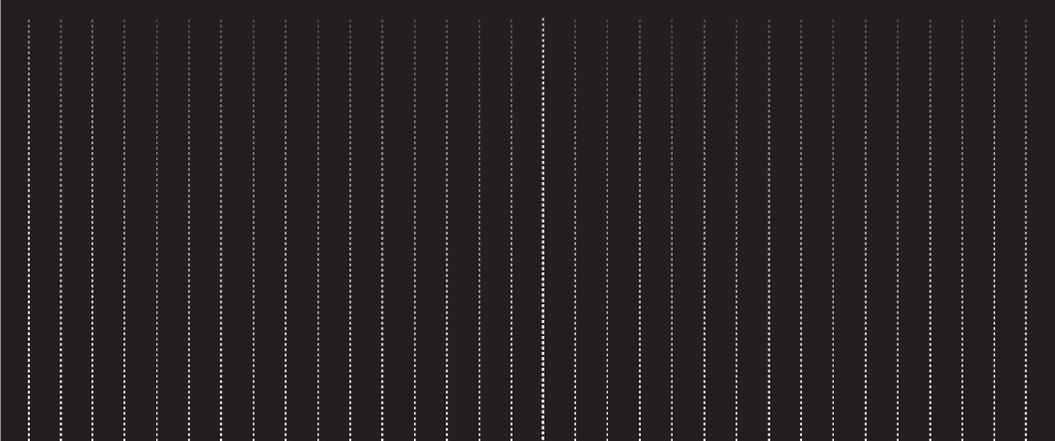


MONITOR

Civil-Military Relations in Pakistan

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The Planned March and the Sit-in on August 14

The Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI), under the leadership of Mr. Imran Khan, has announced to lead a 'Long March' or 'Million Man March' or 'Azadi (Freedom) March' to Islamabad on August 14, 2014. Imran Khan has also said that this march will stay on the streets of the national capital in the form of a sit-in or *Dharna* for an indefinite period till the PTI demands are met. The PTI has been protesting against what it calls 'massive rigging' during May 2013 General Election. The party claims that it has tried all constitutional and legal means during the past one year to seek justice but rigging allegations have not been fully investigated.

The PTI initially demanded that the validity or otherwise of the voters in four specific National Assembly constituencies (all located in Punjab) be verified by tallying the thumb impressions on the ballot paper counterfoils against the National Database and Registration Authority (NADRA) record. Irrespective of the selectiveness of the constituencies, it was a fair demand. In fact, it would have been more appropriate to get the thumbs impressions verification done in all disputed constituencies. Apparently, due to the sheer incompetence of the ECP staff dealing with the supply of the specified ink and paper for accurately recording the voters thumbs impressions at the time of voting, the majority of thumb impressions can not be verified because the specified ink and paper has not been used in any of the constituencies where Election Tribunals ordered Thumbs Impression verification.

A stand-off has developed which has the potential of escalating into a major law and order situation. The capital will certainly be paralysed for days in case the planned march gets underway. In a volatile situation like this, the terrorist groups under attack in North Waziristan may take advantage and strike at one or more sensitive targets in the capital. Civil armed forces such as police have been rendered almost dysfunctional over a period of time due to political interference in recruitments, postings, transfers, promotions and other operational matters. It is a fair guess that in case the situation escalates, army will have to be called in aid of civil authority and this will set the stage to undermine the current civilian government and may pave the way for an eventual military 'take over' of the sorts.

Even if none of the parties involved, PML-N, PTI and the Army, want a military take over, the possible escalation in violence and break down of the law and order may lead to that eventuality. This is what Pakistan has witnessed more than once in the past. Before August 14, both the Federal Government and the PTI have the option to step back from the brink but after the 'March' is underway, things may not be in their hands and they may become

hostages of the unfolding events, some planned and others may be totally unplanned.

This grave situation has serious implications for Civil-Military relations which were not ideal even before the march was announced. A series of events including some statements by the Federal Ministers about the Military's record in the past, Army Chief's public expression of displeasure at such statements, Federal Government's rather weak reaction to public accusations against the ISI following assassination attempt on Geo TV's anchor Hamid Mir by unknown persons are some of the pointers of deteriorating civil-military relations in the past. One may argue that this state of Civil-Military Relations may have encouraged political opponents of the Federal Government such as the PTI to stage an assault while the ruling party, the PML-N, is on the defensive.

