

Musharraf & Zardari's Regime in Pakistan

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Abstract

Musharraf and Zardari's regime have seen tough times. Support for War on Terrorism and declining economic development led to the failure of the governments of the two.

It is important to understand the factors that led to the failure of these two governments and increase in the debt of Pakistan.

Introduction

Musharraf's era started from 12th of October, 1999 and ended on 18th of August, 2008. These almost nine years were very important in the history of Pakistan. Musharraf's era had some positive aspects as well as some negative. We will discuss his implementation of Martial Law and his important reforms and its aftermaths.

Musharraf's Takeover

12th of October, 1999 was an important day in the history of Pakistan. It was also the darkest day for the democracy of Pakistan. This was the day when Musharraf took the charge of the country by enforcing Martial Law and ruled out democracy. Imposing a Martial Law is treason and violation of Article 6 of 1973's Constitution of Pakistan.

Presidency

The presidency of Pervez Musharraf helped bring the liberal forces at the national level for the first time in the history of Pakistan. Musharraf disbanded the cultural policies of Prime Minister Nawaz Sharif and

quickly adopted Benazir Bhutto's cultural policies after disbanding the Indian channels in the country.

His cultural policies liberalized the Pakistan's media and issued many television licenses to private sector to open television centers and media houses. The television dramas, film industry, theatre, music and literature activities were personally encouraged by Pervez Musharraf. Under his policies, musical bands got appraisal in the country and many concerts in the country were held each week. In 2001, Musharraf got on stage with the rock music band, Junoon and sang a national song with the band.

Support for War on Terrorism

Musharraf allied with the United States against the Afghan mujahedeen after the September 11 attacks. The Afghan mujahedeen, Al-Qaeda operatives and other fundamentalist groups had been long consolidated and endorsed by the US backed President, General Zia-ul-Haq and the initial financial funding and consolidation was also endorsed by the United States against the Soviet Union in 1980s.

A few months after the September 11 attacks, Musharraf gave a speech against Islamic ideology. He instituted prohibitions on foreign students' access to studying Islam within Pakistan, an effort which began as an outright ban but was later reduced to restrictions on obtaining visas. On 18th of September, 2005 Musharraf made a speech before an audience of Jewish leadership, sponsored by the American Jewish Congress's Council for World Jewry, in New York City. In the speech, he denounced Islamic ideology and opened the

door to relationships between his secular ideology and Israel. He was widely criticized by Middle Eastern leaders, but was met with some praise among Jewish leadership.

Relations with India

After the 2001 Gujarat earthquake, Musharraf expressed his sympathies to Indian Prime Minister Atal Bihari Vajpayee and sent a plane loaded with relief supplies to India. In the mid-2004, Musharraf began a series of talks with India to resolve the Kashmir dispute.

Relations with Saudi Arabia

In 2006, King Abdullah visited Pakistan for the first time as King. Musharraf honored King Abdullah with the Nishan-e-Pakistan. Later Musharraf received the King Abdul-Aziz Medallion in 2007.

Nuclear scandals

Since September, 2001 until his resignation in 2007 from the army, his presidency suffered more highly controversial atomic scandals than any other government in the history of the country. These scandals badly affected his authoritative legitimacy in the country and in the international community. On October, 2001, Musharraf authorized a

sting operation led by FIA to arrest two physicists Sultan Bashiruddin Mahmood and Chaudhary Abdul Majeed due to their supposed connection with Taliban after they secretly visited Taliban in 2000. The local Pakistani media widely circulated the reports that Mahmood had a meeting with Osama Bin Laden where Bin Laden had shown the interests of building a radiological weapon. Later, it was revealed that the accused scientists could not build such designs of the bomb and lacked scientific knowledge of such weapons. The credibility of these two scientists was put in great doubts about their role in country's atomic bomb program. In December, 2001, he authorized the security hearings of these two scientists and was taken into the custody of the JAG Branch (JAG) where the security hearings continued until the early 2002.

Another widely controversial scandal during Musharraf's presidency arose as a consequence of the disclosure of atomic proliferation by Dr. Abdul Qadeer Khan. Earlier in 27 February, 2001, Musharraf spoke highly of Abdul Qadeer Khan in a farewell state dinner in Islamabad. In 2004, Musharraf relieved Qadeer Khan from his post and initially denied knowledge of government's and the armed forces role in nuclear proliferation, despite Qadeer Khan urging that Musharraf was the 'Big Boss' of the proliferation ring. Following this, Musharraf authorized a national security hearing of Qadeer Khan which would be continued until his resignation from the army in 2007. According to Zahid Malik, Musharraf and the military establishment at that time exercised rough actions against Qadeer Khan to prove the loyalty of Pakistan to the United States and Western world.

On July 4, 2008 Qadeer Khan in an interview laid the blame on President Musharraf and later on Benazir Bhutto for transferring the technology, claiming that Musharraf was aware of all the deals and he was the 'Big Boss' for those deals. Abdul Qadeer Khan said that Musharraf gave centrifuges to North Korea in a 2000 shipment

supervised by the armed forces. The equipment was sent in a North Korean plane loaded under the supervision of Pakistan security officials. Nuclear weapons expert David Albright of the ISIS agrees that Qadeer Khan's activities were government-sanctioned. After Musharraf's resignation, Qadeer Khan was finally released from house arrest by the executive order of the Supreme Court of Pakistan. After Musharraf departed from the country, the successive Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff Committee General Tariq Majid terminated all further debriefings of Abdul Qadeer Khan.

