state’s geopolitical location and volatility constitute its most - and one could say only - valuable asset within the international arena. Thus the “insecurity syndrome” has, ironically, become a self-fulfilling yet functional prophecy which does not mean, of course, that there is a causal relationship between this process of cashing in on insecurity and the level of violence in the country. That being said, militarization is principally domestically-driven by the army’s own institutional compulsions. In this regard, this paper pays special attention to the shift from the military’s need to accommodate the colonial legacy to a more assertive and restructuring strategy following the critical decade of the 1970s.<sup>12</sup> It stresses that the history of state institutions and their dynamic relationship - or more precisely entanglement - with society matter.

---

11. DAVIS, Diane E. and PEREIRA, Anthony W., “Contemporary Challenges and Historical Reflections on the Study of Militaries, States, and Politics”, in Davis and Pereira (eds.), *Irregular Armed Forces and their Role in Politics and State Formation*, Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 2003.

12. For a discussion of these shifting strategies applied to the Middle-East, see BARNETT, Michael N., *Confronting the Cost of War. Military Power, State, and Society in Egypt and Israel*, Princeton, Princeton University Press, 1992. Barnett shows how the dilemma of mobilizing greater resources for war while overcoming unavoidable social and political costs has altered state power in Egypt and Israel depending on the type of strategy adopted by the state: “accommodating” (the state uses pre-existing resources, such as prolonging the colonial legacy); “restructuring” (it redefines state-society relations so as to increase the social contribution to the war effort) and “international” (the political and economic cost of war is borne by foreign sources).

# MILITARIZING THE STATE: PAKISTAN’S PRAETORIANISM

The Pakistani state is a “modern praetorian state” as defined by Amos Perlmutter, i.e. a state wherein “the authority relationship between the military establishment and the political order is based on a legal-rational orientation”, yet “favors the development of the military as the core group and encourages the growth of its expectations as a ruling class”.<sup>13</sup> The causes of this state of affairs are hotly debated by scholars. Does the military purposely weaken the political system so as to stay in power forever, making it impossible to remove except under exceptional circumstances (a military defeat in 1971, the death of its chief in 1988)?<sup>14</sup> Perhaps, but this thesis fails to explain General Musharraf’s non-exceptional removal from power in 2008, under the combined pressure of external donors and the military junta for his inability to handle the conflict with the judiciary. Is this “reluctant professional army”, on the contrary, compelled to “clean up the mess” of corrupt and inefficient politicians, as maintained by most Pakis-

---

13. PERLMUTTER, Amos, *Political Roles and Military Rulers*, London, Frank Cass&Co., 1981, p. 13.

14. SIDDIQA, *op. cit.*

tani generals and their sympathetic analysts?<sup>15</sup> If so, it is hard to make sense of the equally distressing instability and corruption engendered by all army-led governments. Is the military’s political domination the result of systemic international constraints and of the structural weaknesses characterizing the domestic polity?<sup>16</sup> This is doubtless so, but strangely the timing of military take-overs (1958, 1977, 1999) never corresponded to critical international crises and, as in the two latter cases, followed particularly assertive and powerful Prime Ministers. Is a “normativist” reading, emphasizing the military’s growing “self-confidence” towards civilians, more convincing?<sup>17</sup> This thesis surely has a point, but perceptions alone are insufficient to explain the practices of political actors, even less complex processes such as a military coup. A dynamic assessment, looking at the colonial legacy and changing pattern of the military’s political autonomy on the one hand, and identifying the peculiar configuration of the military-state relationship that emerged from this on the other, might help to clarify the terms of the debate.

## The Socio-Genesis of the State

The close relationship established with the US in the 1950s, within the framework of Cold War military alliances, played its part in sustaining the military’s ascent to power. Yet this external support acted in an ambiguous way: not only did various US administrations apply distinct policies towards Pakistan, but the State Department and the Pentagon also regularly differed on the stabilising role played by the military in Pakistan.<sup>18</sup> The very “socio-genesis” of the Pakistani state, to use Norbert Elias’ notion, proved much more critical in shaping the state’s progressive militarization.<sup>19</sup> This includes, firstly, its colonial shape, something much more lasting than the term “colonial legacy” suggests for “colonialism is not simply a matter of legacy but of active, immediate and constitutive determinants”.<sup>20</sup> Pakistan initially comprised those areas of the British Indian Empire where a

15. See for instance CLOUGHLEY, Brian, *A History of Pakistan Army. Wars and Insurrections*, Oxford, Oxford University Press, 1999.

16. On this, see: JALAL, Ayesha, *Democracy and Authoritarianism in South Asia. A Comparative Perspective*, Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 1995.

17. This point is made by NAWAZ, *op. cit.*, p. 573.

18. KUX, Dennis, *The United States and Pakistan. 1947-2000*, Washington, Woodrow Wilson Center Press, 2001.

19. ELIAS, Norbert, *The Civilising Process. State Formation and Civilisation*, Oxford, Blackwell, 1982.

20. According to Rajeshwari Sunder, quoted in TALBOT, Ian, *Pakistan. A Modern History*, London, Hurst&Co., 1998, p. 53.

“security state”, as Ian Talbot puts it, previously existed, i.e. a political structure where law and order, emergency coercive measure and permanent police powers superseded the introduction of representative institutions.<sup>21</sup> Unlike the regions that subsequently fell under India’s control, the North West of the Raj was annexed later and representative institutions had very little time to acquire strength. Moreover, they were included not for economic but for strategic reasons: the future Pakistan was already a frontline, hence authoritarian zone long before Independence. This led to a quite unfavourable military versus bureaucracy ratio in 1947,<sup>22</sup> whilst the enduring concept of “martial races” also translated into strong ethnic homogeneity amongst the military (with 75% of its forces initially drawn from Punjab),<sup>23</sup> a factor that later contributed to its corporate ethos.

The very circumstances of Pakistan’s birth consolidated the impact of these colonial determinants. The country came into existence as a “secessionist” state carved out for the Muslim minority of the former Indian empire. Pakistan’s government, deprived of the lion’s share of the financial assets and administrative machinery, which were retained by India, had to handle the enormous task of settling 7 million Muslim refugees from India (one in ten of the population). Hence, it was also a “migrant state” governed by a “muhajir” elite, with no bases of support in Pakistan’s provinces.<sup>24</sup> This demographic imbalance delayed the emergence of democracy: the Bengali-speaking population (separated from West Pakistan by 1,000 miles of Indian territory) formed the majority, hence any democratic consultation would have shifted the balance of political power towards them. For the Urdu-speaking elite and the Punjabi-dominated army, the solution was to let the civilian bureaucracy rule the country for all practical purpose, especially as Pakistan, unlike India, went through “a process of administrative centralization without anything remotely resembling a national political party [...] that [could] palpably claim to speak on

21. TALBOT, *op. cit.*, p. 54-65.

22. 155,532 military personnel against 9,000 civil servants, with only 200 to 300 in the superior ranks in 1947.

23. Punjabi-speakers make up 44% of the Pakistani population. According to the 1998 Census, the province of Punjab accounts for 56% of the total population, Sindh for 23%, the North West Frontier Province or NWFP for 13.4%, Baluchistan for 5% and the Federally Administered Tribal Areas for 2.4%. Pakistani-administered portions of disputed Kashmir (Azad Jammu and Kashmir and Gilgit-Baltistan, formerly known as the Northern Areas) are not considered as provinces and are not included in the Census.

24. Urdu speaking Muslims who have migrated from India since 1947.

behalf of all the provinces".<sup>25</sup> The Muslim League had, indeed, very weak roots in the regions it was called upon to govern. To make things worse, the country soon faced an acute leadership crisis after its first two historical leaders died (its founder Muhammad Ali Jinnah in 1948, and Liaquat Ali Khan, its first Prime Minister, in 1951).

Although the principle of civilian supremacy, even if an authoritarian one, over the military was upheld in the early years, the security environment progressively led to its erosion. Two months after Independence, the state was caught up in a war against India for control of the former princely state of Kashmir. This half-lost war went on to have a tremendous impact on the future of state-military-society relations in the country, firstly because the civilian leadership (who pushed for the UN sponsored cease-fire) was seen by the military as being the main responsible for not allowing it a clear-cut victory in Kashmir. Secondly, because the "Kashmir cause" itself came to structure Pakistan's official and reactive nationalism, as the inability to gain control over the sole Muslim-majority state in the Indian Union signified the incompleteness of the state and of Jinnah's "two nations theory" (according to which Hindus and Muslims are distinct political communities). Of even greater consequence was the fact that the Kashmir issue shaped the army's own institutional nationalism. It soon became its "sacred cause" (its Alsace-Lorraine so to speak), and this for lack of any other. The myth of being the "conqueror of Kashmir" amongst army generals subsequently sparked off many isolated instances of military adventurism, as proven by the 1965 and 1999 offensives. External observers are often taken aback by the Pakistan army's focalization on - some would say "obsession" with - Kashmir. Yet it is not so surprising if the deficiency of the army's historical legitimacy is brought back into the equation; a dimension which is yet to be accounted for. The Pakistan army came into existence not as a national liberation army but as a colonial army, made up of officers who had played no role in the Muslim League's struggle for Independence and led by British officers (until 1951) - a very distinct pattern from the Algerian army's "Revolutionary Family" for instance. The first generation of Pakistani officers, especially those who migrated from India, was more lastingly traumatized by the atrocities of Partition (and its sense of helplessness in helping the refugees) and more infuriated by Indian's reluctance

25. JALAL, Ayesha, "India's Partition and the Defence of Pakistan: An Historical Perspective", *The Journal of Imperial and Commonwealth History*, 15 (3), May 1987, p. 307.

to give it its share of military assets than by the continuation of the British domination<sup>26</sup>. Finally, the unfolding “security complex”<sup>27</sup> with India established the primacy of both a national security agenda and a “political economy of defence”<sup>28</sup> over issues such as democracy and development, with Kashmir becoming “both a reason for not allowing a democratic polity to emerge and a massive financial haemorrhage for the new nation state”.<sup>29</sup>

Given the continental nature of the country and of foreign threats the army enjoys massive numerical domination (550,000 personnel as against 45,000 in the Air Force and 25,000 in the Navy). It also enjoys a clear sense of superiority, with the Navy and Air Force always being put in front of a *fait accompli* whenever military coups were organized or major military operations launched against India (in 1965 and in 1999 for instance).<sup>30</sup> The power of the army chief (COAS) is superior even to that of the Chairman of the Joint Chief of Staffs Committee (CJCSC), a post set up in the mid-1970s for joint planning and control of the armed forces, who in any case is inevitably drawn from the army. On occasions the two posts are pooled (General Musharraf in 1998). The army is undeniably the most complicated organisation in Pakistan, and little is known about its internal struggle and conflicting visions. As a class, “Pakistani officers move in mysterious ways. They oscillate between unquestioning obedience and outright defiance, between individual ambition and collective solidarity”.<sup>31</sup> This paradox is attested, for instance, by the fact that in 1988 the army had to let civilians rule because the COAS did not have the confidence of the General Headquarters (GHQ). Indeed, and despite a very personalised reading of the army’s political domination, it actually operates as a

26. A revealing testimony of this first generation of army officers’ frame of mind can be found in: KHAN, Major-Gen. Fazal Muqeem, *The Story of the Pakistan Army*, Karachi, Oxford University Press, 1963.

27. A “group of states whose primary security concerns link together sufficiently closely that their national securities cannot be realistically considered apart from one another” as defined in BUZAN, Barry, *People, State and Fear: The National Security Problem in International Relations*, Harvester Wheatsheaf, Hemel Hempstead, 1990, p. 190.

28. Distinct from India’s “political economy of development”, this implies a deviation of much needed resources for development towards the defence budget, heavy taxation of the provinces to fund the war effort which turned the federation into a highly centralized state, and joining the pro-US military alliances (in 1954) in exchange for US military support. JALAL, *Democracy and Authoritarianism*, op. cit., p. 122 and p. 298.

29. NAWAZ, op. cit., p. 73.

30. As confirmed by a former member of the GHQ Warfare Directorate (interview, Karachi, January 2004) as well as a former Navy Chief (interview, Islamabad, September 2002).

31. DEWEY, Clive, “The Rural Roots of Pakistani Militarism” in D.A. Low (ed.), *The Political Inheritance of Pakistan*, Houndmills, Macmillan, 1991, p. 280.



“junta”, with key decisions being taken at a collegial level. Under Musharraf’s regime (1999-2008) for instance, it was a small group of some 150 officers of general rank (two to four stars), and even perhaps a smaller one, that helped him control the politics of the country.<sup>32</sup> This explains why the army protects its corporate structure even against its own leadership if the latter threatens the respect felt to be due to the institution or its operations. In 1969, for instance, public discontent pushed the high command to remove Ayub Khan and replace him with another general. This was also the case when Musharraf was compelled by his own peers (and not just by the American administration) to hand over to a new COAS in November 2007. His incessant political trickery and incapacity to peacefully solve the judicial crisis polarized the army and damaged its image within society, a situation the military could ill afford given that it had a war to fight in Pakistan’s tribal areas. The degree of army cohesion is actually quite remarkable given its regular intrusion in the political sphere and in comparison to other post-colonial armies.