Operation Zarb-e-Azb

It took the civilian Government one year in office, and "four and a half months of "dialogue" with the militants to initiate a full-scale operation in North Waziristan against terrorists with the resolve that the "Zarb-e-Azb" operation would continue until terrorism is eliminated from the country."¹

The announcement that the operation had been launched first came from the ISPR, in a statement that said: "*on the direction of the Government, the Armed Forces of Pakistan have launched a comprehensive operation against the foreign and local terrorists who are hiding in sanctuaries in North Waziristan. The operation has been named Zarb-e-Azb.*"² A day after the ISPR Press Release, Prime Minister Muhammad Nawaz Sharif addressed the Parliament and explained why an operation was launched saying that "*dehshat gardi k na khatam hone wale silsaley, aur bil khasoos Karachi airport per hamley ke baad, aik faisla kun operation ka faisla bhe bahmi mushawarat aur kamil hum ahangi ke sath kia gaya hai.*"³ (Translation: After a never-ending series of terrorism and particularly after the attack on Karachi airport, it has been decided with mutual consultation and complete unanimity to launch a decisive operation)

The necessity for the State to establish its writ across its territory and people is non-negotiable requirement for a sovereign state. However, questions loom large about why an operation to establish this writ had not been conducted earlier. Why have the successive Governments, that under Gen. (Retd.) Musharraf and later under Mr. Zardari, decided not to act against the terrorists as they continued to fortify their position in North Waziristan? That the former Military Chief, Gen. (Retd.) Kayani insisted the

1. NW operation to continue until terrorism eliminated: Nawaz, Dawn, June 17, 2014: <http://www.dawn.com/news/1113129>
 2. For details, please see ISPR Press Release No PR124/2014-ISPR, June 15, 2014: https://www.ispr.gov.pk/front/main.asp?o=t-press_release&id=2574#pr_link2574
 3. For details, please see Nawaz Sharif's speech in House on Operation Zarb e Azb, June 16, 2014: <http://www.unblock.pk/browse.php?u=KODvcctFjpdwxBwcWxcYRrDhXPIWbyaxlkLEqZ7UckZ7%2FzRos0%3D&b=29>

decision to launch an operation was solely his⁴ and ISPR former spokesperson claiming the operation was not conducted by Gen. Kayani as COAS due to a feared blowback from the militants⁵ point out, among others, the complete abdication of decision-making on security matters by the civilian elected governments.

After launching the military operation, the three most important long-term tasks before the civilian government to address the issue of militancy and terrorism are:

- i. To develop a counter-narrative to the ideology propagated by the militants and then popularize the counter-narrative among the populace;
- ii. To secure the Pak-Afghan border against any infiltration or unauthorized movement, and
- iii. To mainstream FATA in consultation with the local tribes.

In the short to medium term, the challenges include:

- i. To take care of the large number of Internally Displaced Persons (IDPs)
- ii. To organize IDPs safe return and rehabilitation after the operation establishes the writ of the State and
- iii. To develop a civil set-up to effectively govern the area after the military has done its part.

The NSC Fails to Meet Regularly

While the restructuring of the National Security Committee (NSC) is lauded as one of the significant achievements of the Government during its first year in office, its inability to use this forum to address issues and conflict management is fast turning the NSC into an irrelevant forum.

The NSC, which has only met thrice during the first year of Government, has not been convened to take critical security decisions such as that of launch of operation, or overview of security policy options after ghastly incidents such as attack on Karachi airport.

Despite the required structural reforms, the negative tendency to use informal methods for security policy-making are still preferred over formal methods. Despite the existence of the NSC, meetings of all the members of NSC are held in the Prime Minister House but without the rubric of NSC. This practice indicates reluctance to institutionalization of decision-making

and policy-formulation on security issues.

FIA Investigation halted on Asghar Khan Case

According to media reports, the Federal Government, now treading carefully not to irk the already-somewhat-estranged Military leadership, has halted the FIA investigation into the Asghar Khan case.⁶

If it is indeed true, the Government, which earlier pursued the High Treason case against Gen. (Retd.) Musharraf on Supreme Court orders, is willing to defy the Supreme Court in the Asghar Khan Case⁷ investigation in a bid to save themselves and the ISI from the possible embarrassment and the criminal cases resulting from the findings of the investigation.

