

Praetorianism in A Case of Exploding Mangoes: A Critical Analysis.

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Abstract

This research investigates the social and political circumstances of Pakistan during 1980s, when General Muhammad Zia-ul-Haq exercised his power and controlled the government of Pakistan by military take-over till he breathed his last in an air crash near Bahawalpur. Mohammed Hanif, a journalist and newscaster of BBC London Urdu service has written an allegorical fiction named “*A Case of Exploding Mangoes*” in which he has narrated various instances of General Zia’s praetorianism. During the course of narration Mohammed Hanif, as an adept critic and seasoned analyst of global political scenario has employed the devices of black humour, irony and political satire in an allegorical way by making use of real and fictitious characters, well known to the Pakistani masses and International Community for their significant role in Pakistani armed forces and political government. Mohammed Hanif’s novel is a very valuable document which very aptly describes the reality of Pakistani politics, army’s role and its interference in public and civil politics. This novel also throws light on General Zia’s personality as the Chief of Army Staff and afterwards as the elected president, who remained a perfect example of a praetor throughout his reign of a third world country, named Pakistan.

Introduction

What is Praetorianism?

“The control of a society by force or fraud, especially when exercised through titular officials and by a powerful minority is called praetorianism.”

In other words Praetorianism means an excessive or abusive political influence of the Armed Forces in a country.

Daniel R. Headrick, professor of History and Social Sciences at Roosevelt University, describes praetorianism as a type of militarism oriented to the interior life of a nation, often related to minor countries, that does not aspire to fight or win international wars, but instead to maintain its influence in the domestic political system, controlling decisions that could affect the interests of the military as a corporation, or supporting some particular political faction or party.

There are a large number of nations of the World where an individual, a group or an organization overpowers the whole nation with illegal usurpation of power. Pakistan is one of the unique examples of this phenomenon.

Amos Perlmutter has declared Pakistan as a modern praetorian state. A praetorian state is such a state in which the authority relationship between the military and the political government is based on a “legal-rational orientation”, but even then this relationship favours the development of the military as the sole ruler and encourages its growth as a ruling class”. Scholars have hotly debated the causes of such type of hegemonic circumstances on the part of the military elites. Mohammed Hanif, a Pakistani novelist and research scholar has made an attempt to further enhance this fund of knowledge about the military power and its balance in political order of a country where he had been himself an armed force’s officer but due to certain reasons, he quitted this career. He selected writing novels as his career and succeeded in it very much. In his comic novel “*A Case of Exploding Mangoes*” he has selected a very hotly debated era in the history of Pakistan, General Zia-ul-Haq’s era for the purpose of suggesting the assumption given by Amos Perlmutter to prove the Pakistani state – A praetorian state where military rules in all the cases, though it be dictatorship or democratic government in the country. The significance of this assumption moves the research agenda forward and as a researcher I became keenly interested in researching this aspect of the novel in an unbiased and critical manner.

The most of the Pakistani generals and the analysts who are sympathetic towards this “reluctant professional army”, on the contrary, are of the view that army is compelled to “clean up the mess” of corrupt and inefficient politicians, If so, it is hard to make sense of the equally distressing instability and corruption engendered by all army-led governments. This research paper answers the question that the military’s political domination is the result of systemic international constraints and the structural weaknesses characterizing the domestic polity?

There is no doubt in the fact that the timing of military take-overs in Pakistan (1958, 1977, 1999) never matched to critical international crises and specially the two latter cases, followed particularly assertive and powerful Prime Ministers. In this case a “normativist” reading, emphasizing the military’s growing “self-

confidence” towards civilians, is more convincing.

This research surely has a point, but perceptions alone are not sufficient 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 stabilizing role played by the military in Pakistan.

The very “socio-genesis” of the Pakistani state, to use Norbert Elias’ notion, proved much more critical in shaping the state’s progressive militarization. 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” Pakistan initially comprised those areas of the British Indian Empire.

“You can blame our men in uniform for anything, but you can never blame them for being imaginative.”(Hanif: 2008 p. 12)

“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. 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” , and this insecurity of the state determined the role of the armed forces of Pakistan and in this way the Generals became dictators and praetors in the true sense of the word.