Domestic politics

In December, 2003 Musharraf made a deal with MMA, a six-member temporary union of far-right Islamic parties, agreeing to leave the army by 31st of December, 2004. With that party's support, pro-Musharraf legislators were able to muster the two-thirds super majority required to pass the Seventeenth Amendment, which retroactively legalized Musharraf's 1999 coup and many of his decrees. In late 2004, Musharraf went back on his agreement with the MMA and pro-Musharraf legislators in the Parliament passed a bill allowing Musharraf to keep both offices. On 1st of January, 2004 Musharraf had won a confidence vote in the Electoral College of Pakistan, consisting of both houses of Parliament and the four provincial assemblies.

Women's rights

The National Assembly voted in favor of the 'Women's Protection Bill' on 15th of November, 2006 and the Senate approved it on 23rd of November, 2006. President General Pervez Musharraf signed into law the 'Women's Protection Bill', on 1st of December, 2006. The bill placed rape laws under the penal code and allegedly does away with harsh conditions that previously required victims to produce four male witnesses and exposed the victims to prosecution for adultery, if they were unable to prove the crime. However, the Women's Protection bill has been criticized heavily by many for paying continued lip service and failing to address the actual problem by its roots: repealing the Hudood Ordinance. In this context, Musharraf has also been criticized by women and human rights activists for not following up his words by action. The Human Rights Commission of Pakistan (HRCP) said that '*The so-called Women's Protection Bill is a farcical attempt at making Hudood Ordinances palatable*' outlining the issues of the bill and the continued impact on women.

His government increased reserved seats for women in assemblies, to increase women's representation and make their presence more effective.

Major Reforms and Achievements

The list of the Musharraf's reforms is given below,

- a. Nine world class engineering universities were developed. The cost of building these Universities was over PRs. 96.5 billion.
- b. In 1999-2000 there were 31 Public Universities. In 2005-2006 there were 49 Public Universities. Air University (established 2002), Institute of Space Technology (established 2002), University of Science & Technology, Bannu (established 2005), University of Hazara (founded 2002), University of Gujrat (established 2004), Virtual University of Pakistan, Lahore (established 2002)
- c. Literacy rate in Pakistan increased from 45% (in 2002) to 53% (in 2005). Education received 4% of GDP and English was introduced as a compulsory subject from grade 1.
- d. In total, 99,319 educational institutions increased in Musharraf's era.
- e. There were more than 5,000 Pakistanis doing PhDs in foreign countries on scholarships in Musharraf's era. 300 Pakistanis receive PhD degrees every year, in the year 1999 this number was just 20.
- f. Major Industrial estates were developed under Musharraf's vision: M3 industrial, Sundar industrial estate, Chakri industrial, etc.
- g. In 1999 what we earned as GDP: we used to give away 64.1% as foreign debt and liabilities. In 2006, what we earned as GDP: we gave only 28.3% as foreign debt and liabilities. We were saving 35% of our GDP for economic growth at that time.
- h. According to an IMF report, Pakistan was 3rd in banking profitability in the world. On the IMF chart, Pakistan's banking profitability was on third position after Colombia and Venezuela. On the same IMF chart, India was on the 36th position and China was on the 40th position.
- i. According to the Economic Survey of 2005, poverty in Pakistan in 2001 was 34.46%. And after 7-8 years of Musharraf, poverty in 2005 was reduced to 23.9%. Thus, poverty decreased by

10.56%. Overall, 12 million people had been pushed out of Poverty in 2001-2005.

- j. The government was providing Sui Gas facility to areas of South Punjab at a cost of PRs. 1.311 billion. A total of 1,138 kilometer gas pipeline was being laid. The districts benefiting from these schemes mainly include Multan, Khanewal, Bahawalnagar, Rajanpur, DG Khan, Vehari and Muzaffargarh.
- k. The Compressed Natural Gas (CNG) sector of Pakistan had attracted over PRs. 70 billion investments during the five years (2001-2006) as a result of liberal and encouraging policies of the government. 1,765 CNG stations were operating in the country, in 85 cities and towns. It provided employment for 30,000 people in the country.
- l. The economy was the third fastest growing economy after China and India.
- m. Five dams were built: Mirani, Subakzai, Gomalzam, Khurram and Tangi.
- n. Seven motorways were completed or were under construction.
- o. Gwadar, an advanced sea port, was developed.
- p. The GDP per Capita in 2007 was \$1000.
- q. The industrial sector registered 26 percent growth.
- r. A historic 100% increase in tax collection (amounting to PRs. 1 trillion) was observed.
- s. Revenue collection in 2007/08 was PRs. 1.002 billion.
- t. Exports in 2007 were worth \$18.5 billion where Textile exports in 2007 were worth \$11.2 billion.
- u. Pakistan development programs in 2007 were valued at PRs. 520 billion.
- v. Foreign direct investment in 2007 was \$8.5 billion.

Fall from the presidency

By August, 2007 polls showed 64% of Pakistanis did not want another Musharraf term. Controversies involving the atomic issues, Lal Masjid incident, unsuccessful operation in West, suspension of famed Chief Justice, and widely circulated criticisms from rivals, Benazir Bhutto and Nawaz Sharif had brutalized the personal image of Musharraf in public and political circles. More importantly, with Shaukat Aziz departing from the office of Prime Minister Musharraf could not have sustained his presidency any longer and dramatically fell from the presidency within a matter of eight months, after popular and mass public movements successfully called for his impeachment for the actions taken during his presidency.

Corruption issues

When Musharraf came to power in 1999, he claimed that the corruption in the government bureaucracy would be cleaned up. According to a survey conducted by Transparency International Pakistan ranked in 2001 as the world's 11th most corrupt nation. In 2007 Pakistan ranked as the 112th most corrupt nation.

