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The Influence of the Pakistani Army on the Formulation of Foreign Policy: A Comparative Analysis of the Musharraf and Bajwa era

1. **Hina Butt** 

hinasalmanm81@gmail.com

PhD Scholar, Department of International Relations, Bahria University, Islamabad

2. **Muhammad Salman** 

tipu487@hotmail.com

PhD Scholar, Department of Political Science, Islamia University, Bahawalpur

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Hina Butt 

PhD Scholar, Department of International Relation,
Bahria University, Islamabad

Muhammad Salman 

PhD Scholar, Department of Political Science,
Islamia University, Bahawalpur

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Abstract

Foreign policies function as a structural design in the politics of states. Foreign policy is the insurance to maintain national security, the stability of the economy and establishes international relations with other states. While state institutions like the army, the judiciary, and the civil bureaucracy help and strengthen it. Specifically, the military supports the functioning of the state by defending borders and working under civilian governments around the world. But in the case of Pakistan, the army plays an important role in the formulation of foreign policy. Therefore, in this study, we examine the role and influence of the military in the formulation of Pakistan's foreign policy. The study will analyze the role of two military generals; Musharraf and Bajwa's role in the making of foreign policy. Furthermore, the objective is to examine the differences in foreign policies of the Musharraf government and the Bajwa era. However, the theoretical basis of the study will be Realism. The secondary literature available openly in the forms of books, journals, and media commentaries will be used for this short study.

Keywords: Foreign policy, Military, International Politics, Realism, international relations.

Corresponding Author Email:

hinasalmanm81@gmail.com

tipu487@hotmail.com

Introduction

Pakistan military has been remained influential in the making of foreign policy since the inception of the country. The military became a powerful institution because of the overriding priority of the state to build an as powerful institution and for this purpose allocation of budget acceded to 70%. Certainly, Britain could not fulfill monetary assistance for military development once the subcontinent was divided into two parts after partition. Therefore, Pakistan demanded a two-million-dollar loan soon in October 1948, which received in 1954 at the cost of being an ally of the US against China and Russia. The US assistance for economy and military tied in the bond with cento, SETO, and Baghdad Pact. Pakistan's concern was purely deterrence against India instead of the communist bloc. This situation led Pakistan into a dependent relationship with the US but at the same time, Pakistan as the frontline state shifted its policy towards counterbalancing Indian superiority. Till General Ayub Khan the focus of the military remained strict to the security of the state but due to the cold war tension among USSR and United States compelled General Zia ul Haq to change the perspective. USSR desired efforts for warm waters were challenging to the borders of Pakistan and political leaders remained to disable in forming a powerful foreign policy. Such political conditions were enabling enemies to overcome the state. So General Zia accepted American President Reagan's 400 million dollars economic and military aid, after coming into power Ronald Reagan not only provided billions of dollars but F-16 fight jets (which were used against USSR aggression in the Afghan region by Pakistani pilots). Resultantly, military due to security concerns kept influencing foreign policy affairs till 1999.

The weaknesses of political parties kept challenging the democratic structure continuously. Now Pakistan that already has strategic importance in the region but after 9/11 it has appeared notably in the realm of international politics. The incidents of these two decades from 2001-2019 have made the military influence in foreign policy formation even more discernable. The strategies behind foreign policy formation in the General Musharraf and General Bajwa era are contrasting in case of comparison. Undoubtedly, the failure of the democratic system and military coup put foreign policy formation in a controversial situation. Moreover, abrupt turmoil in international politics due to the US terrorists attack dragged the state into a complex political situation and loss of democratic leadership made things more vulnerable to address in the construction of international affairs. Later, at the time of the General Bajwa military has a different stance that influenced the foreign policy because of the US military and presidential stance towards Pakistan „DO MORE“ after being consistent ally in the “War against Terrorism”.

The study aims to analyze the military role in shaping the foreign policy of Pakistan in the Musharaf and Bajwa era. The primary data will be secured from the elites' official statements available at ISPR. The online journals, books and research paper will be used as secondary data sources in the study.