## The Army and Politics

The Pakistan military is clearly a “political military” in the sense that it conceives of its implication in domestic politics and in government affairs as “a central part of its legitimate functions”.<sup>33</sup> Yet, it does not see itself as being, *per se*, the only and ultimate source of executive functions. Pakistani top commanders recognize that the military alone cannot rule the country forever. Hence, once in power, military rulers have regularly adopted a middle course by sharing power with carefully selected politicians from the PML, prepared to follow conditions laid down by them. They are also fully aware that under exceptional circumstances they might have to let civilians be in charge without, always, being in a position to choose their partners. This happened after the traumatic 1971 defeat by India as well as after Zia’s sudden death in 1988.<sup>34</sup> Hence, and despite the army’s frequent direct in-

32. The 9 Corps commanders, the Director-General Inter-Services Intelligence (DG-ISI), the Director General Military Intelligence (DG-MI) and the Director General Military Operations (DG-MO) as well as the principal staff officers at the General Headquarters (GHQ).

33. KOONINGS, K. and KRUIJT, D. (eds.), *Political Armies. The Military and Nation Building in the Age of Democracy*, London, Zed Books, 2002, p. 1.

34. In the first case, the army transferred power to the PPP because Zulfikar Ali Bhutto was at the time perceived as closer to the military establishment than his main rival, Sheikh Mujibur Rehman from East Pakistan who had won the elections. In the second case, Benazir Bhutto’s massive popularity (added to the insurance she gave that she would not interfere in nuclear and defence policies) could not be ignored.

tervention in politics, the principle of military-directed government only has “secondhand” legitimacy. Nor at times does the international environment support a continuation of the military regime: this was the case in 1988 when the US were disengaging from Afghanistan, and hence no longer needed Pakistan’s support, and in 2008 when Washington thought that Musharraf’s unpopularity was detrimental to the “war on terror”.

Indeed, despite 33 years of military rule, Pakistan’s political system is characterized by a remarkable feature: the structure of the political parties and the people’s level of political participation has been retained virtually intact, as proven by the February 2008 general elections. Despite a wave of suicide attacks, 45% of registered voters,<sup>35</sup> a figure comparable to the 1988 elections and even higher than the turnout for the 1997 elections, cast their ballots and elected the PPP and the PML-N, anti-army forces whose leaders had been in exile for years - in addition to anti-Islamist nationalist parties in Pashtun areas (the ANP) and in Karachi (the MQM). It is thus problematic to label Pakistan “a militaristic-totalitarian system”.<sup>36</sup> On the contrary, it is precisely because political parties - weak and fragmented as they initially were - proved impressively resilient that the army has been compelled to be “imaginative” (to return to the term used in the epigraph to this paper), and use several “tricks” to protect its hegemony over the state or to guarantee its role in the decision-making process, a point developed further in the next section.

As Muhammad Waseem observes, only a “fossilized view about the politics of Pakistan which continued to dwell on the model of a post-colonial state with its epicentre in the military and the bureaucracy” fails to notice the political and social impact of adversarial politics.<sup>37</sup> Eight national elections have been held since 1970. They have given birth to a vast and locally powerful class of politicians (tribal and feudal elites, *biraderi* or community elders, industrial elites, middle

35. According to CHEEMA, Ali et al., “The Anatomy of an Election”, *The Herald* (Karachi, monthly), March 2008. Turnout figures are still debated more than three years after the elections were held. 45% voter turnout seems low in comparison to the historic 63% turnout in the first national democratic elections in 1970, or to level of participation in India (60% at the 2009 general elections). Yet, in a political system where the army dominates, it is far from negligible.

36. As stated in SIDIQA, op. cit., p. 2.

37. WASEEM, Muhammad, *Democratization in Pakistan. A Study of the 2002 Elections*, Karachi, Oxford University Press, 2006, p. 2.

class professionals and ulama). Divided roughly between mainstream “catch-all” parties (the PPP and PML), and ethnic and Islamist forces at the provincial level, they all have fairly stable electorates - the feudal aristocracy, peasants, working urban middle-class, and liberal intelligentsia for the PPP, which is unchallenged in rural Sindh; middle-class conservative industrialists, bazari and merchants for the PML, unchallenged in Punjab. Since 2007 the military also has to deal with a newly empowered judiciary and a vast network of civil society organizations (women’s and human rights NGOs, the numerous privatized TV and radio channels, the press, as well as a vast and very diverse network of madrasa). Army generals having to explain their actions on TV almost on a daily basis, as well as street protests contesting military rule (such as during the 2007 lawyers’ and students’ movement) or military operations (such as initial demonstrations against the participation in the “war on terror”, though these have receded to be replaced by more violent forms of contestation) have become a new, regular phenomenon in the 2000s.

Because of the historically unstable relationship between the army and political parties, it has always had to count on the support of the bureaucracy. Though small in terms of numbers in 1947, the bureaucracy was still institutionally much stronger than the weak and fragmented political leadership. This, coupled with the army’s numerical domination, led Hamza Alavi to conceptualise early Pakistan as an “overdeveloped state”.<sup>38</sup> The nature of the partnership also has an ideological component, with both civil and military bureaucrats sharing the same “myth of guardianship”, i.e. the idea that it is their mission to defend the interests of the people, in opposition to the supposed partisanship of “professional” politicians who are perceived as inept leaders, rift with rivalry, etc.<sup>39</sup> This close relationship between these two crucial institutions evolved from an absolute domination by the bureaucracy (1951-58) to a military-bureaucratic hegemony (1958-88) to, more recently, palpable tensions (as explored below). A small coterie of Punjabi bureaucrats (exemplified by Pakistan’s third Governor General, Ghulam Muhammad, 1951-55) came to dominate the political system early on through an “intentional, slow,

38. ALAVI, Hamza, “Class and State” in H. Gardezi and J. Rashid (eds.), *Pakistan, the Roots of Dictatorship. The Political Economy of a Praetorian State*, London, Zed Press, 1983, p. 42.

39. *Ibid.*, p. 66.

gradual and systematic intervention".<sup>40</sup> The bureaucracy openly aligned itself with the military. Iskander Mirza, a Sandhurst-trained officer who later became President (1955-58), personified perfectly this alliance. Convinced that only "a dictatorship would work in Pakistan",<sup>41</sup> he increasingly involved the military in the functioning of the state, perceiving it as well as a "force multiplier" for the civil bureaucracy without realizing that power would soon be hijacked by an ambitious army leadership. This happened in 1958 when Ayub Khan, the first Pakistani Commander-in-Chief (in 1951), removed Mirza and took over. Ayub carefully strengthened the coalition with the bureaucracy and delegated the process of authoritarian economic modernization to it. The "military-bureaucratic nexus", as it is commonly labelled in Pakistan, was also reinforced by the induction of army officers into the civil sector, which started as of 1962.

### The Changing Pattern of the Army's Political Domination

As a retired Pakistani Brigadier sarcastically observed, each military dictator tried his own political experiment: Ayub Khan (1958-69) experimented with a "plutocratic, messianic and desperado type of militarism", Yahya Khan (1969-71) a "democratic, epicurean and suicidal militarism", Zia-ul Haq (1977-88) a "theocentric and manipulative jihadism" and finally Pervez Musharraf (1999-2008) a "constitutional engineering and kemalist authoritarianism without the success of kemalism".<sup>42</sup> There is nevertheless a coherent pattern in the way all military rulers attempted to reorganise relations between the military and the state. The typology established by A. Siddiqi between the pre- and post-1977 period proves very useful here.<sup>43</sup>

The years 1947-77 were witness to the gradual built-up of the army's political clout. After gaining prominence on the shoulder of the bureaucracy, the 1958 military take-over signalled that the military was now preparing itself to rule for a long time, though maybe not indefinitely (save the humiliating military defeat in 1971, this could have been the case but it is impossible to prove *post hoc*). General Ayub

40. SHAFQAT, Saeed, *Civil-Military Relations in Pakistan*. From Z. A. Bhutto to Benazir Bhutto, Boulder, Westview Press, 1997, p. 21.

41. Quoted in TALBOT, op. cit., p. 397.

42. SIDDIQI, A.R., "Military Leaders' role in national affairs", Dawn (Lahore), March 10, 2007.

43. SIDDIQA, op. cit., pp. 58-111.

Khan set up the parameters of Pakistan’s “guided democracy” - party-less local bodies elections, constitution-engineering ensuring a strong role for the president (being simultaneously the army chief), rigged presidential elections, anti-corruption drives to coerce the political class, etc. -, a path that the next military rulers followed in virtually all aspects (Zia and Musharraf simply added referendums). This paternalistic pattern of the army’s domination was broken during the next decade. India’s support to help the Bengalis (then half of Pakistan’s population) gain independence in 1971, after a traumatic civil war and military debacle, followed by six years of Zulfikar Ali Bhutto’s Pakistan People’s Party government, shook the military deeply. Many of Bhutto’s policies alienated it: after publicising the army’s humiliating ceremony of surrender in Dacca, he sent it to fight a domestic insurgency (in Balochistan, 1973), launched a massive nationalization program (thus breaking the link between the state and the nascent business community), formed an auxiliary paramilitary Federal Security Force as a potential rival, brought the three services under Ministry of Defence control, made the Prime Minister supreme commander of the armed forces, promulgated the 1973 Constitution replacing Ayub’s presidential system by a parliamentary one,<sup>44</sup> politicised the army to strengthen his position in relation to his opponents, and signed the Simla agreement with India (1972) which could have transformed Kashmir’s Line of Control into an international boundary. He also fixed the 1977 elections and eventually asked the army to curb political unrest. The traumatic decade of the 1970s had a tremendous impact on the military. It demonstrated that civilian players would not accept to be forever “dependable junior partners that would continue to accept the military’s domination endlessly”.<sup>45</sup> A democratically elected leader (though authoritarian at heart) with a strong mandate could humiliate, destabilize, and relegate the armed forces to a subordinate position.

Hence, when the army regained control of the state in 1977, this time it stroke hard: in 1979 Bhutto was hanged (the option to send a defiant Prime Minister into exile was favoured by General Musharraf in 1999). At first glance, the recipes used by the military to assert its political control after 1977 sound familiar: co-opting the Pakistan

---

44. The 1973 Constitution also stated that abrogating it unlawfully is an act of treason punishable by death.

45. SIDDIQA, *op. cit.*, p. 83.

Muslim League (PML) or factions of it (so as to neutralize the PPP under Zia, or Nawaz Sharif PML's faction under Musharraf), relying on weak civilian Prime Ministers (1985-88, and 2002-08), appeasing respective politicians by holding elections delivering expected results (1985 and 2002) and localizing politics by organizing party-less local bodies elections, a sure recipe for "unbridled centralism".<sup>46</sup> It is true that the strategy took different political shape during the three sub-phases: the 1977-88 coercive military dictatorship, the 1988-99 controlled democracy, and the 1999-2008 military-civilian set up. There are also undeniably great differences between Zia's brutal coercion, zero tolerance of the opposition, massive human rights violations, and the systematic use of Islamist-inspired social conservatism to control dissent, and Musharraf's tactful manipulation of the media, acceptance of a minimum level of political opposition (till 2007), and so-called "enlightened moderation" programme.<sup>47</sup>

Yet gradual but fundamental changes were at work in the pattern of the army's political domination compared to the pre-1977 period. From now on the military had two main priorities. Firstly, it became urgent to restructure its relationship with political society. Indeed, the 1970s had also demonstrated the importance of street power and the growing political consciousness of the urban middle-class (a section of society from which soldiers were increasingly drawn in the 1980s). Zia "tamed" it through, on the one hand, coercing trade unions and, on the other hand, through a vast programme of "islamisation" (actually wahhabi-inspired shariatization) and moral control according inflated importance to the most pliable yet most puritanical religious leadership - measures that would prove impossible to fully undo afterwards. Secondly, the army focused actively on insulating its organization from any outside intrusion through institutionalising its control over the state. The core strategy here was to rework the legal framework to give to the army a place in power as the equal of the political forces, as stressed by A. Siddiq. General Zia introduced the 8<sup>th</sup> amendment to the Constitution, empowering the President, via article 58-2(b), to dismiss the Assemblies and sack the Government

46. WASEEM, *op. cit.*, p. 66-74.

47. There are nonetheless serious loopholes in Musharraf's moderate dictatorship: pre-poll rigging in 2002; a Parliament reduced to a subordinate legislature; a partnership with the Islamist forces broken only after 2001, as far as jihadist armed groups were concerned, and after 2004 with the legal Islamist parties; opposition leaders kept into exile till 2007; and the 3 November 2007 state of emergency.

(in 1985).<sup>48</sup> General Musharraf also institutionalised the armed forces’ role in governance after 1999: by immediately re-establishing article 58-2(b), which had been temporarily removed from the Constitution during Nawaz Sharif’s second Government, and by instituting a National Security Council in 2004.<sup>49</sup> Significantly, these two moves followed another traumatic experience of assertive civilian rule: that of Prime Minister Sharif in 1997-99. Even if shorter and less damaging than Z. A. Bhutto’s one, the two years of unchallenged PML rule soon turned into an open battle against the military’s political supremacy: Sharif forced an Army and a Naval chief to resign, negotiated a peace deal with India (without bringing the army on board) then accused it of having embarked on the Kargil war fiasco in Spring 1999 without his consent,<sup>50</sup> and eventually tried to remove the COAS he had appointed a year before, General Musharraf, to eventually be dislodged the very same day by Musharraf himself on October 1999.