Suspension and reinstatement of the Chief Justice

On March 9, 2007 when the President of Pakistan, General Pervez Musharraf, met the Chief Justice of the Pakistan Supreme Court, Iftikhar Muhammad Chaudhary reportedly importuned him to resign; the Chief Justice's refusal unleashed an unprecedented revolt led by Pakistani lawyers in support of judicial independence and the rule of law in Pakistan. Labeled as 'Lawyers' Mutiny' the movement also generated public protests that endangered President Musharraf's hold of office.

The Chief Justice's act of refusal against a generally powerful executive and in the face of pressure is unheard of in Pakistan which has seen no less than four military regimes ruling the country for significant periods during its sixty-five year history. In that time, executive-judicial relations have been strained and numerous judges have been removed despite protective provisions provided in Pakistan's present Constitution promulgated in 1973. A number of judges have resigned in the face of court-packing, reductions in retirement ages, requirements to take fresh oaths and other tactics of the government of the day.

President Musharraf is stated to have asked the Chief Justice to resign, based on grounds of alleged misconduct in the presence of Prime Minister Shaukat Aziz and six other uniform generals. The Chief Justice's reported refusal resulted in his virtual suspension and thus became 'non-functional'. At the same time President Musharraf also invoked his authority under Article 209 of the oft-patched 1973 Constitution of Pakistan to refer the alleged abuses of office by the

Chief Justice to a Supreme Judicial Council. This was the first time that a Chief Justice was made 'non-functional'. Soon after, an Acting Chief Justice was sworn-in in a hastily arranged ceremony. As explained, the second senior-most judge was picked for the acting position because the senior-most judge was out of the country.

The reference to the Council, consisting of five Supreme Court Justices chaired by the Acting Chief Justice, went into session soon after the swearing-in ceremony. During the proceedings in camera, the Council ordered Chief Justice Chaudhary not to perform functions as the Chief Justice or as a judge of the Supreme Court until the reference was decided. The suspended Chief Justice was called upon to answer in a matter of days the allegations raised against him.

The presidential reference to the Council spelled out the allegations regarding the Chief Justice's abuse of office. In May the Supreme Court suspended the Council's inquiry and after deliberating further for over four weeks, the Court ruled on June 9 that it had jurisdiction over the Chief Justice's suspension. The Court admitted a petition filed by the Chief Justice challenging the legality of the reference to the Council. At first, the government argued against the admissibility of the petition on grounds that the Council was the competent forum for the reference made against the Chief Justice. It was also asserted that the Council had the power to restrain the Chief Justice from performing his duties. Later the government offered, primarily claimed to show its 'good intentions' to accept the reference being decided by either the Supreme Court or the Council.

In a dramatic culmination on July 20, 2007 the thirteen-member Court rendered a historic decision to reinstate the Chief Justice and dismiss the charges leveled against him. Soon thereafter, President Musharraf publicly accepted the ruling, stating that judicial independence was essential for governing the country.

Lal Masjid siege

Lal Masjid had a religious school for women and the Jamia Hafsa madrassa, which was attached to the mosque. A male madrassa was only a few minutes' drive away. The mosque was often attended by prominent politicians including prime ministers, army chiefs, and presidents.

In April 2007, the mosque administration started attacking local businesses including video shops and massage parlors, because according to the mosque administration such businesses were not legitimate under their hard lined version of Islam. These attacks on local businesses were often executed by the mosque's female students. In July 2007, a confrontation occurred when government authorities made a decision to stop the violence by the madrassa students and sent officers to arrest the responsible individuals and the administration of the madrassa for violence against citizens.

This development led to a standoff between police forces and heavily armed 'students'. Mosque leaders and students refused to surrender and kept firing and shelling on police from inside the mosque building. Many police men got killed in this operation against radical fighters of the red mosque.

Conflict

Seven mosques were demolished in Islamabad which were reportedly built illegally on government's land. These mosques were directly under influence of Lal Masjid because most of the clerics appointed there were graduated from seminary build conjunctly with Lal Masjid. CDA promised to give substitute lands for these mosques after demolishing, but they were never given. The two brothers took stand against this issue and things started piling up for next so many months. This issue was conflagrated when Maulana Abdul Aziz's Fatwa came into limelight in which he stated that no Pakistani Army officer could be given an Islamic burial if died fighting the Taliban. The reason behind this Fatwa was Maulana Abdul Aziz's belief that Taliban were fighting in Afghanistan on a noble cause. This Fatwa was contentious enough to draw attention of Pakistan Army officials and plan was made somewhere at that time to get rid of these guys from scene. A campaign was started from government's side as well as from Lal Masjid's side to oppress each other's stance.

The students (both male and female) took to the streets to persuade video shops not to sell vulgar movies. The campaign took a turn for the worse when the students seized a famous brothel owner in the Aapara area, where both the Taliban-supporting Lal Masjid and the state's Inter-Services Intelligence are situated. They held the woman hostage in their seminary. Despite complaints, the government was unable to do anything about the brothels in the area because of the unholy nexus between high-ups and the prostitutes. Thus the students took matters into their own hands, much as the Taliban did as they emerged as a power in the 1990s in Afghanistan and in the Waziristan tribal areas.

The students had the full backing of prominent religious personalities. Ghazi Abdul Rasheed and Maulana Abdul Aziz were two brothers who ran the Lal Masjid and the men's and women's seminaries. The police tried to release the suspected brothel owner and when they failed, they arrested two female teachers from the seminary. In a matter of minutes, students and followers of the Taliban blocked all important arteries in Aapara and also took two police officers with their official vehicle as hostage.

When Abdul Aziz threatened to call a jihad, the two women were released, so the students then released the policemen.