Research problem

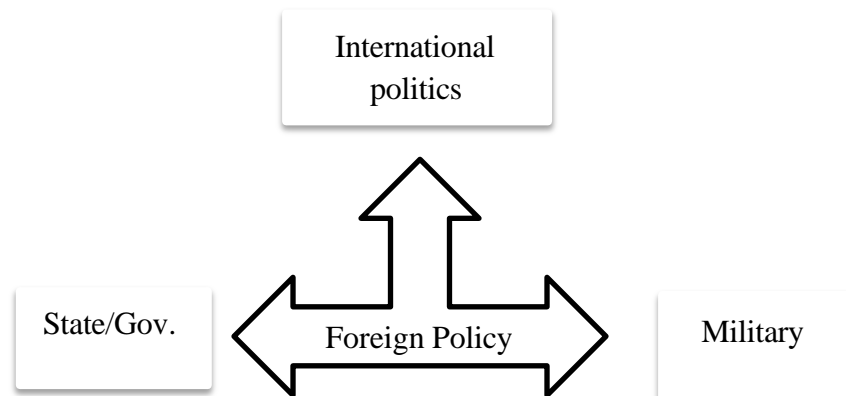
The study aims to explore the military influence on the formation of foreign policy. The purpose of the study is to find the sources that compelled military elites to formulate foreign policy and get it implemented. General Musharraf has a certain standpoint regarding foreign policy in his regime, while General Bajwa has decided a completely different approach. The investigation will try to implore the causes behind the military influence that entangles the military in political affairs. Moreover, such political entanglement transforms the military status from a pressure group to assertive authority in policy formation.

Research question

1. What has been the role of the military in shaping the foreign policy in General Musharaf and the General Bajwa era?
2. What were the approaches taken by Musharraf and Bajwa in shaping foreign policy?
3. What were those international political conditions that compelled the military generals to formulate foreign policy in 2001 and 2015?

Research framework

The study revolves around the framework in which realism is base for military, political government/system and formation of foreign policy.



Figure#1: model of the study

Realism is giving direction to the military and political government/system to design a foreign policy. The natural flux of realism in the current study is leading to military influence in foreign policy by the comparison of General Musharraf and General Bajwa doctrine.

The Independent variable in the study is the military and the dependent variable is the formation of foreign policy.

Literature Review

Quaid-i-Azam said:

“Our foreign policy is one of friendliness and good-will towards all the nations of the world. We do not cherish aggressive designs against any country or nation. We believe in the policy of honesty and fair play in national and international dealings and are prepared to make our utmost contribution to the promotion of peace and prosperity among the nations of the world. Pakistan will never be found lacking in extending its material and moral support to the oppressed and suppressed of the United Nations Charter.” (Broadcast conversation in February 1948, USA available on the Ministry of Foreign Affairs website)

Bojang AS narrates in the article that foreign policy is based on three components: the “denouement”, the “technique”, and the “policy/procedure”. The denouement is an end of perception with its results, while the technique is more of based on policies and thoughts like diplomatic tactics etc. however the procedure is dependent on the state’s capabilities like economy and military. So the foreign policy is the perception that a state invests with its ideas, policies, and thoughts to achieve the desired goals with the help of the state’s capabilities. He explains that foreign policy is dependent on external and internal determinants. The external determinants are power structure, international organization, the reaction of other states, world public opinion, and alliances. At the same time, the internal determinants are historical influence, size and geography, natural resources, economic development, industrial development, and military power, political organization, and role of media and think-tanks.(1)

Ian Talbot writes that military influence has been observed since the birth of Pakistan. The military has always been considered the custodian of security. The defense expenditure has always been allotted maximum keeping other institutions' needs aside. Pakistan's army has remained active in regional politics on various incidents. The military coup also has been one of the major reasons for involving in politics and the formulation of foreign policy. The tumultuous political leadership could not stay ever for longer periods and if in case of completing tenures then it has remained perplexed and under stress. Nawaz Sharif and Benazir Bhutto as prime ministers of Pakistan remained stressed due to bureaucracy and regional politics and personal weaknesses also affected the tenures.(2)