## Instability as a Norm

Ideally, article 58-2(b) and the NSC both ensure that the military does not, necessarily, have to be in the forefront of affairs. When needed, civilians can be allowed to rule (as in 1988-99 and since February 2008). As a matter of fact, the military regularly intervened in the 1990s to tweak the political system every two years: from Benazir to Nawaz Sharif, and vice and versa, or from one of the two to caretaker governments. In addition, civilians have little room to manoeuvre under the “troika” system - the COAS-President-Prime Minister’s sharing of the executive - which makes the President the political arm of the army (the President’s role is even more important as he appoints Governors who are regularly high-ranking officers). The army’s “moderating” role during democratic interludes is nevertheless not without fundamental ambiguities for the level of institutionalisation of the armed forces’ political role cannot be overestimated and does not actually preclude a shift to “guardianship” or a military coup in the future.<sup>51</sup> Musharraf’s

48. Through this amendment, the President also has the prerogative to appoint provincial governors and the chief of the armed forces.

49. Clearly inspired by the Turkish model, this civil-military body comprises 4 military officers (the Chairman of the Joint Chief of Staffs Committee, the Chiefs of the Army, Air force and Navy staff) and 8 civilians (President, Prime Minister, Chairman of the Senate, Speaker and Leader of the Opposition in the National Assembly, and Chief Ministers of the four provinces). It deliberates on a wide range of issues - “national security”, “sovereignty”, “crisis management”.

50. And was reportedly about to order an official inquiry into the Kargil war.

51. To borrow on Nordlinger’s threefold typology of military regimes: “moderator type” (the military exercises its

(military-inspired) motto of "unity of command in governance"<sup>52</sup> and the need to institutionalize power-sharing with political forces could not, indeed, be reconciled. Hence the NSC proved to be quite inefficient and soon the Corps Commanders conference regained the key role it had always had in determining the country's top security strategies. When, for instance, the country was faced with a very serious crisis – the urban armed rebellion organized at Islamabad's Lal Masjid (March-July 2007) – it did not even meet once. It was also of no help when the Supreme Court challenged the army's domination in November 2007, and was about to declare Musharraf's re-election as President unconstitutional. The President had few other options left than to declare a state of emergency so as to get rid of the Supreme Court's president.

Years of military regimes and of amending the Constitution to such an extent that the most competent jurists of the country were at a loss to state what was or was not constitutional by the end of Musharraf's rule,<sup>53</sup> have in any case already led to a deep de-institutionalization of the political system. The political dynamics operate as a zero-sum game wherein each player has no guarantee that he/she will be able to reintegrate the game if he/she loses.<sup>54</sup> In such a context, a voluntary withdrawal is extremely costly: yesterday's opponents will, once in power, reframe the game to their advantage. If this creates a high level of political instability, it also, and paradoxically, generates a "normal system of expectations".<sup>55</sup> A case in point is that the November 2007 state of emergency was anticipated by the main political parties long before it actually happened. The political forces operate in a pre-determined framework: they contest the military regime but still play according to its rule. Hence, the main opposition forces - the PPP and the lawyers' movement - both presented their candidates in the October 2007 presidential elections whose legality they were at the

---

power of veto from behind the scenes), "guardian type" (the military feels it necessary to displace civilian rulers but its goals are conservative and seemingly corrective) and "ruler type" (the military seeks to change significant aspects of the political, economic and even social system). NORDLINGER, Eric A., *Soldiers in Politics. Military Coups and Governments*, Englewood Cliffs, Prentice Hall, 1977.

52. MUSHARRAF, Pervez, *In the Line of Fire. A Memoir*, London, Simon & Schuster, 2006, p. 117

53. The Supreme Court judges could not, for instance, state with exactitude when Musharraf's presidential term started: 2001 when he self-proclaimed it, 2002 after the referendum, or 2004 when the Parliament gave an unprecedented, and unconstitutional, vote of confidence to the president?

54. YUSUF, Moeed, "Wait your turn", *The Friday Times* (Lahore), 14-20 September 2007.

55. ROUQUIE, Alain, *L'Etat militaire en Amérique Latine*, Paris, Seuil, 1982, p. 336.



same time contesting. The PPP as well as the PML-N also took part in the two general elections undertaken under Musharraf’s military rule (2002 and 2008).

It is also interesting to note that Pakistani armed forces never tried to clearly engrave their political functions into the Constitution. Their only constitutional role is limited to “defend[ing] Pakistan against external aggression or threat of war” and “act[ing] in aid of civil power when called upon to do so” (article 245). In fact, the military’s formal role in politics is nothing compared to what used to be its Turkish counterpart’s one: article 58-2(b) can be removed from the Constitution by a vote of Parliament, as proven by the precedent set by Sharif, and more recently when the PPP-led government had it removed again, in April 2010, through the 18<sup>th</sup> amendment.<sup>56</sup> This time, and contrary to what happened in 1997, not only did the army stay silent, it also pushed from behind the scenes for the new constitutional package to be supported by PPP-opponents and pro-army politicians. This is an important change, for the implementation of 58-2(b), followed by its brutal restoration after Musharraf took over, were generally perceived as a key feature of the army’s inability to renounce its political clout.

Is this change due purely to the circumstances, meaning that at some better time the army might try to restore its leverage over Parliament again? Indeed, it could be the result of an unprecedented and highly volatile political and security environment: with its image badly damaged after Musharraf’s rule, a failing counter-insurgency in the FATA, suicide-attacks on an almost weekly basis since 2009, without mentioning the ideologically divisions within the officer corps and depressed lot of the soldiers, a catch-22 situation in Afghanistan (increased US pressure to “do more” against the Taliban whilst the prospect of their return to Kabul seems more plausible with each passing day), and an Indian government threatening “hot pursuit” at the next terrorist attack in its territory from Pakistan-based jihadist groups, the army’s plate is well and truly full when it comes to defence priorities. The army might also prefer to let civilians bear the blow of the deepening economic crisis the country has been facing since 2009 (with the growth rate dropping from 6-8% during 2000-08 to 2.7%, and inflation reaching 30% for food items). Or is it that the army no lon-

---

56. Intriguingly, political analysts of Pakistan have barely commented on this aspect of the 18th amendment.

ger sees any interest in institutionalising its political role? The 18th amendment will thus indicate a more structural evolution, the end of an era - characterized by an army removing unplayable Prime Ministers at will, or jumping to centre stage whenever even this did not work -, and the beginning of a new one where it fully accepts "democratic rule"? A thriving media with aggressive talk-show hosts, a stronger middle-class and civil society, and a more assertive Supreme Court are said to have made the army realize that it is more difficult than a decade ago to use article 58-2(b) at will and even question its very usefulness.<sup>57</sup> This is an optimistic scenario. Actually, a more pragmatic reason might have transformed this article into a redundant tool: the threat of anti-corruption drives seem to be, for the time being, a more discrete and efficient sword of Damocles so as to ensure the obedience of the Government,<sup>58</sup> as it was indeed during the yearly years of the Pakistan's existence. Time will tell whether Pakistan is now on its way towards a "normalized", yet not fully democratic, pattern of civil-military relations, where civilians have learnt hard lessons - not to meddle with the armed forces' prerogatives and its organizational matters<sup>59</sup> - while officers have also learnt theirs: occupying the political centre stage proves much too costly for the army's professional ethos and cohesion. This clear-cut sharing of tasks might explain why, contrary to the hectic transitions to civilian rule in 1971 and 1988, the military could carefully and precisely plan the steps towards a return of the democratic forces to power in 2007-08, and then let them rule as long as they stayed within their own sphere.

## The Colonization of Civil Institutions

The reason why the army never felt the need to fully institutionalize its power-sharing with political forces is not to be found purely in the latter's internalisation of the army's ascendancy: the former's control over the bureaucracy made it quite unnecessary in practical terms. Once in power in 1958, as mentioned before, the army started to progressively "colonize the civil institutions", to borrow Samuel Finner's

57. As put forwards in NOOR, Arifa, "The Changed Game", *The Herald* (Karachi), May 2010, pp. 10-11.

58. To facilitate the return to civilian rule before the 2008 elections, a decree was conveniently passed which amnestied all political leaders previously accused of corruption (the National Reconciliation Ordinance). The Supreme Court has since challenged it and asked for the reopening of corruption cases - making President Zardari's and some of his close associates' future quite uncertain -; a move that the army did not oppose.

59. The initial attempt by President Zardari to place the ISI under its control got a clear "do not even dare"-message from army circles. He subsequently stopped interfering publicly in the army's institutional affairs.

concept.<sup>60</sup> But again, the 1970s proved to be a turning point: General Zia dramatically boosted this process by establishing permanent military quotas for recruitment to the civilian bureaucracy (10% of the highest slots) and appointing retired generals as governors in the four provinces - a crucial move with long-lasting effect.<sup>61</sup> This "colonization" took unprecedented proportions under Musharraf. In just the first four years of his rule, 1,027 acting or retired officers were appointed to posts in public administration and firms. They also monopolized the very lucrative chairmanships of most of the semi-governmental organizations (the Water and Power Development Authority, and the National Highways Authority, for instance). "Expert commissions" and "bureaus" headed by high-ranking officers were also formed so as to short-circuit civil administration. More critically, generals head most of the civil service training establishments. This of course gave the military strong leverage over civilian bureaucrats who have to undergo pre-service and in-service training to be appointed and promoted.

Several factors led the army to penetrate civil institutions in full force: it guarantees the army's autonomy vis-à-vis bureaucrats and ensures that they do not align themselves with political parties, and it offers a "reservoir" of posts for retired officers who have otherwise few chances of promotion within the army, or to loyal allies, or even, on the contrary, to those who might prove too ambitious. Another rationale is overseeing key sectors where the army has economic corporate interests to defend. Yet over time this policy created acute tensions with the bureaucracy, as attested, for instance, by the petition (the first of its kind) sent by the civilian staff of the National Highway Authority to the newly elected Prime Minister in 2002, complaining that 90% of the senior positions were occupied by serving and retired army officers. The level of resentment within the civil bureaucracy<sup>62</sup> reached such a point that in 2004, officers affected to civilian jobs were directed by Army headquarters not to wear uniform and not to mention military ranks with their names on their badges in order to hide their army background. The increased visibility of mismanagement by military

60. FINER, Samuel E., *The Man on Horseback: The Role of the Military in Politics*, Boulder (Col.), Westview Press, 1988 (1962), p. 273.

61. Governors are the representatives of the Federal Government in each province. From 1988 to 1997, all the Governors in the NWFP were from the army, as were 3 in Punjab and Baluchistan, and 1 in Sindh. In 2003, three out of the four Governors were retired lieutenant-generals.

62. A resentment sharpened by the new 2000 devolution plan which transferred law and order powers to elected nazim (mayors) at the district level.

officers, especially in universities, also increased the level of public criticism against the army. All these reasons led Musharraf's successor as the new COAS, General Ashfaq Pervez Kayani, to announce a few days before the February 2008 elections - and for the first time in Pakistan's history - that the number of military officers in civil institutions would be reduced.



# THE MILITARY’S INTERNAL ECONOMY: “HE WHO HAS THE STICK, HOLDS THE BUFFALO”

The Pakistan military has not only evolved into an independent political class over the years, laying claim to its share in controlling the state, both in competition and at times in collaboration with political forces and the bureaucracy. It has also progressively become a major business force thanks to its access to means of coercion and to state resources. Having the stick surely helps hold the buffalo, as stated by a famous proverb from Punjab which applies beautifully to the case at hand, not only because the majority of the armed forces comes from this province but also because agricultural land played a key role in the army’s mutation into an economic force. The huge amount of state land transferred to the military, along with the numerous profit-making ventures it conducts in the industrial and commercial sectors, constitute a major dimension of its political economy, and one which only started to be seriously examined in the 2000s.<sup>63</sup> As a result, offi-

---

63. Actually, Hamza Alavi analyzed the transformation of the officers into an economic class as soon as 1983 (see his “Class and State”, in Gardezi and Rashid (eds.), *op. cit.*, pp. 40-93, and pp. 66-67 in particular). For more recent works,

cers became landlords and businessmen and now cut across the two other economically dominant classes - the landed-feudal elite and the financial and entrepreneurial “bourgeoisie”. Interestingly, civilians’ control over the polity (1970s, 1990s) did not translate into any economic marginalization of the armed forces - quite the contrary even. To understand this process, we need to look once again at the shift from a colonial legacy to a pro-active strategy in the 1970s.