NRO, Martial Laws and the US

While the infamous National Reconciliation Ordinance (NRO) 2007 had its share of controversy before being declared *void ab initio* by the Supreme Court of Pakistan, Sindh Assembly's member and Deputy Speaker, belonging to the Peoples Party, added new and embarrassing layers to it by claiming that the United States had served as guarantor of the NRO and the underlying understanding reached between late Ms. Bhutto and then ISI Chief General Ashfaq Pervez Kayani, in which it was agreed that no martial law would be imposed till three general elections have taken place in the country. She also claimed that the former President and Co-Chair of PPP, Mr. Asif Zardari had recently proceeded to the US to remind the Americans of their "past promises to protect democracy" in Pakistan. While the PPP formally denied this claim by Ms. Raza, it is interesting to note that no action has been taken by the party against Ms. Raza for making such a profound but reportedly false statement.

It is unlikely that the statement will receive any ringing endorsement from the parties involved, but it once again reveals an embarrassing fact of the shameful acceptability by our political elite of a lording role of the foreign powers in Pakistan's political affairs.

Premier-COAS Interactions

The first interaction between the Prime Minister and the COAS during the month of June was on June 10, 2014 when the Prime Minister chaired a high level meeting to review the law and order

4. Gilani says decision to launch N Waziristan operation was reserved by Kayani, The Express Tribune, July 11, 2014: <http://tribune.com.pk/story/734223/pml-n-should-honour-musharraf-resignation-deal-says-gilani/>

5. Kayani feared religious right's backlash against him: Athar Abbas, Dawn, July 02, 2014: <http://www.dawn.com/news/1116558>

6. Asghar Khan case probe halted by the FIA, The News, July 24, 2014: <http://www.thenews.com.pk/Todays-News-13-31800-Asghar-Khan-case-probe-halted-by-FIA>

7. In the Asghar Khan case verdict, the Supreme Court of Pakistan had charged that two former Military officials in 1990 disbursed money among a list of politicians (including Mr. Nawaz Sharif) who were opposed to Pakistan People's Party, to influence the outcome of the 1990 Elections so that the PPP doesn't come back to power. The ruling had directed that Federal Investigation Agency should investigate into the matter, adding that, if evidence was found against anyone, action should be taken against them.

situation in country. Matters relating to Internal and regional security including FATA, Karachi and Balochistan were discussed. The meeting was attended by Federal Interior Minister Chaudry Nisar Ali Khan, Chief of Army Staff General Raheel Sharif, Chief of General Staff Lt. Gen. Ishfaq Nadeem Ahmad and Major General Nasir Dilawar Shah.⁸

The second interaction was when Prime Minister Mohammad Nawaz Sharif received a briefing on Operation Zarb e Azb on June 20, 2014 in Peshawar by the Corp Commander Peshawar. The Prime Minister was accompanied by Chief of the Army Staff General Raheel Sharif, Governor Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Sardar Mehtab Ahmed Khan, Chief Minister Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Mr. Pervaiz Khattak, Federal Minister for Defence Khawaja Muhammad Asif and Federal Minister for State and Frontier Regions (SAFRON) Lt. General (Retd.) Abdul Qadir Baloch.⁹

On June 24, 2014, in a third interaction with the Army Chief during June, Prime Minister Muhammad Nawaz Sharif chaired a meeting on IDPs in Islamabad. Minister for State and Frontier Regions (SAFRON), Lt. Gen. (Retd.) Mr. Abdul Qadir Baloch, Minister for Information, Broadcasting and National Heritage, Senator Pervaiz Rashid, Governor Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, Sardar Mehtab Ahmed, Director General Military Operations (DGMO) and Director General Inter-Services Public Relations (DGISPR) attended the meeting. Minister SAFRON and DGMO briefed the Prime Minister about the present situation of IDPs. Prime Minister directed to facilitate IDPs in every respect.¹⁰

In the fourth interaction, on June 27, 2014, Prime Minister Mohammad Nawaz Sharif visited the IDP Camps in Bannu, Khyber Pakhtunkhwa. Governor KP, Sardar Mehtab Ahmed, CM KP, Mr. Pervez Khattak, and Minister for Information and Broadcasting Senator Pervez Rashid also accompanied the PM. On his arrival to Bannu, the Prime Minister was received by Chief of the Army Staff General Raheel Sharif and Corps Commander Peshawar Lt. Gen. Khalid Rabbani at the helipad.