Ahmad states that Pakistan from its beginning has a threat from a potential enemy of the country India and its influence in Afghanistan kept conditions even complicated for formulating foreign policy. Moreover soviet and Indian presence in the Afghanistan dispute with Pakistan heightens the level of threat and insecurity. The issues of Pakhtunistan and Durand Line kept both countries on nexus. In such a condition of the surroundings of a state-level of insecurities are difficult to handle. This situation prevails yet that foreign policy has been formulated keeping in view the relations with the neighbors of the state Pakistan. Even at the end of the soviet afghan war Pakistan remained vigilant and remained on the same page in formulating its foreign policy.(3)

Lieven said the Nawaz Sharif and Benazir Bhutto regimes were removed due to the charges of exploitation, inadequacy, and weaknesses in the 1990s. Both the political leaders kept ex-changing the office as prime minister. Musharaf took over politics and it was quite a different experience for civil class because his policies were enlightened and he granted maximum freedom. The international political arena was quite a tough period of his time but he authorized press liberty which had not been observed in political regimes of Sharif and Benazir. Musharaf belonged to a modern family and his mother's influence was quite visible as she was a worker of the International Labor Organization (ILO). His tenure was counted as the best time because he gave special importance to women's rights.

Pakistan was facing serious economic issues and the Indian threat for Pakistan was intensifying the condition. Radical Islamic groups were waiting to break the state and this was a final hope to have a progressive political government that could support the country. In such a condition, Pakistan military which was supporting the USA war against terrorism had to be on a page that they were supporting Pakistan in other words. (4)

Fair writes in the article that the public and analysts of Pakistan think that every state in the world possesses an army but in the case of Pakistan military possesses a country. This is because the military was the biggest service unit that occupies the dominant status. Pakistan has the Air Force and the Navy but those institutions do not participate in politics. Military steps in the politics and halts the government and constitution and justify this move under the rule of the Doctrine of necessity in the Supreme Court. Judiciary plays an important role in the execution of the national elections under its supervision. Then in military seizer with the help of intelligence make a group of like-minded political people and those like-minded people get elected in the elections. In this way, the pro-military parliament approves laws beyond the provision of the constitution. Pakistan military gives the top priority to the state and the same stance they develop in the public. For this purpose, they invest in national media, schools, and colleges' study courses to angle their mindset. The second reason that army takes over the political government is national insecurity. The military is carrying sensitive connections with

the United States, China, Afghanistan, and India. The other reason is US restrictions for supplying weapons and US is a top supplier in security assistance.(5)

Khattak writes that the 9/11 incidents changed the world altogether and foreign policy was the biggest challenge then. President Bush in his national speech declared:

"We will make no distinction between the terrorists who committed these acts and those who harbor them."(Bush address: 2001) i

It was difficult for Pakistan but the US president's speech was enough to understand the message. Ultimately general Musharraf didn't refuse the US demands for having access to its bases. Khattak quotes Bob Woodward: General Musharraf surprised Secretary Powell by agreeing to all the seven demands the US made. (Woodward Bob, 2002:59). But Musharraf's such move removed US penalties of 1990's and 3 million dollars debt.(6). Musharraf at the time he was delivering a parting speech he uttered few words on August 18, 2008:

I today decide to resign from my office ... I do not want anything from anybody. I have no concern for that ... The calm and assuredness with which I am leaving that whatever I could do for the nation, this people, that I with honesty, faithfulness did ... but I too am a human. It is possible some mistakes happened along the way. (C-SPAN 2008)ii

His words "I too am a human" declare that foreign policies are run by human beings not by states. The links among countries are those humans who execute the policies because power is concentrated on a single person. Then the policies are dependent on that person's psychological dealing with the matter.

In Musharraf's case, he took over power when the state was unbalanced and under international pressures. The nuclear tests of 1998, Kargil issue and the worst pressure of the 9/11 incident were challenging conditions of his time. The unstable regional situation was compelling to have a strong person to deal with the matter and he was simultaneously governing authority in civil and military affairs. He took advantage of the geographical location of the state and collected billions of dollars-worth aid. He allowed the US to use air and ground routes for the operation against Afghanistan. His permission for using bases was, of course, a way to facilitate the US reflected great power could yield the small state anytime for its own purpose.(7)

Fair says Bajwa is a person with a different approach. His views are different from other generals about democracy. The author considers Bajwa has mixed feelings for civil-military management. Current progress in China Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC) is a threat to Pakistan because India is noticing the movement closely. Bajwa is a good addition because he has full command of the areas which are sensitive like Kashmir and Gilgit-Baltistan.