Abdul Rasheed explained his feelings on a call for jihad. 'The students from universities and colleges and youths from all walks of life ask why we do not call for jihad against a repressive regime, but I always say that the time is not ripe. But when pious lady teachers are punished and arrested for the sake of prostitutes, a call for jihad is imminent'. Abdul Rasheed and his brother Abdul Aziz commanded widespread support and were vocal in their backing of the Taliban. The authorities had on several occasions tried to have them arrested but had always desisted for fear of a powerful backlash both among the masses and segments of the establishment. Following the kidnapping of an alleged 'brothel owner' by the women students of Jamia Hafsa - who still held a children's library hostage - the leaders declared the establishment of a 'Shariat Court' of their own and according to Dawn, 'vowed to enforce Islamic laws in the federal capital and threatened to unleash a wave of suicide bombers if the government took any action to counter it'. The report in Dawn goes on to say:

'Our youth will commit suicide attacks if the government impedes the enforcement of the Sharia and attacks Lal Masjid and its sister seminaries' said by Maulana Abdul Aziz, the head of the mosque in

his Friday sermon. The fresh suicide bombing threat intensified fear among Islamabad residents.

President Gen Pervez Musharraf stated that he knew that the Lal Masjid's management willfully harbored suicide bombers. He said that the suicide bomber, who had attacked Islamabad's Marriott Hotel in January 2007, had been seen near the mosque the same day.

Maulana Abdul Aziz announced the setting up of a Qazi court in his sermon that also marked the opening of a three-day Nifaz Sharia-o-Azmat Jihad Conference. A large number of supporters had reached the mosque. The government did nothing to stop the groups of people coming from different cities and nearby areas throughout the day to participate in the conference.

Religious activists, some of whom were wearing masks, also staged a demonstration before the Friday prayers. Burqa-clad girl students of Madrassa Hafsa kept a vigil atop the seminary's roof. The activists were chanting 'Al Jihad, Al Jihad'. Armed with sticks, a group of religious activists set on fire thousands of video and audio cassettes and computer compact discs, 'given up' voluntarily by a shop owner who, according to them, abandoned 'this business'.

Maulana Abdul Aziz reminded the shopkeepers that they had been given a 30-day deadline to close down their evil businesses and switch over to some other 'decent' venture and said students of the seminary would punish the shopkeepers who did not do so. He asked traders to financially 'support' the owners of video and CDs shops to enable them to switch over to some other business. Maulana Abdul Aziz urged the authorities and the people concerned to stop dealing in video CDs, putting up billboards with women's photographs, selling liquor and running brothels and drug dens in Islamabad.

Return of Benazir Bhutto and Nawaz Sharif

Also on 8th of August, 2007 Benazir Bhutto spoke about her secret meeting with Musharraf on 27th of July, in an interview on the Canadian Broadcasting Corporation.

On 14th of September, 2007 Deputy Information Minister Tariq Azim stated that Bhutto won't be deported, but must face corruption suits against her. He clarified that Sharif and Bhutto had rights to return to Pakistan. Bhutto returned after eight years of exile on October 18. On 17th of September, 2007 Bhutto accused Musharraf's allies of pushing Pakistan to crisis by refusal to restore democracy and share power. Musharraf called for a three-day mourning period after Bhutto's assassination on 27th of December, 2007.

Sharif returned to Pakistan on September 2007 and was immediately arrested and taken into custody at the airport. He was sent back to Saudi Arabia. Saudi intelligence chief Muqrin bin Abdul-Aziz Al Saud and Lebanese politician Saad Hariri arrived separately in Islamabad on 8th of September, 2007 the former with a message from Saudi King Abdullah and the latter after a meeting with Nawaz Sharif in London. After meeting President General Pervez Musharraf for two and a half hours discussing Nawaz Sharif's possible return. On arrival in Saudi Arabia, Nawaz Sharif was received by Prince Muqrin bin Abdul-Aziz, the Saudi intelligence chief, who had met Musharraf in Islamabad the previous day. That meeting had been followed by a rare press conference, at which he had warned that Sharif should not violate the terms of King Abdullah's agreement of staying out of politics for 10 years.

Resignation from the Military

On 2nd of October, 2007 Musharraf appointed General Tariq Majid as Chairman Joint Chiefs Committee and approved General Ashfaq Kayani as vice chief of the army starting October 8. When Musharraf resigned from military on 28th of November, 2007 Kayani became Chief of Army Staff.

2007 Presidential Elections

In a March 2007 interview, Musharraf said that he intended to stay in office for another five years.

A nine-member panel of Supreme Court judges deliberated on six petitions (including Jamaat-e-Islami's, Pakistan's largest Islamic group) for disqualification of Musharraf as presidential candidate. Bhutto stated that her party may join other opposition groups, including Sharif's.

On September 28, 2007 in a 6–3 vote, Judge Rana Bhagwandas's court removed obstacles to Musharraf's election bid.

2007 state of emergency

On November 3, 2007 Musharraf declared emergency rule across Pakistan. He suspended the Constitution, imposed State of Emergency, and fired the Chief Justice of the Supreme Court again. In Islamabad, troops entered the Supreme Court building, arrested the judges and kept them under detention in their homes. Troops were deployed inside state-run TV and radio stations, while independent channels went off air. Public protests mounted against Musharraf.

2008 general elections

General elections were held on February 18, 2008 in which the Pakistan People's Party (PPP) polled the highest votes and won the most seats. On March 23, 2008 President Musharraf said an '*era of democracy*' had begun in Pakistan and that he had put the country '*on the track of development and progress*'. On March 22 the PPP named former parliament speaker Syed Yousaf Raza Gillani as its candidate for the country's next prime minister, to lead a coalition government united against him.