The state’s involvement in Cold War US-led military alliances has convinced many analysts that Pakistan’s model of militarization is mainly “externally-driven” or “dependent”, following Charles Tilly’s thesis.<sup>64</sup> According to this thesis, the pattern of militarization in decolonised states would be radically different from that of their European predecessors: they not only inherited a strong coercive apparatus from their colonial rulers but also faced, and early on, the constraints imposed by a bipolar international system. This strengthened the domestic position of the military and resulted in generous outside capital (foreign aid and export revenue), obviating the need for the army to negotiate with the capitalist class and society so as to extract resources in its coercion-building process, hence hindering the virtuous circle of gradual “civilization” of the military which had happened in Europe. The logic of “racketeering”, to use another Tillyan concept<sup>65</sup>, has certainly been externalized in the Pakistani case: in the 1960s, 74% of the total state resources were external funds. From the peripheral wars of the Cold War period to collaboration in the “war on terror”, the military has managed to attract considerable amounts of foreign aid, especially from the US.<sup>66</sup> This helped not only in modernizing the armed forces but also in providing the Ayub, Zia and Musharraf regimes with the financial stamina they were otherwise

---

see: RIZVI, Hasan-Askari, *Military, State and Society in Pakistan*, London, Macmillan Press, 2000; SIDDIQA, op. cit.; and in French: BLOM, Amélie “Qui a le bâton, a le buffle”. *Le corporatisme économique de l’armée pakistanaise*, *Questions de recherche*, 16, December 2005 (<http://www.ceri-sciences-po.org/cerifr/publica/question/menu.htm>). Many incisive descriptions may also be found in NAWAZ, op. cit.

64. See Tilly’s pioneering work: TILLY, Charles, *Coercion, Capital and European States*, Cambridge, Basic Blackwell, 1990 (the last chapter in particular on the Third World’s militaries), and his illuminating article “War Making and State Making as Organized Crime” in Peter Evans et al. (ed.), *Bringing the State Back In*, Cambridge University Press, 1985, pp. 169-191.

65. “Consider the definition of a racketeer as someone who creates a threat and then charges for its reduction. Governments’ provision of protection [ie. keeping armies], by this standard, often qualifies as racketeering” says Charles Tilly in “War Making and State Making as Organized Crime”, op. cit., p. 171.

66. In addition to the \$5.1 billion military aid received from 1954 to 1990, the US-orchestrated weapons aid channelled to the Afghan resistance through Pakistan from 1980 till 1991 totalled another \$3.5 billion. Pakistan’s collaboration in the “war on terror” brought more than \$9 billion in military assistance (estimations), both to aid and reimburse the military for its operations in FATA since 2001.

lacking. In terms of taxation as well, import duties long provided a large source of government income. However, this paper argues that endogenous capital played a much more important role in the militarization of the economy and of society; this, by extension, call for a revision of the role usually attributed to exogenous capital in reinforcing the coercive apparatus of “newcomer” states.

### **“Milbus”: A Multi-Dimensional Process**

“Milbus”, a concept coined by A. Siddiqi for “military business”, refers to the “military capital used for the personal benefit of the military fraternity, especially the officer cadre, which is not recorded as part of the defence budget or does not follow the normal accountability procedures of the state, making it an independent genre of capital. It is either controlled by the military or under its implicit or explicit patronage”.<sup>67</sup> It is difficult to give an exact assessment of its financial value but the total assets of the more than one hundred military businesses is estimated at \$10 billion. This makes the armed forces one of the most important business groups in the country. The military is also said to be the country’s second largest landowner after the bureaucracy,<sup>68</sup> with 12 million acres (approximately 12% of the total 94 million acres of state land), while a rough calculation places the value of military land at about \$11.6 billion.

“Milbus” takes many forms: public-sector organizations controlled by the army, such as the National Logistics Corporation in charge of transportation and the Frontier Works Organisation in charge of constructing and repairing roads, or the thousand or so cooperatives (small-sized ventures run by the various military commands such as bakeries, cinemas, gas stations, poultry farms, commercial plazas, etc). Yet its most noticeable and profitable component are the business ventures of the armed forces’ four welfare foundations set up between 1953 and 1981: Fauji Foundation (FF, for inter-services personnel), Army Welfare Trust (AWT, for army personnel), Shaheen Foundation (SF, for air force personnel), and Bahria Foundation (BF, for navy personnel). They were all initially registered as charitable organizations (under the 1889 Charitable Endowments Act) to run welfare projects

67. SIDDIQA, *op. cit.*, p.5. Keeping this definition in mind, this paper does not discuss arms procurement or the military-industrial complex and the military’s indigenous manufacturing of weapons.

68. Interview with a former Chief Secretary of Punjab, Lahore, 2001.



for retired armed forces personnel and their families (in education, health, professional training, etc.).<sup>69</sup> But they all mutated into large business conglomerates (representing today 23% of the total value of assets of the 43,000-odd private sector companies registered with the Securities and Exchange Commission of Pakistan).<sup>70</sup> They now operate in a wide range of activities: agro-industries (sugar mills, cereals etc.), gas extraction and distribution, fertilizer and cement production, power plants, pharmaceutical products, airport support facilities, universities, colleges and schools, real estates, banking, insurance companies, etc.

The formal structure of these foundations is highly complex as they span state and military sectors, public and private realms. They were all set up using public funds and, as charitable organizations, can qualify for subsidies and special aid from the government.<sup>71</sup> They are also all subsidiaries of their respective parent services, controlled at the top by senior generals (or members of the Ministry of Defence) and they frequently use the military’s resources. Yet their accountability does not follow the normal procedures prescribed for a government institution or even military projects financed by the public sector. They are run as private companies. They have also established many joint-ventures with the private sector and foreign investors and they employ both military and civilian personnel. Therefore, from the military’s perspective, “milbus” performs a very similar function to the civil administration jobs occupied by military personnel - a very valuable reservoir of employment for retired armed forces men (when the private sector can absorb a limited part of them), an opportunity for high-ranking officers to accumulate personal wealth, and a way for the top echelons to get rid of “ambitious” or disturbing generals by appointing them as executives.

The increased penetration of the private sector (3,000 to 4,000 retired officers, excluding military foundations)<sup>72</sup> has also been a noticeable change to the armed forces’ political economy over the last twenty years. It is linked to the downsizing of opportunities in the Gulf,

69. It was decided to set up AWT, for instance, in 1971 to help the families of prisoners of war after the 1971 defeat.  
70. SIDDIQA, *op. cit.*, p. 119.

71. For instance, Fauji Fertilizer received a subsidised provision of natural-gas worth \$18.97 million from the government in 2006 alone.

72. Interview with Ayesha Siddiq (Islamabad), January 2004.

among other factors. Often favoured because of their close connection with the military, and hence their access to the state apparatus, these men generally go into sectors such as the administration of private universities and schools, aviation (for Air Force officers), import-export, and transportation and security guard companies which, due to the deterioration of law and order and to the level of police corruption, have grown impressively over the past twenty years (from just one in 1983 to about 200 in 2001, 90% managed by retired officers).

More critically, the military established itself as a landed elite. Land is the most valuable resource in Pakistan's agrarian economy (agriculture still represents 26% of GDP and 47% of the labour force), a lucrative business (real estate investments in cities in particular), and one of the very few available means of social mobility. The Pakistan military is certainly not an isolated case in this respect: armies rewarding their personnel with prime lands and other valuable real estate is a widespread and long-standing phenomenon worldwide (it was, for instance, a common practice amongst European colonial armies). Yet given the lack of civilian control, the process has taken on uncontrollable proportions in Pakistan. To give just one example: in Karachi alone, 35 per cent of prime land is said to come under the cantonment board. Lahore presents a similar picture. The legal status of the lands occupied by the military is hotly contested by the provincial bureaucracies and military. Some were transferred *de facto* to the military on Independence ("cantonments", "border areas", training fields and farms for operational use); others come under the military foundations' farms and real estate operations; a third type is given on lease by provincial governments to the various military services which then distribute them to their retiring personnel (or as awards to serving ones) for their personal use;<sup>73</sup> finally, various lands and properties are simply confiscated by the military or illegally occupied when it stops paying rent to the provincial governments.<sup>74</sup>

There are several controversial aspects which have been debated both by Pakistani academics and human rights activists and journalists. Firstly, officers started to rent or sell their lands for private and commercial purposes - a shift facilitated by the fact that "cantonment

73. The land distributed to soldiers and officers under this system (going from 20 acres for the former to 50 acres for major generals and above) is said to cover about 6.8 million acres in 2008.

74. In Punjab alone, 0.5% of the province's lands is assumed to be illegally occupied by the military.

boards” are always presided by an army officer. The rising number – and extension - of Defence Housing Authority (DHA) schemes all over the country’s big cities that sprang up in and around the military cantonments is an illustration of this. These heavily subsidised plots garnered multiples of their purchase price on the free market. Over time, a secondary market developed dominated by private brokers. The Ministry of Defence, initially responsible for releasing state land to the army, progressively lost all control of the process. Secondly, the policy of redistributing lands to military personnel has given birth to a new class of agriculturalists enjoying special privileges (access to water and farm-to-market roads for instance). Thirdly, military farms are also a lucrative operation, and though intended to provide only for the troops, they are actually used for commercial production (dairy products, sugar cane, wheat and cotton).<sup>75</sup> This redistribution policy has become, in the words of a retired lieutenant-general, “institutionalised corruption”,<sup>76</sup> though “institutionalized racketeering” would fit better. It has put unbearable pressure on state lands. Between 1994 and 2000 alone, 700,000 acres of land are said to have been distributed to various military officers. If the military has to accommodate about 1,000 retiring officers and soldiers each year, this means the provincial governments have to give the military about 250 square km on an annual basis.

Any impartial assessment of the phenomenon should include the military’s own justification of its profit-making activities and privileges. It usually puts forward four types of arguments. Firstly, low salaries and pensions:

“When I left the army in the early 1970s” explains one retired general “the army offered me to buy a piece of land at a very low price in Karachi’s Defence Housing Society. Initially I refused, I am an old-fashioned officer, I didn’t like this privilege-business thing officers indulge in, it’s not good for their morality. But I ended up by saying yes because at that time my pension was just 1,100 rupees per month, barely enough for my family to live on.”<sup>77</sup>

75. In Punjab, they represent 40% of the agricultural land given on lease by the government and employ 500 000 tenants.

76. Lt-Gen (ret) Talat Masood, quoted in HUSSAIN, Zahid “A Military State”, *Newline* (Karachi), October 2004.

77. Interview with a retired officer, Karachi, 2004.

The second argument put forward is the difficulties in professional retraining of “fit young retiring military personnel who have been isolated from the civilian world for a long time and have no experience in starting a new profession”.<sup>78</sup> Thirdly, civilians do the same or even worse: “I don’t see why people criticize the fact that the military owns land, banks, industries, farms etc.” fumes a retired officer, “they have no problems with corrupt politicians and bureaucrats getting land, houses, imported cars and being regular loans defaulters”.<sup>79</sup> One last line of defence is that the military is the main agent of modernization: “military foundations benefit from the army’s organizational qualities: discipline and dedication”.<sup>80</sup> There are problems with this self-justification, without necessarily having to conclude that “the basic greed of the top echelons of the officer cadre”<sup>81</sup> is *the* underlying causes of an ever-expanding “milbus” (though this might be true in some cases). Another rationale of a structural nature has to be taken into account: the shift from an accommodating to a restructuring strategy, along the lines of that in place in the political realm, explains how the military transformed itself into a powerful economic force.

### From an Accommodating Strategy...

The accommodating strategy includes, firstly, the land redistribution policy that Pakistan’s military elite inherited from the British. Building on the age-old policies of the Sikhs and the Mughals, the colonial powers allocated lands to military personnel to breed horses and mules, and more significantly what were known as “canal” or “colonized lands”.<sup>82</sup> In the emergent hydraulic society of the late 19<sup>th</sup> century, this type of redistribution policy meant that the authority of the military was significantly strengthened in institutional terms. Not only did the new Pakistani state retain after 1947 the colonial law in force, it would also seem to have developed a very loose interpretation of it: wherever new water resources and channels were built, the GHQ could claim its share of barren lands (as in South Punjab and Sindh). This process was

78. See: [awt.com.pk/ISPR-Film2.html](http://awt.com.pk/ISPR-Film2.html)

79. Interview with a retired officer, Lahore, 2004.

80. Ibid.

81. SIDDIQA, *op. cit.*, p. 10.

82. Barren areas transformed into high value agricultural land thanks to a sophisticated system of canalisation. On this process, see: ALI, Imran, *The Punjab Under Imperialism, 1885-1947*, Princeton, Princeton University Press, 1988.

aggravated by the unfavourable balance of power between civilians and the military on the country’s coming into existence, and by the risk of alienating a much larger army. A retired officer (serving in 1947) recalls:

“When Pakistan was formed, it inherited a huge number of army men in comparison to civilians. We were badly paid and the civilians had many more perks and privileges than we did. Our resentment was very strong and we had the guns. The government was perfectly aware of the danger of such a situation. It realized that it had to accommodate us, to give us land among other things. Then this policy progressively got out of control.”<sup>83</sup>

In their comparison between countries, Brömmelhörster and Paes consider that military business in developing states is generally an output of reduction in state funding, whilst the armed forces still need to fund their “primary role”, i.e. “reassurance”, “deterrence” and “compellence” (enforcement of a government’s political and strategic goals by military means).<sup>84</sup> The increasingly high costs and multiple roles of the military in Pakistan did indeed put the defence budget under pressure. The international financial institutions’ and donor community’s instructions for more conservative fiscal strategies and structural adjustment exacerbated this problem in the 1990s, at a time when the economic crisis was worsening and the migration market to Gulf countries was shrinking. The military also suffered from dramatic isolation: its nuclear programme provoked a range of US sanctions after 1990, depriving it of military and economic aid worth \$564 million a year. To make things worse, these combined financial pressures all happened at a time when the military needed resources to pursue its nuclear programme, sustain a rebellion in Kashmir, and modernize its forces given the credible prospect of a riposte from India, while also having to accommodate financially 200,000 additional personnel between 1988 and 2004. “Milbus” surely offered a much needed “security valve”. Nevertheless, the defence budget does not tell the whole story: Pakistan’s defence budget is proportionally comparable to India’s, yet the Indian military did not mutate into an industrial and commercial empire.