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 wars in Afghanistan. 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. 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 (The largest time period is the reign of General Muhammad Zia-ul-Haq, almost 11 years). 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 politicize the officers, the army took over and removed the elected Prime Minister (as it did in 1977 by overthrowing the political government of Zulfikar Ali Bhutto, the most charismatic Elected Prime Minister and head of the most popular political party of the country_ pppp) and the Chief of the Army Staff (COAS) remained 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 wielded state power.

Review of Literature

There is abundance of literature on military, civil-military relations, and general politics in Pakistan. I have used the following typology in order to categorize different literature. Propagandists- who look at military as an instrument of nation building and a modernizing force, Conspiracy theorists- who view military conspiring with foreign powers especially the US to gain and consolidate its power at the expense of political forces, Instrumentalists- who see military from the prism of external forces, Elite bargain theorists-who tend to view political developments from the elite perspective and Structuralists- who explain military in the larger context of the Pakistan's state.

General Fazl-e-Muqem Khan (1960) Huntington (1968), Burki (1991) and Pervaiz Iqbal Cheema (2002) view the military as a nation builder. Being the most modern institution, the military gets into politics. The incompetent political leadership compels otherwise a reluctant military to govern. This propagandist literature virtually regards military as a neutral political umpire with a natural desire to serve as protector of the state. It simply does not explain the causes which forces the military to intervene in politics (Cheema, 2002).

The work of Ayesha Jalal (1991), Saeed Shafqat (1997), Tariq Ali (1970) and Husain Haqqani (2005) constitutes the second type which finds the military as highly exploitative in fulfilling its institutional and organizational interests. Jalal even argues that the Pakistan army aligned with Britain and then with the US in an attempt to underscore the national political forces (Jalal, 1991).

Her narrative, however, is based on a linear-historical description of events that explains the inactivity of the civilian leadership. The civil bureaucracy is viewed as a rent seeking institution materially and politically benefiting through its alliance with Washington. The relative strength of political institutions is next to nothing as there is an underlying conspiracy to strengthen bureaucracy at the expense of social and political forces in Pakistan.

Jalal has further elaborated her previous work with no significant analytical modifications. In her both accounts the author has treated bureaucracy particularly the military as a post- independence phenomenon. Similarly, Shafqat while taking military as a post-independence phenomenon develops 'military-dominant party hegemonic system' to discuss politics from Zulfikar Bhutto to Benazir Bhutto (Ayesha, 1995).

He has treated the pre-1971 period as partially hegemonic which is arguable. In addition, the writer has only emphasized the political hegemony of the military thus ignoring socio-economic dimensions of the concept.

The third type (Instrumentalists) comprises Stephen Cohen (2004 see also 1984). He, in his two books on Pakistan and its army, has shed light on the regimental and organizational aspects of Pakistan Army from the prism of the US interests. The author, however, has not touched the domestic factors in analyzing the civil-military relations in the country.

Maya Chadda narrates the politics in Pakistan from the 'elitist mindset which is essentially marked as a supreme force capable of using even 'coercive' measures to democratize, integrate and 'consolidate' the state in Pakistan. One simply wonders did the elite i.e., civil-military bureaucracy, politicians, 'consolidated' the country in 1971? This approach is defective as it creates the myth of an elitist leadership riding over a monolithic nationalism. Moreover, it reduces or better ignores the role of the masses in shaping the political developments in the country. In addition, it implicitly encourages the armed forces to apply unnecessary violence in the name of national consolidation to fulfill their own institutional and organizational interests.

The military's power is studied as a structural problem by Hamza Alavi (1988, 1990), Hassan Askari Rizvi (2000) and Mohammad Waseem (1994). Alavi's theoretical work with respect to state and its dominant classes is doubtlessly monumental.

According to him the state in his Marxian context is an 'overdeveloped' structure having strong capitalist links with the 'metropolitan bourgeoisie'. The 'landed-feudal' class along with the 'indigenous bourgeoisie' strives to collaborate with the civil bureaucracy to further their interests politically, economically and socially.