Impeachment movement and resignation

On August 7, 2008 the Pakistan People's Party and the Pakistan Muslim League (N) agreed to force Musharraf to step down and begin his impeachment. Asif Ali Zardari and Nawaz Sharif announced sending a formal request or joint charge sheet that he step down, and impeach him through parliamentary process upon refusal. Musharraf refused to step down. A charge-sheet had been drafted, and was to be presented to parliament. It included Mr. Musharraf's first seizure of power in 1999—at the expense of Nawaz Sharif, the PML(N)'s leader, whom Mr. Musharraf imprisoned and exiled—and his second last November, when he declared an emergency as a means to get re-elected president. The charge-sheet also listed some of Mr. Musharraf's contributions to the 'War on Terror'.

Musharraf delayed his departure for the Beijing Olympics by a day. On August 11, the government summoned the national assembly.

On August 18, 2008, Musharraf resigned. On August 19 he defended his nine-year rule in an hour-long speech.

Caretaker Government

Soomro was appointed as caretaker prime minister on November 15, 2007 at the expiration of the term of the previous Prime Minister, Shaukat Aziz, ahead of a new parliamentary election. On November 16 Soomro was sworn in as Prime Minister by President Pervez Musharraf. His term ended on March 25, 2008 when Syed Yousaf Raza Gillani was sworn in as Prime Minister.

President of Pakistan

As required by the constitution, Soomro (in his position as Chairman of the Senate) automatically became President on August 18, 2008 upon the resignation of Musharraf. The constitution also required that a new President be elected by Parliament within 30 days.

Asif Ali Zardari was elected President and subsequently sworn in on September 9, 2008 succeeding Soomro.

Zardari Regime

In April 1993, he became one of the 18 cabinet ministers in the caretaker government that succeeded Nawaz Sharif's first abridged premiership. The caretaker government lasted until the July

elections. After Bhutto's election, he served as her Investment Minister, chief of the intelligence bureau, and the head of the Federal Investigation Agency.

After the election, Zardari promised to approve the constitutional provision that removed the President's power to dismiss Parliament, but public was doubted that whether he would actually carry out his promise or not. His economic competence was questioned after allegations that he had raised grain procurement prices through inflationary subsidies and scrapped the capital gains tax. His first parliamentary speech was overshadowed by September 20 Islamabad Marriott Hotel bombing. A few days later, he went to the United Nations Headquarters in New York City on his first overseas trip as President.

Economic issues

From 14 to 17th of October, 2008 he was in China to negotiate foreign aid, as Pakistan faced the possibility of defaulting on its payments. China refused to offer any aid commitments but instead promised to provide assistance in the development of two nuclear power plants and more future business investments.

After Saudi Arabia, Britain, China, the United States and the United Arab Emirates refused to provide any bailout he officially asked the International Monetary Fund (IMF) for assistance in solving Pakistan's balance of payments problem on October 22. Due to our decrease in GDP rate, no country was ready to give aid for our financing needs. Due to conditions of IMF, the government imposed high tariffs

rates on consumer and domestic goods which created extreme economic crisis for our country.

Relations with India

In early October 2008, he received fierce domestic criticism for repeatedly calling Kashmiri nationalists in India 'terrorists'. In mid-November 2008, he suggested Pakistan was ready for a no-first-use nuclear policy and called for closer economic ties.

The relationship between the two nations was damaged by the November 2008 Mumbai attacks. He initially denied any links between the perpetrators and Pakistan but the government soon pursued military action against Lashkar-e-Taiba leaders in a December 7 raid. India cleared Zardari's government of any direct involvement in the attacks but simultaneously demanded the extradition of 20 Pakistanis which it alleged had taken part in them. Zardari offered to send Inter-Services Intelligence Director-General Ahmed Shuja Pasha to assist in the investigation.

In June 2009, Zardari met Singh for the first time since the Mumbai attacks at a Shanghai Cooperation Organization summit in Yekaterinburg, Russia.

Reinstatement of the judiciary

In February 2009, Zardari and the Musharraf-appointed Supreme Court attempted to disqualify Nawaz Sharif from running in any elections and tried to force his brother Shahbaz Sharif to resign as Chief Minister of Punjab province. Zardari dismissed the Punjab provincial government and only partially reinstated the judiciary by restoring 56 other judges deposed by Musharraf—but not their former leader, Chief Justice Iftikhar Chaudhary. After Nawaz Sharif defied house arrest and rallied with thousands of his supporters, the Sharif brothers vowed to join forces with the Lawyers' Movement in the 'Long March'. Zardari's government gave in to popular pressure and Prime Minister Gillani in an early morning speech on March 16, 2009 promised to reinstate Chaudhary by March 21. Ten judges were reinstated on March 16 and Chaudhary assumed his position on March 22. Zardari's month-long direct control of the Punjab ended on March 30.

Reduction of Presidential powers

In late November 2009, Zardari gave Prime Minister Gillani the chairmanship of the National Command Authority, Pakistan's nuclear arsenal oversight agency.

In December 2009, the Supreme Court ruled that the National Reconciliation Ordinance amnesty was unconstitutional, which cleared the way for the revival of corruption cases against Zardari. Though Zardari had immunity from prosecution because he was

President, the end of NRO and his earlier corruption cases challenged the legality of his presidency. Calls for his resignation escalated Zardari, who rarely left the Aiwan-e-Sadr presidential palace, responded with a nationwide spurt of speeches in January 2011. In January 2010, the Supreme Court ordered Pakistan's government to reopen Zardari's corruption charges in Switzerland. However, Zardari prevented the MQM-leaning Attorney General, Anwar Mansoor, from filing charges, so Mansoor resigned in protest in early April. That same month, Zardari won a key victory against the judiciary over his corruption trials when Geneva Attorney General Daniel Zappelli stated that Zardari cannot be prosecuted under international laws because of his Presidential immunity. Zardari was supported by Prime Minister Gillani, who defied the Supreme Court order.

