

Civil military Relations

Question: Under the historical pretext of the British colonialism, what is the evolution of Civil-military Relations (CmR) in Pakistan? What should be the mechanism for enhancing CmR in the country?

Civil military Relations in Pakistan

Understanding Civil military Relations

Civil-military Relations (CmR) refer to the relationship and interactions between the civilian (non-military) sector, including government and society, and the military (armed forces) within a country. Civil-military Relations encompass various aspects, including governance, control of the military, decision-making processes, and the roles and responsibilities of the military in both peacetime and during crises. The nature of CmR can significantly impact a nation's political stability, governance, and overall security.

According to Valdimir Rukavishnikov and Michael Pugh, CmR is "the relationship between civilians (people without arms), the society at large, and the military (people with arms)."

If democracy functions smoothly, it means that the Civil military Relations are strong, but if there is a military dictatorship, then the CmR are weak.

British Legacy and Roots of Colonialism

1. **Colonial Purpose to Rule Over India:** British colonial rule in India was motivated by economic interests, seeking to exploit the country's resources and establish a market for British goods.

2. Development of State Institutions During Colonial Period: The British introduced a centralized bureaucracy, legal systems, and administrative structures through the Indian Civil Service (ICS), significantly impacting governance in India.

3. Role of Civilian and Military Bureaucracy in the Colony: The ICS, predominantly composed of British officers, governed India alongside a substantial military presence used for control and suppression of resistance.

4. Growth of Democracy, Democratic Culture, and Institutions in Colonial India: While democratic principles were not fully extended to India, the colonial period fostered political awareness and nationalist movements, notably the Indian National Congress.

5. Literacy Rate in Colonial Society: Literacy rates remained low due to limited access to education, which primarily aimed at creating an elite class to assist the colonial administration. Widespread literacy promotion began post-independence.

Civil military Relations in Pakistan

Civil-military Relations (CmR) in Pakistan are characterized by a complex history, with periods of military rule and civilian governance.

The military has wielded significant political influence, impacting governance and security. Balancing these relations is vital for Pakistan's political stability. Pakistan has seen thirty-three years of military rule since its inception.

Shamshad Ahmed, in his writing 'Pakistan and World Affairs' mentions that "Story of Pakistan is one of the remorseless tug and pull between civilian and military rulers in one hand, and the liberal and religious forces on the other."

mentioned below are some of the many factors that influence the Civil military Relations in Pakistan:

5. Formal Leadership of the Defense ministry:

The ministry of Defense (MoD) should be formally headed by a defense minister. This appointment should ensure that there are no bypasses or direct meetings between the Head of the State, the Head of the military, and the Services Chiefs. This will help maintain a structured and accountable chain of command.

6. Key Appointments:

Key positions, such as the Foreign Minister and National Security Advisor, should never be kept vacant. Consistent leadership in these roles is crucial for effective decision-making and coordination.

7. Empower Provincial Police Forces:

Provincial Police Forces should have an effective, independent role, at least in line with the provisions of the Police Order 2002. Each Provincial Government should work on strengthening the capabilities of their police forces, and the Federal Government should coordinate and support these efforts.

8. Rule of Law Reform:

The Federal Government should present a comprehensive plan to reform Pakistan's rule of law structure to align with the country's security needs. Strengthening the rule of law is fundamental for ensuring justice, stability, and respect for human rights.

9. Institutional Framework for Security:

A separate institutional framework for the security of Vuips, Vips, and constitutional setups should be established. This framework will help ensure the safety and security of key individuals and institutions while maintaining clarity and accountability.

5- Perpetual Security Threat:

The security landscape in Pakistan was shaped by both internal and external threats, transforming the nation into a security state.

These threats favored the ascendancy of the military.

Internally, Pakistan faced challenges from communism, religious extremism, ethnic ambitions, and terrorism.

Externally, the country confronted threats from neighboring countries, including various Indo-Pak wars (1947-48, 1965, 1971, 1998), and war threats over the years, further strengthening the role of the military in national security.

6- Strong Civil Dependency on Army:

The Pakistan Army's deep involvement in civil administration stemmed from the weaknesses of welfare and law enforcement institutions. In 1947, the army established a civil secretariat in Karachi, vacating barracks for civil servants. The army played a vital role in refugee rehabilitation, security provision, disaster relief, and support during elections and censuses. Its reliability and effectiveness in maintaining law and order led to frequent calls for assistance in times of crisis, such as in Karachi, Balochistan, Swat, and erstwhile FATA. The military conducted minute operations as well, instead of police and other departments, as seen in events like the Lal Masjid operation, Chotto Gang in Punjab, and Karachi Operations, and operations in Hyderabad and rural Sindh. The military's involvement extended to civilian departments, including Civil Services, Education, WAPDA, Railway, PAA, and Steel mill, further entrenching its role in governance.