83. Interview with an Air Commodore (retd), Karachi, January 2004.

84. BRÖMMELHÖRSTER and PAES, *op. cit.*, p. 11.

Of greater significance, as Brömmelhörster and Paes also mention, is the number of “secondary roles” that the military fulfils and which eventually lead to military business, such as “aid to civil power”. Pakistan’s armed forces have carried out numerous operations of this kind (from bringing relief to flood victims to helping civilians curb political dissent in restive provinces). This was, as a matter of fact, their very first function: protecting refugee convoys going to and coming from India, and providing them with relief in 1947. “Aid to civil power” can be analysed as belonging to the “accommodating” strategy in the sense that it was initially asked for by civilians. Yet it soon changed into lucrative operations. Firstly, because fighting smugglers, cleaning canals, and maintaining law and order are all funded by provincial government budgets. Secondly, because these activities gave rise to “rentier practices”. The Rangers are a case in point.<sup>85</sup> This paramilitary force, set up to protect the borders, was called upon on a temporary basis to secure “law and order” in Karachi and its surrounding areas in 1989. Twenty years later it is still there. And its 12,000 men based in the city now occupy many education institution hostels and even have their own secure income, such as fishing contracts in the surrounding lakes and the cash cow of supervising water distribution and selling it to private intermediaries.<sup>86</sup> “Nation-Building” activities have provided the military with another entry into business. The Frontier Works Organisation, for instance, was established in 1966 to build the 800km-long Karakorum Highway connecting Pakistan to China.<sup>87</sup> Staffed by the Army Engineers Corps, it soon became the country’s largest contractor for constructing and repairing roads, as well as collecting tolls.

The National Logistic Cell, set up in 1977 to solve a major crisis of wheat distribution and to help with logistical support to Afghan refugees after 1979, soon became the largest haulage company in the country with a fleet of more than 1,600 vehicles and 7,000 employees. Both are now operating on a profit-making basis. The process has

---

85. This 25,000-strong paramilitary force officially comes under the Ministry of Interior. But in fact it is headed by an army general and only the local Corps Commander has power to discharge it of its responsibility to protect borders so as to do other «exceptional» tasks required by the provincial government.

86. The Sindh Governor (then a retired Lieutenant-General) called upon them to take control of the city’s main water tanks in 1999, after a wave of street protests provoked by the combined effects of a severe drought, the Karachi Water and Sewerage Board’s incompetence, and the mafia-type practices of the private tankers.

87. “With New Zeal for Nation-Building” was the FWO motto for the country’s 55th anniversary.

been recently repeated during the October 2005 earthquake: the government delegated the entire relief operation to the military which then staffed the already existing or *ad hoc* organizations formed to manage the reconstruction process and handle the generous foreign aid.

Another crucial “secondary role” that boosted “milbus” is, unsurprisingly, occupying state power. The beginning of “milbus” coincided with the military moving into the political arena. Then each phase of military rule pushed the process further, as the military’s main constituency is its personnel, after all. Here too the Zia era was a turning point: “In economic terms and by amassing huge fortunes, the military was a major beneficiary of the rule of general Zia-ul Haq”.<sup>88</sup> Lucrative jobs in the vast post-nationalisation public sector were opened to them (the main reason why Zia, despite his pro-private sector leanings, only selectively undid Bhutto’s nationalisation) and officers continued to serve on the boards of private companies and assist in negotiating investment decisions – a legacy which explains why so many businesses and enterprises are now owned by retired military officials. Moreover, the first Afghan war (1979-88) with its extensive corruption linked to the arms and drug smuggling, resulted in some officers making huge sums of money, with Zia’s family name even being implicated in the drug trade. On the foreign front as well, military arrangements with Saudi Arabia gave officers and soldiers new avenues to riches.<sup>89</sup> It was also during the 1977-88 period that the “infrastructural and sectoral expansion of milbus”<sup>90</sup> enjoyed its major boost. After 1977, new foundations were set up (NLC, SF, and BF), AWT became functional, while FF and AWT started to move into the lucrative sectors of fertilizer production, agro-based industries, and the strategic oil and gas sectors. Last but not least, Zia also authorized his corps commanders to operate secret “regimental funds” (transfers from the defence budget for classified projects and money earned through small ventures such as cooperatives).

After Zia, “milbus” expansion became, somehow, a self-perpetuating logic. An increase in the armed forces numbers, long years of military rule, the habit of receiving material rewards at retirement as

88. ZAIDI, S. Akbar, *Issues in Pakistan’s Economy* (Karachi: OUP, 2000), p. 431.

89. An entire brigade was stationed in Saudi Arabia from 1982 to 1988 and reactivated during the 1990 Gulf War.

90. SIDDIQA, *op. cit.*, p. 139.

a “right” (and not a privilege), and a more “materialist ethos”<sup>91</sup> among officers and soldiers all combined in the 1990s to lead to tremendous pressure on public posts, state land, and even the foundations’ ability to accommodate new entrants. Any new army chief who tried to turn back the clock would create huge discontent within its constituency. All the COAS who succeeded Zia, and Musharraf in particular, were no exception. Hence in the ‘democratic decade’ of the 1990s the pattern was not altered, it just mutated under the influence of: 1/ the emergence of a vibrant middle-class, whose excessive consumerism the military-run business adapted to (the mushrooming shopping malls for instance), 2/ the accelerated pattern of privatisation which boosted the capitalist class, the military included, especially in the banking sector. In 1992 for instance, AWT established its own bank, the Askari Commercial Bank, a joint venture (it holds 40% of the capital) and one of the country’s top five private banks.

### **... To a Restructuring Strategy: Military Syndicalism and “Disciplinisation”**

As seen, the military’s internal economy was initially based on an accommodating strategy that utilized already existing policies. Yet it deviated from past policies, in scope as well as in content. How can this evolution be explained? The hypothesis put forward here is that, following a similar pattern to the one analysed above in the political realm, the traumatic civilian decade of the 1970s compelled the military to make its economy as autonomous as possible from civilians. This restructuring strategy also became a key instrument in furthering Pakistan’s armed forces “esprit de corps” and disciplining its forces.

Though Samuel Finer does not analyse the economic power of the military organization as such, he emphasizes that one of its major characteristics is its “anxiety to preserve its autonomy”, this also being “the most widespread motive for its political intervention”. He develops this idea further: “in its defensive form it can lead to something akin to military syndicalism – an insistence that the military and only the military are entitled to determine on such matters as recruitment, training, numbers and equipments. In its more aggressive form it can lead to the military demand to be the ultimate judge on all matters affecting the armed forces [...] foreign policy, and inva-

91. RIZVI, *op. cit.*, p. 243.



riably [...] domestic economic policy”.<sup>92</sup> This “military syndicalism” is a good description of the Pakistan military’s insatiable intervention in the economic sphere. Because the military’s political supremacy has never, and can never, be absolute in Pakistan’s political system, it has systematically sought, and given itself the means to attain, maximum financial autonomy vis-à-vis civilians. This includes not only keeping the defence budget out of civilian sight<sup>93</sup>, but also expanding its material assets and protecting them both legally and fiscally. The development of the military foundations demonstrates this point. When, for instance, the control exerted by the Ministry of Defence over FF proved highly risky under Ali Bhutto’s government, the army decided to establish its own foundation, AWT, and to place it under the direct authority of the GHQ. The evolution of the Defence Housing Authorities also shows the army’s determination to isolate its economic interests from any civilian intervention: Zia transformed their legal status so as to put them under the direct control of the GHQ which also enabled the DHAs to raise their own taxes<sup>94</sup>. The evolution of the economic operations set up by military foundations also illustrates that self-sufficiency is the core motive of the military business. Firstly, it penetrated “captive markets”, i.e. clients and consumers from its own ranks. This is the case of its activities in agriculture (meant initially for the troops only), in real estate (selling plots to army personnel), in banking (managing the savings’ accounts of its members), and so on. In a second phase, these firms and societies started to target private consumers and clients. Eventually this led to a situation where all the links in the chain are interdependent. For instance, military farm production is now processed and marketed by firms under military foundation control, which use the Askari Commercial Bank to handle most of its transactions.

The second component of the military’s restructuring strategy is to be the sole body in charge of the rent-seeking and rent-distributing process. Endogenous capital enables the military apparatus to strengthen its cohesion without diverting the precious, fragile external aid it also badly needs. It hence devised a sophisticated and efficient

92. FINER, *op. cit.*, p. 41.

93. For years, defence allocation only took up one line in the nation’s budget. Yet after the February 2008 election, the armed forces agreed to give more details to the National Assembly, though these are limited to a breakdown between the three services and the division between personnel, operations, travels, weapons (physical assets), civil work and general expenditures.

94. Interview with a retired Air Force officer, Karachi, January 2004.

policy of rewards and privileges, based on the policy inherited from the colonial powers, which binds army personnel into a tight-knit “military fraternity”. The main advantage of this system is that members (officers and soldiers) are less tempted to manipulate it for their own benefit or to seek additional rents outside the institution, a process that would inevitably lead to greater influence for civilian political groups on the military itself. This explains why, in comparison to Bangladesh’s highly factional army where the two main political parties have been able to make destabilizing inroads, Pakistan military is amazingly well protected both from manipulation by politicians and internal putsches. It is worth recalling here that the six known attempted military takeovers or inner putsches (1951, 1973, 1976, 1984, 1995, and 2006) have all failed.<sup>95</sup>

This mechanism has with time become an essential component of the military’s inner dynamics, even more so since, as mentioned above, obtaining material privilege is no longer seen as a “privilege” but as something military personnel is entitled to. Colonizing foreign lands fulfilled this “disciplinarianisation” function for the European armies of the 19<sup>th</sup> century, and it could be said that the Pakistan military achieved the same thing by colonizing the land of its own country. Sometimes economic power works as a disciplinary process almost in its literal meaning: as said before, economic rewards are useful to sideline powerful yet politically ambitious or threatening generals. This logic seems to have become the rule, if one looks at the officers Musharraf has appointed as heads of the military foundations: the former Director General of the Inter-Services Intelligence (the most powerful of the three intelligence agencies) or DG-ISI Lt Gen. Mahmud Ahmed, who was manoeuvring in September 2001 to help the Taliban (or to become the new COAS, accounts differ) was swiftly named CEO of Fauji Fertilizer Company, and the Director of the National Accountability Bureau Lt-Gen. Syed Muhammad Amjad, who had dared to evoke cases of corruption within military ranks, was appointed CEO of Fauji Jordan Fertilizer Company in 2000.

That is not to say that the Pakistan military is protected from corruption or “criminal” rent-seeking processes. Kickbacks in 1990 obtained in international defence-equipment deals and housing schemes have

---

95. The second most recent one involves a pro-jihadist officer who in 1995 targeted Benazir Bhutto’s government, whilst the last attempt (made public in October 2006) emanated from lower rank Air Force officers hostile to Musharraf’s collaboration in the US-led “war on terror”.

been estimated at about \$164 million.<sup>96</sup> But just as significant is the fact that in December 2001, for the first time and though General Musharraf was in power, the Public Accounts Committee publicized the amount of money embezzled in the 1999-2000 defence budget. In 2005 as well, the entire management of Lahore’s Defence Housing Authority was replaced *manu militari* after the city’s corps commander ordered an inquiry related to a widespread property scandal. Moreover, NAB also took up high-profile cases of corruption of enormous proportions, such as that of Admiral Mansur-ul Haque accused of taking personal bribes in the French Agosta submarines procurement deal. This example might also demonstrate that going it alone has a cost: whenever corruption gets out of control the army does not hesitate to strike out against its own dissidents.

This process of disciplinarianisation is nevertheless paradoxical: it might buy, so to speak, the obedience of the military fraternity as a whole and isolate it from the temptation of being corrupted by outsiders, but it also increases tensions within. This is the case, firstly, regarding the relations between the three services. These are traditionally bad because of the army’s monopoly on decision-making for security affairs, but they have worsened as a result of “milbus”. The Army is much better placed to extract the lion’s share of land and private resources than the other services. Secondly, and though there is very limited information on this, one might suspect that relations between officers have suffered given that the rewards of “milbus” are not evenly distributed within ranks and files: “senior army officers” tend to “vie with each other to get plum appointments so they could double dip up their military pensions and benefits as well as the generous perquisites that came with their new jobs as heads of army-controlled enterprises”.<sup>97</sup> This surely affects the inner cohesion of the armed forces, for “milbus” and a more materialistic ethos within the armed forces are nothing but interdependent.<sup>98</sup>

### “Milbus” and Military Takeovers: The Missing Link

It is tempting to conclude from the above that “entrepreneurial activities [are] the major driver of the armed forces’ stakes in poli-

96. ZAIDI, Mubashir, “The hunt for kickbacks”, *The Herald* (Karachi), October 2000.

97. NAWAZ, op. cit., p. 446.

98. RIZVI, Hasan-Askari, *The Military in Politics in Pakistan*, Lahore, Sang-e-Meel, 2000, p. 202

tical control".<sup>99</sup> This thesis is actually open to question. The military can perfectly well bolster "milbus" without necessarily controlling the state. As a matter of fact, civilian leaders have never tried to breach the armed forces' economic empire. Zulfikar Ali Bhutto clearly destabilized the armed forces' political hegemony yet did not interfere in their internal economy. On the contrary, civilian governments tend to allow the military to accumulate assets free of oversight: Bhutto did not stop the formation of AWT in 1971, Sharif granted the NLC a contract in 1999 to carry out toll collection and maintenance on Punjab's main highway for instance, and so on. There are several reasons for this state of affairs. Firstly, civilian leaders are fully aware that "milbus" is a sector they would do better not to touch. As stated by Sharif's former Finance Minister, "for us, the main challenge was reducing the military's political strength. Had we begun to curb their financial interests as well, it would have had an immediate reaction from the armed forces".<sup>100</sup> Secondly, the government also benefits from it, as proven by the military-run firms and government's own partnership in selling sugar to India in the late 1990s, for instance.