In February 2010, Zardari sparked a standoff by attempting to appoint a Supreme Court candidate without the court's approval, but the confrontation ended after he backed down and nominated a candidate acceptable by the court.

In April 2010, after months of political pressure, the government passed the 18th Amendment, which reduced the President to a ceremonial figurehead by stripping the office of the power to dissolve Parliament, to dismiss the Prime Minister, and to appoint military chiefs.

In November 2012, the Pakistan government in response to the court orders finally wrote to the Swiss authorities seeking to reopen the corruption cases against Zardari. As of December 2012, Swiss authorities are yet to respond to that letter.

Flood of 2010

The 2010 Pakistan floods began in late July with rain in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa and soon submerged a fifth of Pakistan and affected 20 million people, resulting in one of the nation's largest natural disasters. Zardari ignored domestic pressure and began his European tour in Paris on August 1 meeting French President Sarkozy. In France, he drew a rebuke from the U.S. after stating that NATO had '*lost the battle for hearts and minds*' in the Afghan war. As the flood's devastation became increasingly evident, he was widely criticized for flying in a helicopter. Zardari returned to Pakistan on August 10. He first visited an area affected by the flooding in Sukkur on August 12. He cancelled the August 14's Independence Day celebrations and instead visited Naushera. He flew over devastated areas with United Nations Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon on August 15.

Hajj corruption scandal

Federal Investigation Agency (FIA) asked the customs authorities to provide data of luxury vehicles imported with the name of Asif Ali Zardari, President of Pakistan and Syed Abdul Qadir Gillani, son of former Prime Minister of Pakistan Syed Yousuf Raza Gillani in connection to Hajj Corruption case.

Sources said that Pakistan Customs provided details of all luxury vehicles asked by the FIA. The customs reported that all the vehicles were clear as per customs laws. The authorities replied the FIA that

the vehicles imported by President of Pakistan were assessed with the benefit of SRO.

Earlier, Pakistan Today reported that the FIA on November 5 summoned Abdul Qadir Gillani, son of former Prime Minister Yousuf Raza Gillani and others in connection with the Hajj corruption case. The FIA notice summoned Qadir Gillani, his friend Zain Sukhera, Federal Secretary for Water and Power Nargis Sethi and others in relation to the case.

The daily quoted the sources that the FIA to review the statements of Qadir Gillani, Sukhera and others.

The FIA issued the summons in light of an earlier backtracking on the part of Pakistan Muslim League-Nawaz (PML-N) MNA (member National Assembly), Pirzada Syed Imran Ahmed Shah from Sahiwal on allegations that he had leveled against Qadir Gillani in the Hajj corruption case, the daily reported.

Shah had earlier accused Qadir Gillani in a statement dated December 22, 2010 of receiving a luxury bullet-proof Toyota Land Cruiser from the former Hajj Director General, Rao Shakeel Ahmed, the principal accused in the scam, it added.

NICL scandal: Assets of three accused seized

The Federal Investigation Agency (FIA) has completed the confiscation of assets of the three offenders wanted in the multi-billion

Rupee, National Insurance Company Limited (NICL) scandal.

Official documents reveal that the National Assembly's Standing Committee on Commerce has also asked for a detailed update on the investigation plan.

A meeting of the committee was held on July 3, under the chairmanship of MNA Engineer Khurram Dastagir.

The deputy directors of FIA Lahore and Karachi, Basharat Mehmood Shahzad and Altaf Hussain, appeared before the panel with a progress report of the Punjab and Sindh chapters of the case, sources told The Express Tribune.

The FIA completed confiscating the assets of Mohsin Habib Warraich, son of former state minister for defence production Major (retd.) Habibullah Warraich, and former directors on the NICL board Amin Qasim Dada and Javed Syed.

Four assets owned by Mohsin were confiscated, including two houses and two plots in Lahore.

Syed's house in Islamabad and a car were confiscated, while a house in Karachi owned by Dada was also confiscated.

The assets were taken over upon the FIA's request under Section 88 of the Code of Criminal Procedure, according to official documents.

Mohsin is alleged to have sold a piece of land for nearly twice its actual price to the NICL. The total liable amount owed is PRs. 420 million. His uncle provided 10 post-dated cheques of PRs. 42 million each earlier this year, but the first of these cheques bounced.

The three wanted men had escaped abroad as soon as the NICL scandal surfaced. Despite the FIA having contacted Interpol, the extradition of these individuals has so far remained unsuccessful.

The FIA also sent a reminder to the Serious Organised Crime Agency (SOCA) in the UK, requesting more information about the accounts of Mohsin and Chaudry Moonis Elahi.

The SOCA, however, replied saying they could only act in accordance with UK laws and would provide information about the men accordingly.

Devaluation of rupee

Pakistan since last few years has faced a steep devaluation of its currency.

Comparison of Musharraf and Zardari's regime

In long and short, Musharraf's era was not an ideal but still better than all the other eras of either democratic or dictatorship history of Pakistan with respect to progress and prosperity in every field of life. Progress was on its peak at that time. He started a plenty of new projects for the development of the Pakistan. He started tax free industrialization to urge the foreign investors. His plan worked and a number of multi-national companies launched in his era. The impact of that was the increasing number of jobs in his era. It was very difficult to find out skilled laborer for small level construction.