1- Incompetent Political Leadership:

The early years of Pakistan were marked by a leadership vacuum following the demise of Quaid e Azam Muhammad Ali Jinnah and the tragic assassination of Liaquat Ali Khan. This leadership void exacerbated the issue of ineffective second-tier leaders. Akbar Hameedi's assessment of this period noted that internal bickering among politicians, who often lacked an all-Pakistan following, played a detrimental role and contributed to the imposition of martial law. Some politicians even exploited the unblemished reputation of the Quaid's sister, Fatima Jinnah, as a rallying point for advancing their personal interests. (Writings on Fatima Jinnah part of resistance literature, 2003). In addition to this, this complex political landscape also witnessed the induction of bureaucrats like A.M. Malik, Ghulam Muhammad, and Zafarullah Khan into the cabinet. Furthermore, in 1954, almost nine cabinet members were chosen from outside the Parliament, including General Muhammad Ayub Khan. Moreover, delays in constitution-making processes further fueled the rise of authoritarian governance, with the absence of healthy democratic traditions and the postponement of elections which left politicians without significant political power until 1970, ushering in a period of political uncertainty.

2- Weak Political Forces:

A strong and well-organized political landscape is essential for a healthy constitutional and political system. However, in Pakistan, political parties struggled to become robust vehicles for national political will. The pioneer political party was inadequately organized, and many native Pakistani politicians were associated with the feudal or landlord class, often lacking a genuine commitment to democratic ideals. The clash between federal and provincial governments in 1953 led to the first imposition of martial law, and this pattern was repeated in the 1990s, underscoring the country's political fragility.

3- Weak Institutions:

In the aftermath of independence, Pakistan faced the challenge of building institutions from scratch, unlike India, which inherited more established governmental structures. This institutional void extended to key institutions such as Parliament, the civil secretariat, Supreme Courts, the central bank, and the armed forces. The lack of well-established institutions increased the likelihood of authoritarian governance. Moreover, there was a shortage of competent parliamentarians and a weak civil bureaucracy, including the judiciary. Notably, the Pakistan Army quickly established itself as a dominant institution, setting the stage for a complex civil-military relationship.

4- Rising Power of Civil-military Bureaucracy:

The growing influence of the civil-military bureaucracy in Pakistan was due to several reasons. These included a shortage of essential infrastructure, a political leadership crisis marked by a lack of strong leaders in the second tier, and the bureaucracy stepping in to fill the leadership gap. Historical events like the **dissolution of the National Assembly in 1954** and the role of the judicial bureaucracy, particularly their interpretation and use of "**Law of necessity**," played significant roles. The **abrogation of the constitution and dissolution of assemblies in 1956**, along with the postponement of general elections, marked a pivotal moment. The period of military dominance, beginning with CMLA's (Chief military-Dictatorship Administrator) rule and the emergence of military dictatorship, saw its peak during **General Ayub's era (1958-68)**, which was a golden age for bureaucracy, characterized by immense power without political interference. The subsequent years of **General Yahya (1969-71)** witnessed political disunity and disintegration, culminating in the **breakup of the country in 1971**. The civilian rule under Bhutto marked a challenge to the powerful bureaucracy, but the weakness of political leadership allowed the induction of a **third military dictator**. The **1990s** saw the influential role of the **troika** and a series of weak political governments.

Recommendations for Improving CmR

Improving Civil-military Relations (CmR) in Pakistan requires a comprehensive approach and the implementation of key recommendations to ensure a balanced constitutional equation. Here are some crucial suggestions for enhancing CmR in Pakistan:

1. Regulation of the National Security Committee:

The passage of an **Act of Parliament** to regulate the workings of the National Security Committee is essential. This act would establish clear guidelines for the committee's operations, ensuring transparency and accountability in decision-making processes related to national security.

2. Periodic Review of National Security Policy:

Relevant Standing Committees of the Senate and National Assembly, along with plenary sessions, should undertake periodic reviews of the **National Security Policy** after its announcement. Regular assessments will help in assessing the policy's effectiveness and making necessary adjustments.

3. Rejuvenation of the Defense Council:

The Defense Council, chaired by the defense minister, should be revitalized. It should convene regularly, **at least once a month** or as required, to foster dialogue and coordination between civilian and military leadership.

4. Provincial Apex Committees:

Clear notifications should define the membership, roles, and functions of Provincial Apex Committees. These committees play a critical role in addressing security issues at the provincial level and should operate with transparency and accountability.

Conclusion

Implementing these recommendations will help establish a balanced and transparent civil-military relationship, strengthening democratic institutions and promoting national security in Pakistan.

In conclusion, the concept of "Civil-military Relations," particularly with a focus on "**Civilian Supremacy**," does not fully capture the complex and dynamic nature of the relationship in Pakistan.

Instead, Pakistan's Civil-military Relations are shaped by specific incidents and the often-conflicting interests of civilian and military leadership.

To establish the supremacy of civilian government over military leadership, it is imperative that the political leadership set a clear and superior agenda for the nation, one that prioritizes national interests over personal concerns. This agenda should encompass a comprehensive doctrine addressing national unity, internal and external threats, and should also acknowledge and incorporate the interests of the military alongside those of civilian leaders.

Achieving a more stable and balanced Civil-military Relationship in Pakistan requires a shared vision of national welfare and unity that transcends individual ambitions, fostering a harmonious collaboration between civilian and military leaders to ensure the country's prosperity and security.