The supposedly logical link between military "predation" and takeovers is all the less convincing since the military's ability to obtain favourable arrangements for its corporate interests from civilians has *not* reduced its need to intervene directly in politics, as demonstrated by the latest coup in 1999.

This is because takeovers result from a totally different type of rationale: firstly, the impetus to prevent civilian interference in the armies' institutional interests (promotion and posting) and prerogatives (policy towards India and the US) and/or their attempts to alter the balance of power (the army's role as political arbitrator). Secondly, the military is regularly tempted to intervene because over time it has internalised strong shared beliefs about the institution's survival and the kind of relationship that should exist between officers and politicians.<sup>101</sup> A principle of disobedience to "incapable" politicians and the belief that

99. As argued in SIDDIQA, *op. cit.*, p. 2.

100. Quoted in: *ibid.*, p. 151.

101. On a normative approach of civil-military relations in Pakistan, see SHAH, Aqil, "To Coup or Not to Coup: Civilian Control in India and Pakistan", unpublished presentation, Dept. of Social Sciences, Lahore University of Management Sciences, 29 August 2008.

civilian control is appropriate only by default shape the military's actions and preferences. In other words, its corporate interests are also normatively and socially constructed.

## Milbus, its Supports and its Discontents

The growth of the army's political and economic power has greatly benefited from its alliance with the two dominant economic classes, i.e. big landlords [*zamindar*] and private businessmen. As far as the first are concerned, the military never attempt to challenge them: the first agrarian reforms (1959) had very limited impact, whilst Zia simply ignored Bhutto's more ambitious directives, especially since officers themselves had then turned into new land-barons. The relationship between the business community and the military shows the same symbiotic pattern. Historically, the entrepreneurial class has greatly benefited from military rule. It was under Ayub Khan's “civil-military bureaucratic capitalism”<sup>102</sup> that the trader-merchant class mutated into industrialists, through state loans and incentives. At that time as well, state industries were also sold to the private sector at a nominal price: the famous “22 families” who owned about 68% of the industries and 87% of the banking and insurance assets in the 1960s were surely sympathetic to their source of power. Later on, the same industrialists who had resented Ali Bhutto's nationalization programme and socialist-inspired pro-trade union policies welcomed the return to power of the military.<sup>103</sup> After 1977, Zia not only re-empowered the big business houses and gave incentives to industrial and commercial capital, he also placed a national ban on labour unions.<sup>104</sup> In addition, he promoted the entry into politics of prominent industrialists, such as future Prime Minister Nawaz Sharif of the Ittefaq industrial group. General Musharraf pursued Sharif's pro-private sector policy. This resulted in the privatisation of huge public-sector financial and industrial units, such as the Karachi Electricity Supply Corporation and Pakistan Telecommunication Corporation.

102. ZAIDI, S. Akbar, op. cit., p. 429.

103. In the first phase, all banks were nationalised as well as about 20% of the industries (producing consumer goods units were left untouched); in a second phase, small/medium and agriculture-based industries were nationalized as well.

104. He even offered military personnel to suppress a massive strike in Multan in 1978 (leaving 14 people dead), a scenario which was repeated when in May 2005 General Musharraf offered army helicopters and paramilitary forces to curb a strike organized at the state telecommunication company (PTCL), which was due to be privatized.

The armed forces' relations with the private sector have therefore been eased by the fact that they never tried to constrain the corporate sector, bar some important exceptions.<sup>105</sup> In addition to the generals pro-private sector policies, one should add that the military-run businesses are interconnected to other private businesses through many deals and numerous family-based connections.<sup>106</sup> That being said, there is no "military-private business honeymoon" in several sectors where, as stated by a former Finance Minister of Punjab (Shahid Kardar), "military-run industries enjoy privileges which others don't and therefore crowd out private business".<sup>107</sup> In transportation, road construction, and real estate, for instance, the military impose unfair competition on rivals who are unable to benefit from the same level of public facilities. But on other occasions, the private sector has also been able to bargain to get the privileges enjoyed by military-run business transferred to it (such as the provision of subsidised natural gas to private fertilizer companies). At times as well, army-run business is careful not to expand to the detriment of the private sector, as in the very lucrative mobile phone sector (catering to more than 90 million subscribers in 2010 in a country of 180 million), for instance, where local and foreign companies outpaced the Fauji group in a 2006 bid supervised by the privatisation commission (and though the Telecommunications Authority was then headed by a retired general). It would thus seem that army-private business relations are not easy to pigeonhole in clear-cut oppositions. In any case, deregulation and globalisation make the local businessmen much less dependent on the state than they are on global financial institutions and markets. Therefore, the relationship between business and the political regime presently defies black and white categorisations in terms of a pro-democracy versus a pro-dictatorship business community: any government with a pro-private sector policy that attracts foreign investors and stabilizes the economy is welcomed.

It is society at large that has suffered more than the private sector from the military's economic ambitions. Firstly, the accumulation

105. In 2007 for instance, the National Assembly Standing Committee on Defence stalled the privatization of Pakistan State Oil (PSO) after representatives of the military expressed their reservations regarding its "negative impact" on oil supplies to the armed forces.

106. Though this, incidentally, creates a strong regional imbalance: the Karachi-based business community does not enjoy the same level of connections to the army as the Punjabi community, who often have relatives in the military or running military-owned businesses.

107. ALAM, M. Badar and JAMAL, Nasir, "Whose Business is it Anyway?", *The Herald* (Karachi), May 2008, p. 79.

of material privileges by a North Punjabi-Pashtun dominated army has contributed to aggravate ethnic tensions. In South Punjab and Sindh in particular, the amount of land taken away by the military, and its attempt to divert or extend canals to water its lands, led to the alienation of the local population, a process which in South Punjab helped re-boost the old Seraiki nationalist movement.<sup>108</sup> In addition, new forms of social resistance have appeared against the military. In 2000 and for the first time, it faced an impressively long movement of civil disobedience in its Okara farm group (near Lahore) when 150,000 peasants resisted the military’s new extractive practice.<sup>109</sup>

“The armed forces are highly respected in civil society” we can read in the Wikipedia entry on the “Military of Pakistan”<sup>110</sup>. Based on armed force booklets or pro-army TV channels, the statement is correct. But if based on private discussions with Pakistani citizens (at the end of Musharraf’s rule), it needs to be seriously qualified. The army’s expanding “milbus”, its unrivalled privileges, its enormous budget – when all wars had been either lost or fought by irregulars (since the late 1980s) or directed against its own citizens (since the mid-2000s) – as well as the legacy of incoherent and authoritarian policies from Zia’s and Musharraf’s rules, have all combined to tarnish the image of the military in society. The Pakistan army of the late 2000s is suffering from a profound movement of “de-mystification” within society – even though it is hard to document. Things have come a long way from the 1965 popular song “O’ splendid soldiers of the homeland, my songs are for you!”, aired in the middle of the war against India, to the “O’ handsome generals of the homeland, all the plots are just for you!” written on the banners that the lawyers were carrying during the 2007 protest movement against General Musharraf.<sup>111</sup> At the end of Musharraf’s term, widespread questioning of the army’s role was in no way limited to the professional democratic forces. It reached significant sections of Pakistani youth as well, one Lahori student summarizes it as follow:

“Before, I would never hear my friends talking badly about the army, it was somehow taboo, plus all of us had a brother

108. The Seraiki-speaking minority represents 10.5% of the population.

109. A shift from the sharecropping arrangement in force for years to a rent-in-cash contract which made peasants more vulnerable to arbitrary eviction from the lands they have tilled for generations.

110. [http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Military\\_of\\_Pakistan](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Military_of_Pakistan)

111. NAWAZ, op. cit., p. 567.

or a cousin in the army. Frankly, there was respect. But now, it's amazing how it has changed: people curse the army, they see it as a bunch of robbers and politicians just like the others”.<sup>112</sup>

In a 2007 poll for instance, 47% of interviewees stated that “generals are more corrupt today than they were eight years ago” (the figure reaches 51% for the 25- to 34-year-olds).<sup>113</sup> Their privileges and luxurious lifestyle (that an army salary or pension cannot justify) are, indeed, visible to all: one wonders if (s)he still is in Pakistan when walking in the military-run residential districts of big cities, such as Lahore's DHA, with its impressive number of “Dallas”-type houses, private banks, westernised clothes shops and coffee shops, its air-conditioned cinema (not even failing to sell pop corn), its well-lit and clean streets, its rare rickshaws (taxi-scooters) yet numerous expensive cars raced by young boys listening to loud techno music.

---

112. Interview, Lahore, September 2007.

113. “60 years, 60 questions. What Pakistanis Really Think”, *The Herald*, August 2007.





## THE MILITARIZED SOCIETY: A REASSESSMENT

The level of the military’s penetration into Pakistani society should surely not be exaggerated. Pakistan is not a “garrison state”<sup>114</sup> though there are “sub-national garrison states” - the strategic territories such as the Northern Areas (NA, officially renamed in 2009 “Gilgit-Baltistan”), where almost each and every family has a soldier in the army,<sup>115</sup> and the part of Kashmir under Pakistan’s administration, Azad (Free) Jammu Kashmir (AJK) which played the role of an operational base all along the 1990s “jihad in Indian-occupied Kashmir”.<sup>116</sup> But at the national level, the picture is less clear: not only is the Pakistan military a professional force and not a conscript one, it has also fought only limited and short wars.<sup>117</sup> These did not involve dramatic fiscal or personal sacrifices, and most importantly did not require the political or military mobilization of society at large, except in the euphoric initial moment. If these wars impacted on the structure of state power,

---

114. The “garrison state” thesis was put forward in LASSWELL, Harold, “The Garrison State”, *American Journal of Sociology*, vol. 46, 1941, so as to describe mid-century Japan, a society then consumed by war and war making.

115. I am grateful to Nosheen Ali for sharing this information with me.

116. Kashmiris are over-represented in the army and retired officers now represent 8.5% of the population according to a former President of AJK. Self-defence classes were compulsory in schools till the late 1990s and most of the “jihadist” training camps operating in Indian Kashmir were located here.

117. A year in 1948-49, two months in 1965, 14 days in 1971, and a month in 1999.

especially because they all ended in defeats (the 1948 war led to the process of “nationalising” the armed forces by giving them a patriotic cause to fight for, 1965 increased the level of social discontent and brought down Ayub’s regime, 1971 dismembered the country and gave way to Bhutto’s “Islamic socialism”, and 1999 put an end to ten years of democratic transition), they did not contribute, as such, to drastic alterations in state-society relations.<sup>118</sup> The militarization of Pakistani society is nevertheless significant, firstly because such a process can take less all-encompassing, yet as (yet very consequential, forms than a constant mobilization for war or its eventuality: social networks are such a form. Secondly because the limited wars launched by the military resulted in their being sub-contracted to societal forces.

### **The Military’s Social Networks and Social Engineering**

There are wide horizontal networks linking the Pakistan military to society. In 1998, there were over 9 million ex-servicemen and their families (6% of the country’s total population) benefiting from the social and economic advantages offered by the Fauji Foundation alone<sup>119</sup> (to which the 36,000 civilian employees of its firms, societies, educational institutes etc. need to be added). It is also important to remember that the armed forces, with 650,000 personnel, are the country’s second largest employer after the federal and provincial public authorities. If army recruitment has long been characterized by ethnic imbalances, “the Pakistan Army today reflects Pakistani society more than at any time in its history”.<sup>120</sup> At the officer level, recruitment is far more urban-based and of a wider scope: Lahore, Karachi and Faisalabad combined send more officers to the army than the traditionally military-dominated city of Rawalpindi. This urbanisation and wider representation is also reflected at the level of the soldiers: Punjabis still dominate but their numbers have declined (63% in 1991 to 43% in 2005), Central and Southern Punjab now outpace Northern Punjab, while recruitment from Sindh has increased (from 8% to 23%) and remained more or less the same as that from Khyber-Pakhtunkhwa (ex-NWFP) and FATA combined (about 22%).<sup>121</sup> Yet Balochistan is still largely underrepresented (1.5%).

118. On this, see: CENTENO, Miguel Angel, “Limited War and Limited States”, in Davis and Pereira (eds.), *op. cit.*, pp. 83-84.