But there are some negative aspects of Musharraf's era too. NRO (National Reconciliation Ordinance) was one of them. Pakistani Nation was looted under this act. Musharraf legalized this illegal ordinance. According to this, a plenty of loans of parliamentarians, bureaucrats and politicians were removed by this act. And this was the only act that Musharraf considered his mistake during his period. Another aspect is the pending process of Kala Bagh Dam. If it could have been completed more than half of electricity and water crisis of Pakistan would have resolved. But when he was asked about that, he replied that re-establishment of Kala Bagh Dam was controversial.

If Army could kill Akbar Bugti in his era, if operation of Lal Masjid could be held in his era then why not Kala Bagh Dam be built?

Pakistan is a federal country. Distribution of resources has a profound impact on income, development, backwardness and poverty. The Eighteenth Amendment of the Constitution of Pakistan was passed by the National Assembly of Pakistan on April 8, 2010 removing the power of the President of Pakistan to dissolve the Parliament unilaterally, turning Pakistan from a semi-presidential to a parliamentary republic, and renaming North-West Frontier Province to Khyber Pakhtunkhwa. The amendment bill was passed by the Senate of Pakistan on April 15, 2010 and it became an act of parliament when President Asif Ali Zardari put his signature on the bill on April 19, 2010. It was the first time in Pakistan's history that a President gave up significant part of his powers willingly and transferred them to parliament and the office of the prime minister. The National Finance Commission (NFC) award is considered as a step towards federalism. Out of 56% provincial share of total divisible pool, financial resources were distributed among the provinces in the ratios of (Punjab 51.74%, Sindh 24.55%, Khyber-Pakhtunkhwa 14.62% and Balochistan 9.09%).

President Asif Ali Zardari signed the Gilgit-Baltistan (Empowerment and Self-Governance) Order 2009 aimed at introducing far-reaching administrative, political, financial and judicial reforms in the Northern Areas and made Gilgit Baltistan a separate province by providing provincial powers.

Musharraf removed Chief Justice Iftikhar Muhammad Chaudhary, his removal brought months of protests by lawyers. Later Supreme Court of Pakistan restored the Iftikhar Mohammed Chaudhary with full dignity and authority. Historic 'long march' was held, thousands of people from all walks of life, lawyers and political workers participated, which was led by Nawaz Sharif and Aitaizaz Ahsan as a result of which Iftikhar Muhammad Chaudhary was restored as Chief Justice of Pakistan and other judges dismissed by Musharraf were also given their positions. The long march was put to an end after the intervention and assurance of Army chief, General Ashfaq Pervez Kiyani, into the matter.

Political employees of Peoples Party were dismissed by Nawaz Sharif, later President Zardari restored their jobs on the back dates of their jobs and gave them full benefit was given to them. China took control of Pakistan's Gwadar Port located at the mouth of the Persian Gulf. The official transfer of Concession Agreement from the Port of Singapore Authority (PSA) to the China Overseas Port Holding Company was carried out in the presence of President Asif Ali Zardari. The reason was to grow Pakistan-China relationship; moreover the development of this port was an economical benefit for Pakistan.

Due to corruption PIA, railway and steel mills were completely devastated. This was because Zardari's government was an alliance of many political parties who were working for their benefit instead of the country. Terrorism increased in Zardari's regime as compared to Musharraf's regime.

Pakistan's GDP growth rate during 2004-5 was 7.48 % while during 2005-6 it was 8.96 % the later was highest since 1980 when the GDP growth rate was 8.526 %.

KSE was awarded as the best performing Asian market.

Zardari's regime is better than Musharraf's regime because democracy is always better than dictatorship. In democracy everyone has a right to vote to stand against the actions taken by the government while in dictatorship people had to follow the commands or they had to accept the actions taken by the president. Moreover it is due to democracy that Zardari's government completed its five years.

Articles

My Benazir's hopes for democracy can live on... if Musharraf stands down

By Asif Ali Zardari

It has been little more than a week since the world was shocked, and my life shattered, by the death of my beloved wife, Mohtarma Benazir Bhutto. Benazir was willing to lay down her life for what she believed in - for the future of a democratic, moderate, progressive Pakistan. She was willing to stand up to both dictators and fanatics,

those who would distort and defy our constitution and those who would defame the Muslim Holy Book by violence and terrorism. For me and my children, our pain is unimaginable. But I feel even sorer for a world that will have to move forward without this extraordinary bridge between cultures, religions and traditions. My wife was truly unique.

I married Benazir in 1987, and spent less than five years living with her in the Prime Minister's house over her two terms in office, interrupted by military interventions. I also spent more than 11 years as a prisoner in Pakistani jails without a conviction on charges that former Prime Minister Nawaz Sharif and General Pervez Musharraf (who brought and pursued the charges) have now publicly acknowledged were politically motivated. Even before Benazir was elected Prime Minister in 1988, the intelligence agencies of Pakistan began a campaign to discredit her, targeting me as her husband and several of her friends. The term 'Mr. Ten Percent' was attached to my name as an appendage by public relations hired guns working for the intelligence agencies, just as the names of her friends abroad were besmirched by ridiculous charges that they headed the non-existent 'Indo-Zionist' lobby.

This campaign of character assassination was possibly the first institutional application of the politics of personal destruction. She was the target, and her husband and friends were the instruments. The purpose was to weaken the case for democratic government in Pakistan. It is perhaps easier to block the path of democracy by discrediting democratic politicians.