Domestically many challenges Pakistan is facing in the completion of the CPEC project, especially from Balochistan many insurgencies are happening to stop the process by abducting Chinese engineers and bomb blasts, etc General Bajwa other than security issues has to face sectarianism by calling him Ahmadi or relations with Ahmadi people. But the Pakistan military diffused this scandal as well.(8)

Conley says General Bajwa's appointment as chief of army staff turns him more focused on the regional alliance. His analysis reflects from his policies to get the state strengthens in regional politics and less intensified political conditions are necessary for progress. He does not believe in war between neighbors and the same strategy can be seen in Prime Minister Imran Khan's speeches. Since the time general Bajwa is on chief appointment he is dealing with India with a different philosophy.(9)

Lalwani says the year 2019 brings different things together. In the same year, America adopts a friendly and relaxed mode to talk to the Taliban with the assistance of Pakistan. China and Pakistan relations have been noticed on its peak; on the other hand, Pakistan has experienced aggressive behavior of India. Indian aircraft have been destroyed and Indian pilot has been captured alive on violation of Pakistan boundaries. General Bajwa gets an extension of his tenure for the security of the state. The military is the hegemon of the state and uses power at the time of rivalry.(10)

Hypothesis

- H1: if political leadership is unsuccessful in delivering its role then the military takes the charge to formulate the foreign affairs.
- H2: if the realm of international politics is unpredictable then military leads in designing a nation's foreign policy.

Realism theory-linkage to army influence on foreign policy

Realism is a theory of international relation which deals with the state to state relations and involvement of various foreign factors which are intrinsically linked with the security and defense. Realism provides a deep study of a structure of the state that is an important element of international politics. The state has to pursue power for its survival and without power; the state cannot escape from the implications of war. The state formulates foreign policy keeping in view international politics. This foreign policy helps in developing relations with various states in the world.

Research design

The scope of the current study is qualitative. Although, subjective strategies are particularly helpful in assessing individuals, events in a qualitative research design.(11) More specifically, historical or archival research is employed in this study under a qualitative research

design. Historical research is the research technique used by the researcher when the past account of events artifacts and circumstances in a society or a culture are brought under examination. (12) For the sake of the current study books, Journals, Databases, and electronic searches were adopted.

The subjective research techniques utilized for this examination are portrayed further and included literature regarding the Pakistan army as an influencing agent in the formation of foreign policy and as a comparison, two generals doctrine has been implied in the current study. The literature which involves the comparison of general Musharraf and general Bajwa has been brought under review however the literature extending from the history of the post-cold war era to September 11 and their reviewed analysis to date has been considered. In particular, the grounded theory of Realism has been utilized for linking the events regarding the military influence in the formation of foreign policy.

Analysis and findings

The nature of realism theory embodies the state to state relations in international politics. Realism studies the state and its policies. The capability of the state enables it to rule in international politics. This theory works in the foundation of the current study where the state occupies a well-structured military and the political failures encourage the military to formulate/influence foreign policy. The state is always remained under stress due to national and international enemies.

The scope of the study is built around three main research questions and can be recapitulated as under;

1. What has been the role of the military in shaping the foreign policy in general Musharraf and the general Bajwa era?
2. What were the approaches taken by Musharraf and Bajwa in shaping foreign policy?
3. What were those international political conditions that compelled the military generals to formulate foreign policy in 2001 and 2015?

The following section provides a systematic analysis of the research question raised and build a mechanism to identify and understand the military influence on the foreign policy of the state. This study is based on realism associated with the formulation of foreign policy influenced by the military.