119. Figure given in: “Fauji Foundation striving for a prosperous and strong nation”. Advertisement in *The Herald* (Karachi), September 2003.

120. NAWAZ, *op. cit.*, p. xli.

121. *Ibid.*, pp. 570-572.

But it can be argued that a "militarized society" is less about numbers and scale (nor is it about the type of political regime as shown by the example of the United States)<sup>122</sup> than it is about the way spaces and dominant ideologies are structured along the lines of a military ethos. The process of militarizing the space offers an interesting example here. In addition to the "sub-national garrison states" (NA and AJK) and the luxurious "cantonments" and "Defence Housing Authorities" already mentioned, it is worth mentioning the case of the country's capital, Islamabad. Built from scratch under General Ayub's guidance and a perfect example of an authoritarian, idealist, and dysfunctional project of nation-building, its planning was entirely based on a militarised perception of urban management.<sup>123</sup> The city's topography, meant to nurture nationalist sentiments among its denizens, is very similar to an army cantonment, with each sector designated for a particular function (military, industry, government, and so forth) and sub-divided according to a "class" hierarchy within an orthogonal zoning grid. This military planning led to major socio-economic distortions, which was one of the factors that led to the Red Mosque insurgency in 2007.

At the ideological level, the militarization of society took a very peculiar shape in Pakistan when the military, under Zia, shifted from a "modernist" to a "jihadist" project. Islamic symbolism has surely always been an important part of the military's nationalist project, for the nascent Pakistan Army was composed of the Muslim cadres of the British Indian Army. Yet it was only in the late 1970s that the army started to ideologize Islam in a very different fashion: religious rhetoric was no longer a symbolic instrument of legitimacy but became a major tool in controlling and penetrating society.<sup>124</sup> More importantly, it was used as a disciplinary tool to subjugate disaffected lower ranks, most of whom then originated from the impoverished North-West Punjab and ex-NWFP (while only the rich canal colonies of the rest of Punjab and Sindh benefited from the "Green Revolution" of the 1960s).<sup>125</sup> Zia not only changed the motto of the army (from Jinnah's

122. GIROUX, Henry A., "War on Terror: The Militarising of Public Space and Culture in the United States", *Third Text*, 18 (4), 2004.

123. On this, see: SPAULDING, Frank, "Ayub Khan, Constantinos Doxiadis, and Islamabad: Biography as Modernity in a Planned Urban Space", in Charles Kennedy et al. (eds.), *Pakistan at the Millenium*, Karachi, OUP, 2003, pp. 351-376.

124. NASR, Vali, *Islamic Leviathan. Islam and the Making of State Power*, Oxford, Oxford University Press, 2001.

125. On this topic, see ALAVI, op. cit., pp. 67-68.

“Unity, Faith, Discipline” to “Faith, Fear of God [*taqwa*] and Jihad in the path of Allah”), but also elevated the status of the regimental *maulwis*, allowed members of proselyte group such as the Tablighi Jama’at to preach at the Pakistan Military Academy, and so on. More critically for society, he also introduced apologies of military “jihad” in textbooks and TV programmes while reframing the “Kashmir cause” as a “jihad”, a cause for which religiously inspired irregulars were now authorized to fight.

### Patrimonializing Violence

Dominique Colas holds that although “the link between politics and religion, though a central one in history, can be built on an institutional exteriority [...], ie. the secular state can refuse to get involved in managing the sacred, the state cannot abandon direct control of the apparatus of violence”.<sup>126</sup> But in Pakistan both management of the sacred and of wars has been delegated since the late 1980s to jihadist semi-militias,<sup>127</sup> commonly known as “jihadi tanzim” in Pakistan but recently labelled by the Pakistani government as “non-state actors”, where this new label seeks to prove their exteriority vis-à-vis the state. In fact, the state and these semi-militias enmesh in a much more complex way - and a fascinating one, for it forces us to question the supposedly neat separation between state and society on which the modern state and modern political science are based, and this in such a key sector as the conduct of war.<sup>128</sup> The phenomenon of the “state-authorized privatization of extra-territorial violence”,<sup>129</sup> certainly exists in other developing countries. Iran and Syria have also sub-contracted regional war to religiously inspired and semi-private forces. It has long existed in Western countries as well, and reappeared in full in the 2000s, after what might wrongly be perceived as a long phase of decline (let us not forget that the United-States delegated the 1980s guerrilla against the Red Army in Afghanistan to “mujahidin”).

126. COLAS, Dominique, *Sociologie politique*, Paris, PUF, 1994, p. 258.

127. For a theoretical discussion of this proces, see: BLOM, Amélie, “La guerre fait l’Etat”: Trajectoires extra-occidentales et privatisation de la violence, *Les études du C2SD (Centre d’Etudes en Sciences Sociales de la Défense)*, September 2004.

128. For a very convincing critic of the state-society conceptual boundary, see: MITCHELL, Timothy, “The Limits of the State: Beyond Statist Approaches and Their Critics”, *The American Political Science Review*, 85 (1), March 1991, pp. 77-96.

129. THOMSON, Janice E., *Mercenaries, Pirates and Sovereigns. State-Building and Extraterritorial Violence in Early Modern Europe*, Princeton, Princeton University Press, 1994.

But the Pakistan army's delegation of a regional war to private forces, built to support and sustain the insurgency in Indian Kashmir after 1987, is quite unparalleled. Few states have indeed subcontracted a guerrilla war fought in a neighbouring country to armed ideologues based in, and recruiting from, their own territory and society, and to groups who, additionally, not only helped in training recruits but also in ideologically framing the war effort. Even the Bassiji that Revolutionary Iran used as cannon fodder in its war against Iraq differ: the Pakistani irregulars, though far fewer in number than the 500,000 Bassiji,<sup>130</sup> were not formed to safeguard a Revolution or eliminate political opponents. Their main utility was in giving the state the benefit of *plausible deniability*. They also enjoy a level of autonomy in mobilization and recruitment very distinct from that of their Iranian counterparts. That is why, if the latter could easily be co-opted at the end of the war into state administrations and into the private sector,<sup>131</sup> the former continue to enjoy great room for manoeuvre.

The impact of irregular armed forces upon political developments differ with respect to "how they articulate with conventional armed forces", "at what level of the state (local, regional, national, or transnational) they are most salient" and "in combination with which class or social forces in civil society they most wield their power or articulate their aims".<sup>132</sup> Pakistani Jihadist groups who were active in Kashmir throughout the 1990s and early 2000s, such as the Hizb-ul-Mujahidin (whose leadership is still Kashmiri), the Harkat-ul-Mujahidin and its many offshoots, the Lashkat-i-Tayyebah, and the Jaish-i-Muhammad, are complex in nature. They are both inside and outside the state: they have private sources of funding alongside public ones, they are a state-sponsored, army-trained but autonomous class of warriors, who live in a parallel religious-military society but also blend in with the profane environment and have strong local constituencies, undertaking external violence but also social work at home. They are conceptually different from mercenaries, for their foot soldiers do not

130. It is impossible to get reliable figures as to the total number of Jihadist cadres and recruits, but they might not have exceeded 30,000 in total at any point. The two most important Jihadist groups, the Hizb-ul-Mujahidin and the Lashkar-i-Tayyebah, totalled altogether 2,060 fighters active in Indian Kashmir (60% of the entire irregular force) in 2002. To these, the Harkat-ul-Mujahidin and the Jaish-i-Mohammed should be added (no figures available) as well as non-active combatants.

131. KHOSROKHAVAR, Farhad, *Les nouveaux martyrs d'Allah*, Paris, Flammarion, 2002, pp. 124-173.

132. DAVIS and PEREIRA (eds.), *op. cit.*, p. 18.

get any salary (contrary to what is regularly stated),<sup>133</sup> and they do not fight an external enemy in the name of national integrity alone but also of Islamic brotherhood, and/or at times an internal enemy not in the name of “law and order” but of the protection of their respective Islamic traditions. In this sense they are, in comparison to the state, alternative agents of militarized coercion.

The army-jihadist relation is often, and very tellingly, described by their protagonists as a “forced marriage”: indeed, it operates along the lines of a “patron-client relationship”.<sup>134</sup> This patron-client relationship is historically rooted. Religiously-inspired irregulars have been used in all wars against India. The 1947 war was, de facto, sub-contracted to private armies – *lashkar* – autonomously raised in the tribal areas to support their “Muslim brothers” to secede from India, while former Kashmiri soldiers were also rebelling on their own against their ruler. The Pakistan army provided logistic support and supervised them. These irregulars even got plots of land as a reward for their contribution to the 1947-48 war. In 1965 once again, the army relied on irregulars, raised this time within Indian Kashmir itself, while in 1971 the Jamaat-i-Islami’s youth wing was used to fight the Bengali rebels. During the 1999 Kargil war, operational tasks were even precisely shared out between the Jihadists and the conventional army.

Initially, the policy of Pakistani strategists was nurtured by a peculiar synthesis between the Afghan success story, the desire to take revenge for the 1971 defeat and the compulsion of a nuclear South Asia. The hope was that once ripe, the “Kashmiri apple” (a term used by a retired DG-ISI) would fall easily into Pakistan’s lap: India would be forced to leave Kashmir, as the Soviet Union did in Afghanistan, and the truth of the “two-nations theory” would be firmly established. So when after the 1987 rigged elections thousands of young Kashmiri Muslims joined the ranks of the Jammu and Kashmir Liberation Front (JKLF, an ethno-nationalist and pro-independence armed movement,

133. For instance in: STERN, Jessica, “Pakistan’s Jihad Culture”, *Foreign Affairs*, 79 (6), November/December 2000, p. 120. But former recruits from the Lashkar-i-Tayyeba clearly deny this.

134. “A relation of personal dependency based on an exchange of reciprocal favours between two persons, the patron and the client [...]; it is a mutually beneficial exchange but between unequal partners” as defined in MÉDARD, Jean-François, “Le rapport de clientèle. Du phénomène social à l’analyse politique”, *Revue française de science politique*, 1, 1976, p. 103. I have applied this conceptual framework to one Jihadist militia in particular in BLOM, Amélie, “A Patron-Client Perspective on Militia-State Relations: The Case of the Hizb-ul-Mujahidin of Kashmir”, in L. Gayer and C. Jaffrelot (eds.), *Armed Militias of South Asia. Fundamentalists, Maoists and Separatists*, London, New York, Hurst & Columbia University Press, 2009, pp. 135-158.

formed in the mid-1960s and reunited in the late 1980s) and crossed to Pakistan for training, the army provided maximum support. But the Kashmiri apple continued to rot without falling. The army therefore launched a *jihad* of attrition with less ambitious goals: to keep a dispute alive that had long fallen into abeyance in international forums, and exhaust India in a costly and demoralizing guerrilla war. Importantly, it had also become necessary to protect Pakistan’s territorial sovereignty by preventing the JKL’s agenda to seize ground in its own part of Kashmir. Hence the support to irregulars shifted to the Hizb-ul-Mujahidin, a Kashmiri-led Islamist group based in Pakistan, fighting for the state’s annexation to its Muslim neighbour.

The Pakistan army gradually got caught up in a dynamic that became self-perpetuating (in a similar pattern to that of its land redistribution policy). Firstly, Jihadist forces composed exclusively of Pakistani recruits were needed so as to avoid Indian-trained renegades retaliating heavily against Hizb families. Moreover, it became necessary to “purge” the armed groups that proliferated (over 100 in 1992, drawn by Pakistani funds) from their criminal elements so as to prevent the irredentist project of uniting Kashmir with Pakistan from being further discredited. This was a task that the puritan and Ahl-i-Hadith inspired Lashkar-i-Tayyebah was well placed to perform.<sup>135</sup> Other Pakistani irregulars proved too volatile and uncontrollable, such as the Harkat-ul-Mujahidin that started to kidnap foreigners and was involved in sectarian violence. Thirdly, the Punjabi-dominated Lashkar could more easily garner popular support in Pakistan’s heartland and extend the struggle to South Kashmir.

These jihadist groups proved to be formidable recruiting machines: thanks to massive propaganda and well-structured networks, they ensured a regular flow of young Pakistanis used as cannon fodder, an estimated 12,000 of them died in Kashmir in between 1990 and 2001<sup>136</sup>. Yet increased Indian army repression and the failure of the Kargil war led these groups to introduce a new pattern of violence: “*fedayeen ac-*

135. The Ahl-i-Hadith is a reformist movement, also frequently called “Wahhabi”, formed in the 19th century to purge Indian Islam from popular Sufi practices and syncretic Hindu influences. It also rejects the Hanafi jurisprudence followed in Pakistan.

136. This is a compilation of the number of “martyrs” claimed by a dozen of Pakistan-based Jihadist groups, as quoted in: RANA, Muhammad Amir, *Jihad Kashmir wa Afghanistan. Jihadi tanzimon aur mazhabi jamaaton ka aik jaiza* (Urdu), Lahore, Mashal Books, 2002.



tions”, followed by suicide-attacks. Hence they gradually established an ideological framework in which “martyrdom” (*shahadat*) was no longer simply an element of combat rhetoric but a motivating force to prepare militants to die. The social impact of this “martyrography” was aggravated by the fact that these groups recruited all over Pakistan (except Baluchistan) and that their social base was also diverse. Indeed, there is no “typical sociological profile” of Jihadist recruits, and individual trajectories prove more helpful in understanding why young men decided to join them.