During the years of Benazir's governments, she was constrained by a hostile establishment, an interventionist military leadership, a treacherous intelligence network, a fragile coalition government and a presidential sword of Damocles constantly threatening to dismiss Parliament. Despite this she was able to introduce a free media,

make Pakistan one of the 10 emerging capital markets in the world, build thousands of new schools, electrify many villages, and change the lives of women in Pakistan, as well as draw attention to the cause of women's rights in the Islamic world.

Her murder does not end her vision. Her assassination must not be allowed to empower her assassins. Those responsible must be held accountable. I call on the United Nations to commence a thorough international investigation of the circumstances, facts and cover-up of my wife's murder, modeled after the ongoing investigation into the assassination of Lebanese Prime Minister Rafik Hariri. And I call on the friends of democracy in the West to endorse the call for such an investigation. An investigation under the control of the government of Pakistan – such as the Scotland Yard one – will have no credibility. One does not put the fox in charge of the hen house.

But it is also time to look forward. In profound sadness, the torch of leadership in the Pakistan People's Party (PPP) has been passed to a new generation of leadership, to our son Bilawal Bhutto Zardari. I will work with him and support him, and to the extent possible, protect him. The Bhutto family has given more than anyone can imagine to the service of our nation, and in these difficult days it is critical that the party remains unified and focused. Benazir, always prescient and wise, understood that. Knowing that the future was unpredictable, she recommended that the family keep the party together, for the sake of Pakistan. And this is what we aim to do.

The Musharraf regime has called off the elections set for January 8, not because of any logistical problems as they claim, but because General Musharraf and his 'King's Party' know for certain that they would be thoroughly rejected at the polls, and that the PPP and other pro-democracy parties would win a two-thirds majority.

Elections have been postponed to February 18. Democracy in Pakistan can be saved, and extremism and fanaticism contained, only if these elections are free, fair and credible. To that end the people of Pakistan must be guaranteed elections: 1) conducted under a new, neutral caretaker government not composed of cronies of General Musharraf's party; 2) supervised by a truly independent and autonomous election commission formed in consultation with the major political parties of Pakistan; 3) monitored by trained international observers with unfettered access to all polling stations and with the right to conduct exit polling to verify results; and 4) arbitrated by an independent judiciary as provided in the constitution of Pakistan. In addition, there must be a restoration of full electronic and print press freedoms, and all political activists, lawyers and judges in detention must be released.

The enemies of democracy and tolerance who took my wife from me must be exposed and marginalized. Dictatorship and fanaticism have always been rejected by the people of Pakistan and in a free and fair election will be defeated again. And on that day, the vision and indefatigable spirit of Benazir Bhutto will burn brightly, and in the words of John F Kennedy's inaugural address, 'the glow from that fire can truly light the world'.

The Great Achievement

By Amina Jillani

And so, it has come to pass, as predicted by Pamela Constable in her 2011 book, *Playing with Fire-Pakistan at War with Itself*. Despite the then doubts as to the survival of President Asif Ali Zardari and his regime, unpopular at home as it was, all that mattered was to allow him and it to survive, and serve out their term, so that, as she put it, 'the counterproductive cycle of political or military intervention that so often aborted Pakistan's still-nascent democratic experiment' would not be repeated.

'The only way to break the cycle that had bedeviled Pakistan for so long' was for the nation to swallow whole the revenge reeked by Zardari's, and his governments, unique form of democracy. 'So it comes down to this: ensuring that an unpopular, corrupt and indifferent leader (and his government) stayed in office for (their) full term was likely to be the single greatest political achievement in Pakistan's entire 65-year existence'.

Well, the single greatest political achievement is upon us, but the question being asked by some is whether it has been worthwhile. Others have answered, agreeing with Constable, that any civilian or military coup would have been much worse for Pakistan than the continuing chaos and damage inflicted by Zardari and his regime.

Zardari, of course, will outlast this felicitously dying government with which we have had no option but to live with-or die with, as so many have done in the past five years. From the beginning, the Zardari regime's silence on murders committed due to the blasphemy laws and on the death and devastation caused by its inactivity-its

cowardly petrification-when faced by the numerous acts of terrorism and sectarian violence has been shameless in the extreme. What a price has been paid just to keep the wonky 'system' in place, to allow democracy to be practiced in a warped, almost destructive form.

There is a further price to be paid by this unfortunate nation, as what will follow this Zardari regime can only either be a different form of democracy's revenge with a second Zardari regime, or another revised form of Nawaz Sharif and his ameerul momineen ambitions. That would now seem to be the stark and simple choice foisted upon the Islamic Republic by the elections-vital if the 'system' is to continue to survive-now on the national agenda. The amount of faith put on elections considering what is likely to be their outcome is amazing-even the all-powerful army chief has told us, 'It is my dream that free, fair and transparent elections take place on time'.

Free, fair, transparent? Well, going by the record, remembering past elections and despite the faith now being heaped upon the Election Commission of Pakistan and its mature chief, freedom, fairness and transparency, rather like the truth, are alien to the Pakistani psyche. The army's protestations, excessive some might say, that it wishes nothing else than the flourishing of democracy (and even its revenge) would seem indicative of its helplessness to at least nudge those responsible into providing some form of governance. The three-year extension has taken its toll.

The closer we get to the blessed elections, the less is used the word 'change', which in the near past has been a firm factor that many have suggested is the only way forward. As time has gone by, any change is now a distant dream. The hoped for agents of change have been smartly out-maneuvered and apparently have fallen by the wayside.

We are at the mercy of political relics, who have been in positions of power for longer than is decent in what is supposed to be a democratic dispensation. The relics may no longer be affordable in what is seen by some to be a state on the brink of failure-but they are all that is on the ground. Miracles, fresh faces, clean minds have no role to play.

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