The thrust of Alavian thought is that the bureaucracy is central to the state structure in Pakistan whereby the state functions 'autonomous' of the dominant 'classes'. In their bid for political power the three 'classes' i.e. landed-feudal, indigenous bourgeoisie, metropolitan bourgeoisie, engulfed by some political crisis resort to the bureaucracy and the 'charismatic' military for arbitration.

Despite the significance of Alavi's work, the room for improvement is always there. For instance, the author is not clear about the concept of 'overdeveloped' state. How and why does he assume so? Is the state 'overdeveloped' vis-a-vis the civil society? If yes, then the dominant landed-feudal and indigenous bourgeoisie classes are part of the society and they are developed at least functionally in enhancing their politico-economic interests.

Another way to understand Alavi's thesis is by looking at the state's institutions. If we look at the state's elective institutions such as parliament, then sadly we find they have not established themselves even after 67 years in Pakistan. The only developed state's institution, as we see later, is the civil-military bureaucracy which, it seems, Alavi in his Marxian 'peripheral capitalism' paradigm has equated with an 'overdeveloped state'. Similarly, Rizvi's work is mainly about the corporate interest of the officer cadre. Their personal interests are dubbed as national interests. Unfortunately, the author is more descriptive than analytical and takes military as a post- independence phenomenon (Alavi, 1988).

On the other hand, Waseem has very convincingly transformative links of the colonial civil bureaucracy with that of Pakistan. The civil bureaucracy was well trained and disciplined in the art of administration and political under the British. Pakistan inherited a good share of this 'colonial legacy' which underscored the existence of political and social forces due to the structural nature of the colonial state.

Analysis of the Text

The very first thing which one is forced to come across is the changing socio-political scenario of global politics during those years as Mohammed Hanif has discussed at the very outset of his novel is a distance of understanding between the naïve and deep meanings of things being practiced by army and public in establishing the political insight. Zia-ul-Haq has been the most powerful person of the country, being a praetor, a dictator and the Chief of the Army Staff of the World's seventh largest army. Mohammed Hanif has given a deep insight of the changes which were taking place in the history, specially the political set up of the country. Look at the lines from the novel.

"But this afternoon, history is taking a long siesta, as it usually does between the end of one war and the beginning of another" (Hanif, 2008. P.2)

In this novel along with criticism on Zia's policies in Pakistan Hanif has tried to highlight the global politics and its consequences on the third world countries, especially Pakistan, allegorically. Look at the following lines. Baby o says:

"I, the imperialist Eagle, swooped down on Obaid's Third World Dove; he fought back, and for the finale sat on my chest drawing blood from my neck with his cardboard beak". (Hanif.2008, P. 17)

The same third World Dove, Zia-ul-Haq, was drawing blood from the neck of his public on one hand and from the Afghani's on the other. In this context so many conspiracy theories were being concocted about the military rule of the country and it was only a fantasy in the country that military rule will ever be over but the Divine power has destined it in some way else, as the aeroplane boarded by Zia met a tragic accident which proved fatal for him.

"I didn't even figure in the stories concocted to cover up the truth. Even the conspiracy theories which saw an unidentified flying object colliding with the presidential plane," (Hanif, 2008 P.4)

Another glaring example of the Praerorianism of the General is his attitude towards his opponents, who were punished by him for no mistake of their own, just because of the difference of opinion. As Baby o, the imaginary character of Mohammed Hanif describes his opinion about the crimes and their nature in the eyes of the praeter and his favourite team members.

"There is poetry in committing a crime after you have served your sentence. I do not have much interest in poetry but punishment before a crime does have a certain sing-song quality to it. The guilty commit the crime, the innocent are punished. That's the world we live in". (Hanif, 2008). P. 4)

Thus it has always been true in the country that the guilty commit the crime and the innocent are punished.

These lines well interpret the political scene and the emergence of multiple realities in this part of the world. The people of Pakistan were in search of real freedom but it was not being materialized by them even after years of their so called freedom from the foreign rule. In spite of getting independence there was only a change of masters for the people of Pakistan. Actual politics was being exercised by two superpowers of the world, namely Russia and America and Zia was the blue-eyed boy of America as he was the head of the state, being engaged in war against Russia. At last he had to cover up all the hidden and secret activities by the exercise of his sheer undemocratic and unjust use of power, which destined him to blow up in strange circumstances.