The irregular armed forces based in the Pashtun-dominated Federally Administered Tribal Areas (FATA), and fighting in Afghanistan as well as in Pakistan against US and Pakistani troops since the mid-2000s, stem from a distinct set of factors. Wars in the name of jihad against “occupation troops” also have strong historical roots in Pakistan, preceding the country’s foundation in this border area that was traditionally a “buffer state” between British India and Afghanistan.<sup>137</sup>

Resistance against Britain’s “forward policy” led to an increased politicisation, then militarization, of local “mullahs” in the future Pakistan’s tribal agencies. Their instrumentalization by the Afghan monarchy, and then by independent Pakistan in its first war against India, reinforced the process of privatizing wars in the name of “jihad” in this region. In addition, the newly independent Pakistani government negotiated a deal with the local tribes ensuring that the army would withdraw, leaving the tribes to control their own affairs whilst policing was provided by locally recruited paramilitary forces. Later on, in the 1980s and 1990s, the region became the launching pad for the Afghan “jihad” against the Soviets and for the Taliban forces fighting against the Northern Alliance. Logically, the Afghan and Pakistani Taliban’s opposition against the US army-led intervention in 2001 and against the Pakistani state’s collaboration to the “war on terror” was again rooted in the FATA. This situation, added to a new assertiveness of Deobandi inspired sectarian groups targeting religious minorities (Shias and Ahmadis), but also the Barelwi Sunni majority, translated into a wave of suicide and fedayeen attacks all over Pakistan (an average of 50 per year since 2007).

---

137. One of the most important Sufi brotherhoods of that time (the Naqshbandiyya and Deobandi tariqa of Akhund Abdul Ghaffur, 1793-1878) alone launched a dozen such “jihads” in the tribal agencies from the mid-19th century to 1948. On this topic, see: HAROON, Sana, *Frontier of Faith. Islam in the Indo-Afghan Border*, London, Hurst, 2007.

The Pakistani Neo-Taliban (to distinguish them from the original Taliban force gathered in the years 1990-94) are the most challenging irregulars that the Pakistan army has ever had to experience (since the Bengali rebellion of 1970-71). They are all the most difficult to co-opt as the patron-client pattern of relationship never applied to them as strictly as it did for the Jihadists sent to Kashmir. The co-optation of the Neo-Taliban is even more difficult as they have established strong links (ideological, financial, and family-based) with Afghan, Arab, and Central Asian “mujahidin” - thereby proving Davis’ intuition that transnational links make a difference on the impact irregulars have on state development.<sup>138</sup> Finally, at a sociological level, they represent a new type of fundamentalist leadership, akin to the Afghan Taliban,<sup>139</sup> and whose resources combine their status as religious specialist in the Deobandi tradition (though a very rudimentary one), the invocation of a privileged link with the Prophet, their previous participation in military “jihad” in Afghanistan and, lastly, their very confrontation with the state.

Though both phenomena – jihadism in Kashmir and in the Tribal Areas/Afghanistan – are historically and sociologically distinct, there are links between the two fronts. Firstly, the first generation of cadres and recruits of all the Kashmir-oriented Jihadist organizations were trained in the “Afghan jihad” during the late 1980s, and some continued to do so throughout the 1990s, hence their cadres maintain close links with many Taliban commanders. Secondly, the use of suicidal operations in the 1990s state-sponsored “jihad” in Kashmir and in the 2000s Neo-Taliban insurgency are structurally interrelated: the strategy of self-sacrificial violence that both the Pakistan army and the Jihadist groups had promoted on the Eastern front for years helped to transform “martyrs” into national heroes (as proved by the popular movies of the 1990s) in the eyes of many Islamist activists. Finally, some former Jihadist leaders and recruits, who used to operate in Kashmir, have joined hands with the Pakistan Tehreek-i-Taliban (a loose network that has been formed along the Afghan border, particularly in the Waziristan, Bajaur and Khyber agencies), and with local sectarian groups, against what they perceive as a “treacherous” Pakistan army.

138. DAVIS and PEREIRA (eds.), *op. cit.*, p. 24.

139. On the Taliban’s sociological profile, see: DORRONSORO, Gilles, *Revolution Unending. Afghanistan. 1979 to the Present*, London, New York, Hurst & Columbia University Press, 2005.

## Is Pakistan in the Same Dilemma as 19<sup>th</sup> century western states?

From being an asset, irregulars became a burden in the post-9/11 international environment. Under tremendous US pressure, the Pakistan army was compelled to sever its links with the Taliban and to officially ban the Jihadist groups involved in Kashmir.<sup>140</sup> This led to a freeze on their activities, especially in the mid-2000s. The situation had, indeed, changed drastically. On the Western front, the army is now compelled to fight a war on its own territory that it did not want to fight and was not trained to do (the centrality of the Indian “threat” meant that counter-insurgency was never a strategic priority for the military).

Jihadists from the Kashmiri front took distinct trajectories after 2001-03. Some became very discrete on Pakistani soil, such as the Hizb-ul-Mujahidin, and marginally active in Kashmir itself. Others, such as the Lashkar concentrated on re-Islamising society and on a slow but steady “conversion” to the Ahl-e-Hadith school of thought of the predominantly Sufi-oriented Pakistani society. Yet either collectively, as alleged by the Indian authorities, or as a splinter faction as many reliable analysts argue, this group also continued to launch attacks on Indian soil, the latest being the November 2008 bloodshed in Mumbai. Others, closer to the Harkat, turned their violence against their former military patrons. They made the army, police and politicians pay for abandoning the Taliban and the “Kashmir cause”. Some collaborated in terrorist attacks on Pakistan’s soil or have even been held responsible for attempting to murder General Pervez Musharraf. Others left for the Tribal Agencies and joined the ranks of the Pakistani Taliban, as observed above.

In the post 9/11 systemic shift, the Pakistan army is thus confronted with a difficult dilemma: how can it forbid and de-legitimate a pattern of private violence that it itself helped to structure? Though Pakistan in 2010 is surely distinct from 19<sup>th</sup> century Europe, the historical comparison is useful in discussing this point. European states took more than a century to de-legitimate and finally eliminate the various non-state actors (privateers, filibusters, mercantile companies, corsairs, etc.) they had initially encouraged so as to gain maximum freedom of action and minimum responsibility in its confrontation

---

<sup>140</sup>. In January 2002. Yet all of them regrouped under new names and gave birth to dozens of splinter groups.

with other states. Among the major factors which explain why (partially) subcontracting wars to private forces eventually receded are firstly, according to Janice Thomson, "unintended consequences" (privateering generating organized piracy, mercenaries threatening to drag their own states into other states' wars, etc.). These consequences, in turn, raised the question of state accountability for their irregulars' actions. Secondly, she suggests that the impetus for change came not from domestic political actors, but from systemic force, i.e. states exerting pressure on each other so as not to be pushed into unwanted wars.

Unintended consequences played a major part in convincing the Pakistan army to change the pattern of its relationship with the Jihadists: the attack on the Indian Parliament (December 2001, attributed to the Lashkar-i-Tayyeba and the Jaish-i-Mohammad) led India to mobilize half of its army along the Pakistani border, thus forcing the Pakistan army to replicate, a situation which put the two countries on the verge of a fourth conventional war that only US mediation helped to avoid. This terrorist attack reportedly also prompted Musharraf to storm into the ISI Islamabad office and tell its DG-Internal Security to "leash in these mad dogs that you have kept" and to transfer a host of ISI officers serving in the Kashmir.<sup>141</sup> As was the case for modern-area Western states as well, the impetus for change came not from within the society but from systemic factors: US military pressure and the Indian military threat. This led General Musharraf to guarantee his Indian counterparts that no territory under Pakistan's control would be used for terrorist activities. Though these moves were criticized as mere eyewash and proved insufficient (their failure to prevent, for instance, the 2008 attack in Mumbai), they were nevertheless important: it was the first time that the Pakistani state recognized, officially, legal responsibility for private violence emanating from its territory. Similarly, after the 2008 attack in Mumbai, Pakistani officials eventually publicly recognized, even if in a tortuous and reluctant way, that they were in part responsible for controlling their "non-state actors".

Hence Pakistan's present difficulties in dealing with irregulars can be analysed as a particularly interesting yet arduous case of this journey from "heteronomy" to "full sovereignty" that most Western states endured before, for the state cannot "claim a monopoly on violence

---

141. Quoted in: HASAN, Syed Shoaib, "The Whole Truth", Herald (Karachi), October 2005, p. 34.

within its territory and disclaim responsibility for violence emanating from that space”.<sup>142</sup> If this is what its international donors and neighbours now demand of the Pakistan military and government, and is not so difficult (yet nor is it easy) to achieve at the discursive level, what it means in real terms is far more complicated and time-consuming. This means putting in place new techniques, practices, and methods of power which can convince international partners and former jihadist clients alike that the - always elusive yet not illusory - boundary that marks the state as “a real exterior” vis-à-vis society does exist, to paraphrase Timothy Mitchell,<sup>143</sup> something that the Pakistani state never really felt the need to do so far as the conduct of wars is concerned.

---

142. THOMSON, *op. cit.*, p. 4.

143. MITCHELL, *op. cit.*, p. 90.

## CONCLUSION

The Pakistan military has undergone major changes since its inception, notably in the pattern of its praetorianism, of its economic activities, and just as importantly of its privatisation of violence. At a political level, the military-state relationship was initially based on an alliance with the bureaucracy to sideline political forces perceived as incapable of governing the country alone.

Over time this norm acquired a semi-formalized pattern and acted as a constraint on both the civilian and the military leadership. It recently transformed into a “normalized”, yet not fully democratic, sharing of tasks. Secondly, the military’s rent-seeking process came to rely on two main assets: the country’s geo-strategic location, which ensured a regular flow of foreign funds (with the exception of the 1990s), and state land which has been systematically “colonized” (in addition to the bureaucracy and the corporate sector). Consequently, the Pakistan armed forces evolved into a powerful economic class. This process has contributed to shape a sense of “military syndicalism” and contributed to the institution’s internal cohesion, yet it has

profoundly altered military-society relations. Thirdly, the army has been regularly sub-contracting regional wars to semi-private militias. In so doing, it has authorized and legitimized non-state violence to an extent rarely known in today's army-dominated states, one that puts it, in the present context of a regional “pax Americana” in a terribly difficult situation.

In all three realms, the armed forces built on the colonial legacy and initially adopted an “accommodating” strategy. But after the militarily, politically, and economically traumatic decade of the 1970s, the pattern of the army's intrusion into state power, of buttressing its internal economy, and of using irregulars changed. Each followed its own trajectory but, at a wider level, they are interrelated: they all partake of a “restructuring” strategy. Several factors provoked this: the particular dynamics of more numerous and more materialistically oriented military personnel, the resilience of political forces, the difficulty the army had in stabilizing its share of state power, financial pressures, and an unprecedented demand for sub-contracting violence to “non-state actors”, initially emanating, as it is important to remember, from the US administration (as far as Afghanistan is concerned) and from fighters based in Kashmir.

This evolution of the Pakistan military has obviously had deep consequences on military-state-society relations. Political instability has become the norm and, as a close observer puts it, “increasingly, the Pakistan Army is seen by many as a corporate entity that functions as the most effective political party in the country, protecting its interests, sometimes even at the expense of national interests”.<sup>144</sup>

The haughty pride that a General can exhibit today has much more to do with his status as potential patron than it has with his prowess on the battlefield. Finally, years of sub-contracting the war to “idealistic” irregulars has not only deeply affected the social fabric of the country but has also put the Pakistan army in an almost unbearable situation in the new systemic environment. In other words, the restructuring strategy - enforced in the political, societal and security fields - ended up by “dislocating and relativizing the boundaries between the ‘pu-

---

144. NAWAZ, *op. cit.*, p. xxxiv.

blic’ and the ‘private’, between ‘the “economical’ and the ‘political’, between the ‘licit’ and the ‘illicit’”;<sup>145</sup> an evolution whose far-reaching consequences should continue to be further documented.<sup>146</sup>

**Amélie Blom**  
**Research Fellow,**  
**Institut d’études de l’Islam et des Sociétés du Monde Musulman**  
**(IISMM/EHESS)**

---

145. HIBOU, Béatrice, “De la privatisation des économies à la privatisation des Etats. Une analyse de la formation continue de l’Etat”, in B. Hibou (ed.), *La privatisation des Etats*, Paris, Karthala, 1999, p. 14.

146. This paper has benefited from the institutional support of the French Agence Nationale de la Recherche-ANR (as part of a research project on “Conflicts, Wars, Violence: Modes and Scales of Conflictuality in Turkey, Iran and Pakistan”). A preliminary version was presented at the Carnegie Middle East Center’s Workshop on “The Military in the Middle East”, Beirut, 7-9 July, 2008. I am also deeply grateful to the Pakistani analysts, Ayesha Siddiq and Hasan-Askari Rizvi in particular, as well as to the retired officers from the Armed Forces, who devoted some of their precious time to answering to my questions. I would also like to thank Vali Reza Nasr for his comments and suggestions on an older version of this text, as well as Adrian Morfee for helping me with the intricacies of English.