While addressing the IDPs, the Prime Minister said, “*We realize that this is a very difficult stage for all of you and we are working day and night to ease your difficulties*”. The Government would spend maximum funds for IDPs, even if the amount is in billions or trillions. The PM appreciated the Army officers and its jawans for their sacrifices and commitment for the cause of the nation

and said, “*Army is giving their lives and salaries (Pakistan Army donates one day pay for IDPs) for IDPs,*” and for this they deserve praise from the whole nation. *Insha Allah, terrorism will be banished and Pakistan will prosper.*”¹²

During the month of July, the Prime Minister Mr. Muhammad Nawaz Sharif met with the Chief of Army Staff twice.

General Raheel Sharif called on the Prime Minister on July 09, 2014 at the PM House. Army Chief briefed the PM on the operation Zarb-e-Azb and shared that the operation is being carried out successfully according to stated objective plans.¹³

The second interaction between the Prime Minister and General Raheel Sharif took place on July 17, 2014 at the General Headquarters (GHQ). The Prime Minister was accompanied by Khawaja Muhammad Asif, Defence Minister, Chaudhry Nisar Ali Khan, Interior Minister, Mr. Sartaj Aziz, Advisor to the PM on National Security and Foreign Affairs, and Mr. Tariq Fatemi, Special Assistant to the Prime Minister. They were briefed by the DGMO on the progress of Operation Zarb-e-Azb and all related stages. PM showed great satisfaction over the progress and expressed that our forces are achieving the intended objectives at the desired pace. PM said that the whole nation is behind our jawans fighting this battle for peace and stability in our country. The PM said that operation is meant to establish writ of the State. Chase of terrorists by armed forces and other law enforcement agencies and intelligence apparatus will continue till their annihilation, PM added. The meeting noted with concern that there is an issue of effectively prosecuting terrorists in the courts of law and terrorists are not getting convictions which has negative impact on the forces' effort in war on terror. It was agreed that the forces would get full legal backing.

The PM also appreciated Pakistan Army for providing security to the Chinese workers working on different projects all around Pakistan. The PM stated that army would be fully equipped and provided all requisite resources to fight this war. The Prime Minister directed that damage assessment of the area should also be carried out for better and planned resource allocation for effective reconstruction and rehabilitation. The PM said that NADRA should fast track verification process by employing additional manpower and equipment in Bannu.¹⁴

8. For details, please see PM Chairs Law and Order Meeting, Press Release, Prime Minister's Office, Islamabad, June 10, 2014: http://pmo.gov.pk/press_release_details.php?pr_id=529

9. For details, please see Prime Minister visits Peshawar; gets briefing on operation “Zarb-e-Azb”, Press Release, Prime Minister's Office, Islamabad, June 20, 2014:

10. For details, please see Prime Minister briefed on the issue of IDPs, Press Release, Prime Minister's Office, Islamabad, June 24, 2014: http://pmo.gov.pk/press_release_details.php?pr_id=549

11. For details, please see Pakistan Army donates one day pay for IDPs, ISPR Press Release No PR139/2014-ISPR, June 21, 2014: https://www.ispr.gov.pk/front/main.asp?o=t-press_release&date=2014/6/21#pr_link2589

12. For details, please see PM visits Bannu IDPs Camp, Press Release, Prime Minister's Office, Islamabad, June 27, 2014: http://pmo.gov.pk/press_release_details.php?pr_id=556

13. For details, please see COAS calls on PM, Press Release, Prime Minister's Office, Islamabad, July 09, 2014: http://pmo.gov.pk/press_release_details.php?pr_id=568

14. For details, please see Prime Minister Mohammad Nawaz Sharif visited GHQ, July 17, 2014: http://pmo.gov.pk/press_release_details.php?pr_id=577