"Unsurprised there will be no autopsies, the leads will run dry, investigations will be blocked, there will be cover-ups to cover cover-ups. Third World dictators are always blowing up in strange circumstances". (Hanif. 2008 p.3)

Another mask on the face of General Zia was the mask of his religious bent of mind , being the Mullah in General's uniform but actually he was a "wolf in sheep's clothing". Look at the lines from the novel:

"The generals who had called Zia a mullah behind his back felt ashamed at having underestimated him: not only was he a mullah, he was a mullah whose understanding of religion didn't go beyond parroting what he had heard from the next mullah. A mullah without a beard , a mullah in a four-star general's uniform, a mullah with the instincts of a corrupt tax inspector." (Hanif, 2008. P. 32)

The lines quoted above are a very vivid and simple narration of the political strategy of Zia as he used the name of Islam for the establishment and enhancement of his vested interests. Being a praeter, Zia was not the first ruler to have declared Islam and Pakistan as synonymous. Pakistan's drift from official Islam to Islamism, as Saeed Shafqat has shown, was gradual. Unlike India where the state "consistently violated its professed (secular) ideology" Pakistan committed itself to an Islamic system, albeit a progressive one, during its gestation period.

In fact, from 1940 onward the Muslim leadership increasingly took on board religion and religious symbols projecting the future state of Pakistan as an Islamic state consistent with the views of Allama Iqbal as articulated in his magnum opus, *Reconstruction*. After Independence, the Constituent Assembly of Pakistan, under pressure from the Majlis-i-Ahrar and Maulana Maududi-led Jamat-i- Islami, the parties that opposed the demand for Pakistan, passed the famous Objective Resolution in March 1949, which was a blend of Islamic and Western liberal democratic traditions. Before Zia, it was the government of General Yahya Khan which vied to exact through the LFO (1970) a commitment from the future parliament and parliamentarians (under the threat of a Presidential veto) to frame a constitution consistent with the ideology of Pakistan. It is another matter Yahya government did not survive to see its plan through. Bhutto gave a timeframe under the 1973 Constitution to Islamize the laws in Pakistan and took a few steps (prohibition, Friday as weekly holiday, ban on gambling and betting on horse racing) into that direction. It was during the anti-Bhutto agitation by the PNA that religion was brought once again to the centre-stage of national politics.

A political assortment of centralists, Islamists and secularists, the PNA rechristened its otherwise

secular campaign against electoral malpractices as the Nizam-i- Mustafa Movement. Even the celebrated secularists in the PNA such as Nawabzada Nasrullah Khan, Wali Khan, and Asghar Khan countenanced this use of religion for political gain. The mill of Islamization was therefore around Zia's neck. And he used it with consummate craftiness for the sake of legitimacy and longevity of his rule. He repeatedly harped on the theme that Pakistan could not survive without Islam, and that an Islamic system was the *raison d'être* for the establishment of Pakistan. "There had been military coups before", so observed Roedad Khan, "but now for the first time, a *maulvi*, a deeply religious person was the Head of the State, the Head of Government and the Army Chief – a frightening combination". In Roedad Khan's view, Zia was "determined to recreate the Islamic legal and social order which had originated in the tribal area more than a thousand years ago". Unlike most westerners who thought Zia "wrapped himself in a cloak of religion", Roedad's impressions were shared by Lawrence Ziring who had no doubts about Zia's sincerity in this connection. In this way Mohammed Hanif is no exception, who called Zia a Maulvi in General's uniform. He was sure that Zia is a staunch believer in the Islamic constitution as is devised in the Holy Quran.

The following lines well interpret the viewpoint of Mohammed Hanif about Zia's belief in the Holy Verses of the Holy book. Actually Islamization of the country was only one of the many masks which he wore on his face to elongate his rule.

"Between making a decision and implementing it, General Zia sometimes liked to seek divine opinion. And although changing into uniform before or after morning prayers wasn't likely to affect the destiny of his one hundred and thirty million subjects," (Hanif, 2008, P. 25)

According to the teachings of the Holy Quran he introduced *zakat* and *ushr* applicable to all Muslims sans the Shiites who "buoyed by the pride of Iranian Revolution" refused to pay *zakat* and opposed Islamization that the *junta* had set in motion in 1979, based on narrow Sunnite interpretation of Islamic theology and law. The government also set up a Federal Shariat Court, Sharia Faculty, and appointed a Majlis-i-Shura (consultative council). It issued Haddood Ordinance, although punishments awarded under it were set aside by the Shariat Court under public protests. Even then Zeenat's story (a blind woman who was raped by some unknown persons but was punished by the Dictator for committing adultery) is a solid proof of the authoritative behavior of the general.

In Zia's scheme of things, women were the ornament of home and their evidence was half as good as that of a man under the Law of Evidence. Women Action Forum, a body of urban-educated women protested against these laws and generated worldwide concern. To avert any possibility of court intervention, he muzzled the courts further by promulgating the Provisional Constitutional Order (1980, 1981) and retired the recalcitrant Supreme Court judges like Justice Durab Patel and F.G. Ibrahim. The *junta* also curtailed press freedom through censorship, selective distribution of government advertisements, print quota, and public lashing and imprisonment of defiant journalists. Zia spent eleven years and state resources, backed with the military might, to depoliticize Pakistan. It is another matter that the policies he adopted contributed to greater political controversies and polarization. He used education as a foil and as an instrument of state control. Diversity in curriculum was discouraged in Curzonian fashion with added emphasis on uniformity and Islamicity.

"Can we get on with the agenda? We have just toppled a bloody elected government, how the hell are we going to run this country?" (Hanif, 2008, P. 33)

These lines well interpret the fact that Zia was worried much about the government to be run by him after taking over it through a coup. He adopted all the possible measures to run the government efficiently and with an iron hand but despite these measures, Zia could not cope with the lingering question of legitimacy, as opposed to legality that the Apex Court had provided his rule. For the essentials of legitimacy, as emphasized by Mattei Dogan, based on the freedom of speech, freedom of association, freedom to assembly, truly democratic elections, open competition among the political parties, and judicial independence, were conspicuous by their absence during his eleven years of absolute power. The crisis of legitimacy pricked Zia as much as it had pricked Ayub Khan. Hence, he held a controversial presidential referendum in 1984. As expected, the polling wore a deserted look and the tired election staff stamped and stuffed the ballot papers. The question posed in the constitutionally deviant referendum was tricky: a yes vote to Islamization was to be translated a yes vote for Zia. Zia denied that he had asked for a vote on Islam but on his government's services for Islam.

The manner of referendum, low turnout (around ten to fifteen percent against the official tally of 62.15 percent), and exaggerated results tarnished the presidency and its incumbent. The referendum became a subject of comics and the humorous Pir Pagaro, Zia's political ally from Sind, attributed the supposedly high turnout to voting by 'angels'. Regardless, Zia received messages of congratulation from within and outside of Pakistan and persevered in the power game with a manufactured mandate. Earlier, he had nominated a 287 member Majlis-i-Shura as an Islamic substitute for parliament. Lacking power and comprising unelectable *ulema*, technocrats, retired military officers, members of the PNA and a few PPP turn-coats, Majlis-i-Shura could neither influence government policies nor did it lend legitimacy to its creator. However, it provided the regime the needed channel of networking with the country's influentials, who felt indebted to their benefactor. Below the Shura, Zia

government, although reluctant to hold general elections, had already created elected local bodies (District Councils, Union Councils) to develop a new cadre of politicians, the ones who would be supportive of the Zia regime. With the objective of creating alternative political elites at the local level, he assigned them generous development funds which they used and misused so freely. Generally perceived as the reincarnation of discredited Basic Democracy System, the system was defended nevertheless by Zia, as he found more than enough members of general public who were eager to accept and work the local bodies.

With powers relating to law and order, police, treasury, jail, and certain matters pertaining to administration vested in the Deputy Commissioner, General Zia knew the art of creating vested interests, hence, these pseudo representative bodies, which cushioned the dictatorship and harvested its benefits. Zia was candid enough to admit that “gaining power is easier than giving it up”. That is why he attached utmost importance to his first and real constituency, the army. To maintain a grip on the army, he developed and patronized a Jullundur lobby in it. In and outside the army barracks, he preached and encouraged venal propaganda against liberal or progressive politicians and blasted Western democracy calling it un-Islamic. He kept military contented with expansion and new weapons with greater opportunities for career advancement.

He skillfully reduced potential challenges from politically ambitious senior commanders through reassignment and retirement. He fixed a quota of 10 percent in the civil services for the released or retired officers in Grade 17 and 18, and 10 percent for Grade 19 and above. He reserved seats in universities and professional colleges for the soldiers’ sons and daughters, and offered the officers agricultural state lands and residential plots. He persuaded the conservative Gulf countries to seek the services of Pakistan army officers to train their own armies. He introduced the culture of duty-free Mercedes and limousines for the President, Prime Ministers, Governors and Chief Ministers. As Chancellor of the Quaid-i-Azam University, Islamabad, a liberal graduate school, he abolished its Senate, curtailed academic membership of its Syndicate, and appointed two unqualified brigadiers as its professors. He disallowed the arrest and prosecution of army personnel by the civil police and courts. Although Zia was not the first one to have lavished state bounty on the army, his real constituency, for personal political gain, it broke new records under his rule.

Praetorianism, lacking popular support, tends to strengthen coercive arms of the State. Zia brought to the army the required modernization, courtesy of support from the conservative Gulf Cooperation Council. Indulging in blandishment of Saudi Arabia and declaring any attack on it as an attack on Pakistan, Zia won Saudi sympathy and finances to pay for the F-16 fighter jets. In 1981 and 1987, America promised Pakistan 3.2 billions and 4.2 billion dollars respectively as military and economic aid. The American money went a long way in strengthening the army and consolidating the Zia regime. Not all that money was judiciously used for the stipulated purpose. Behind his regular protestations of Islamic piety, he and his close companion, General Akhtar Abdur Rehman, a former ISI (Inter Services Intelligence) boss and CJCS (Chairman Joint Chief of Staff) managed to accumulate the most ill-gained wealth of all. The stories of corruption by the higher military bureaucracy surfaced in the international media as *The Times* published the “World’s Richest Generals” and “Leakage in the Arms Pipeline”. Nonetheless, Zia had the longest tenure of office in Pakistan, which was due less to good governance than to subtle moves like ad-hocism, western support, exploitation of religion, misuse of army, para-military and police, persecution of the opposition, disunity and opportunism of the politicians, and the Afghan War. As a President, Zia continued to extend his tenure as Army Chief and later appointed a Deputy Chief (General Mirza Aslam Beg) to oversee the routine matters. He had learnt from the fate of General Ayub Khan who, in his twilight, was abandoned by the Commander-in-Chief, Yahya Khan. Buying the American thesis that Pakistan had become a front-line State after the Soviet occupation of Afghanistan, he agreed to fight the proxy American War. The Americans were quite impressed with Zia’s commitment to fight Afghan War to the end, and Brzezinski, who had been the National Security Advisor in Carter Administration, praised him for that, if for no other reason, in his posthumous essay on Zia.

As far as regional security and individual lives of the public and the military officials of the country are concerned the General and his team was very authoritative about the compliance of their orders in heart and spirit and explanation of this statement is evident from the following lines. In these lines a member of the Army ruling class is threatening his junior officer that some people who indulge in the activities counter to the will of the dictator die a death worse than dogs.

“Some people insist on digging their own grave.” 2nd OIC snatches the Quran from my hand and puts it back on the shelf (Hanif, 2008. P. 39)

General Zia made Pakistan the arsenal of Afghan resistance, guerrilla training and a base of the largest CIA network. Colonel Shigri was the in-charge of the training camps and he died suddenly by hanging himself. The actual reason of whose death is even today unknown. Zia used his services for the vested interests of his own rule and then got rid of him. Seen in Washington and many Western capitals as fighting the West’s last battle against communism, America and the developed democracies put national interests before ideology while Carter and Regan administrations overlooked his worst human rights record. During the Afghan War sophisticated weapons and contrabands made their way into Pakistani bazaars, specifically into the troubled city

of Karachi, the agonizing legacy of Zia. He went on augmenting and exploiting political polarization in the country. To his comfort, political parties, other than the PPP, were not genuinely interested in elections.

The corps commanders and Chiefs of the armed forces of Pakistan were afraid of their fate from the hands of the Dictator, who had called their meeting after the coupe of Bhutto's government. They found their refuge only in following the instructions given by him. More over General Akhter Abul Rehman went a long way and admired general Zia in the following words:

"I also want to thank our very professional commanders sitting around this table who carried out the coup on the orders of our Chief in such an orderly manner that not a single bullet had to be fired, not a single drop of blood had to be shed." (Hanif, 2008, P. 33)

Zia chose to remain the uniformed President with enhanced presidential powers to make key appointments, dismiss the government, and dissolve the assemblies. Following the elections, he appointed the relatively unknown Muhammad Khan Junejo as the Prime Minister who then sired the official Muslim League. Having enjoyed absolute power and limelight for eight years, Zia was not ready for the oblivion due to the growing independence of the Prime Minister and the legislators. Junejo's maiden speech on the floor of the National Assembly was an eye opener for the Generals attending the ritual. "Democracy and Martial Law cannot coexist", so thundered Junejo, and continually urged the same until the Martial Law was lifted on 31 December 1985.

The dismissal of Junejo isolated Zia-ul-Haq. Little by little Junejo had earned public sympathy. His austerity measures, though symbolic, were well received in the public. For the first time extensive developmental works were undertaken in the rural areas by the revitalized local bodies. Junejo liberalized media and was generous towards the opposition. He declared all the political parties and their leaders as patriotic and invited them (including Benazir Bhutto) to a conference prior to signing the Geneva Accord, all against Zia's expressed will. Therefore, when Zia struck the Junejo government, there was hardly a word of sympathy expressed in the defense of presidential order. It is another matter that the incumbent Chief Ministers including Nawaz Sharif of Punjab, then a blue-eyed boy of the establishment, abandoned Junejo for Zia at whose behest they tried to "hijack" the Muslim League creating in the end a breakaway pro-Zia Muslim League (Fida). With Zia in twilight zone, the Supreme Court of Pakistan declared mandatory registration of political parties (under the Political Parties Act, 1962) with the Election Commission as unlawful.

The Apex Court's decision pre-empted Zia's plan to hold party-based elections minus the PPP which had refused to seek registration with the Election Commission. Rather than showing any respect to the court's decision, Zia tried to evade it by announcing party-less elections once again. That Zia had played his innings and was living on borrowed time was indicative of the Supreme Court's decision and its newfound independence. With the Cold War over, the Americans, unlike Zia, were no longer keen in the Afghan imbroglio. In fact, Washington had begun to consider him a liability, distrusting his talk of an Islamic Confederation and his unswerving support for the fundamentalists among the Afghan *mujahideen*. Similarly, Zia was not on the same page with General Aslam Beg on important policy matters, particularly in relation to Afghanistan. And Zia's corps commanders, many years his juniors, were not so close to the aging chief who now received only "filtered" reports. Having lived in the safe sanctuary of the Army House till his death, Zia tried to give this impression that he was still part and parcel of army life, but these were sure signs of a growing sense of insecurity. After the Ojheri Camp disaster, Zia did not spend a night away from the Army House.

His plane crash in August 1988, whether an act of sabotage or divine intervention, not only saved the isolated General from a possible retribution but also the nation from the hardened opponent of democracy. Zia's death raised fresh hopes for a return to representative democracy in Pakistan. How he was afraid of his death in spite of being the most powerful person in the country, look at the lines given below:

"Those files lie. I am asking *you*, not General Akhtar. You are my shadow, you should know. You see everyone who comes to meet me; you know every nook and corner in this house. It's your job to protect me. As your Commander-in- Chief, I demand to know: who are you protecting me from? Who is trying to kill me?" (Hanif, 2008 . p. 56)

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