To address the first research question, it is important to analyze the contextual orientation of incapability of political leadership that empowers other units to fulfill the task of the governing body first place. The role of the military has always been remained to influence

the formation of foreign policy. Even in developed countries analysts while making foreign policy undertake military stance but the foreign policy has been remained an action of the governing body to formulate. But in Pakistan political situation has always been remained serious that the military has to come over to rescue. The time when General Musharaf took over the state was in need to be rescued because of 9/11. There was no way out except to develop flexible and soft foreign policy due to American presence in the region. Pakistan was in vulnerable condition due to international politics. Otherwise, Pakistan was then under US restrictions and in case of support to the US in the war against terrorism those restrictions were removed. The US as a major supplier of weapons again started dealing with Pakistan. However, this was all happening at the cost of surrendering the national Shamsi base to the US army for the assistance of war. In Salalah, the check post had been closed for a long period in the reaction of US drone attacks on the Pakistani civil population. None the less USA realized it soon that without the support of Pakistan the US had to waste billions of dollars and time to reach Afghanistan.

Musharaf had to manage domestic politics as well and the Laal masjid incident was one of the issues that were challenging stability. But Musharaf as General and President had a liberal approach and he promoted liberty in his politics as well as for press and media that had not been practiced by civil governments earlier.

As long as General Bajwa is concerned, he has an altogether different approach for foreign policy. He believes in more of regional empowerment. He since has been appointed as chief of army staff, his main concern is to achieve regional equity. His command has to face many challenges regarding security but he aims to deliver peace in the region. The completion of CPEC is a challenge and a threat at the same time. India is continuously creating troubles in the completion of CPEC, and trouble in the areas of Kashmir, Balochistan and Gilgit-Baltistan regions. Bajwa after US demand on "Do More" has adopted the policy "No More" and his policy takes another turn in the shape of not interacting with the USA in the matter of support in Afghanistan.

His mainstream priority is to gain regional alliance and for this, he has managed military exercises with Russia and enhances good friendly relations with Iran, China and Russia. He also invited air chief marshal on passing out of PMA cadets. However, India has tried its best to spoil the friendship ties between Pakistan and Iran. The USA realizes the Pakistan military potential and now seeking military support for dialogues with the Taliban so it can withdraw its troops from Afghanistan.

The second research question deals with the approaches of Musharaf and Bajwa as the military Generals. This is very important that the foundation of the study is on theory realism. As for as both Generals are concerned they have a realist approach for the foreign policy but

the difference is Musharraf worked on realistic theory keeping in mind the small state strategy against superpower state. Due to the political unrest in the region, Pakistan was facing crucial strategic conflicts and General Musharraf focused on compromising strategy. He knew it already that the strong military could not stand in front of superpower so Musharraf compromised with the USA and became ally in the war against terrorism because it was a serious threat to the security of the state.

Now General Bajwa also follows a realistic approach but his practical implementation is to promote regional alliance instead of war with the neighbors. As in recent years, India is trying to hegemon in the region and dares to infiltrate through the air in Balakot which is an offense. But Pakistan military under the General Bajwa's approach, the pilot has been returned to the Indian government for the friendly environment of the region. India other than this one incident many other insurgencies have occurred to exploit the current stance and involved directly or indirectly into the war craze.

While answering the third question which deals with international political conditions of 2001 and 2015 which forced the military to formulate foreign policy, this thing is needed to be cleared that Pakistan was lacking political stability in those eras in the first place. Domestic politics was on the falling side and fraudulent activities of the political parties had been challenged by the courts and NAB. The corruption in the case of Panama was a leading heading of the international media.

The international pressure was extremely high and no regional state interrupted in the US invasion in Afghanistan. Meanwhile, Pakistan was facing international isolation and international media was working to prove Pakistan as a failed state. His all policies were to support the country and for this, he empowered the institutions, worked for legal and social women empowerment, and produced employment opportunities. He invested in mega projects of infrastructure, worked on friendly relations with Iran, Afghanistan, India, USA, China, and Middle East states. During his tenure GDP and Stock, market growth was visibly high.

General Bajwa's influence on foreign policy was due to the lame behavior of the democratic government in politics. Nawaz Sharif had always been insecure of military and dawn leaks provoked military to come at the front. Lt. General Assad Durrani's (Rtd) book published and intensified the conditions. Then publically rumors were in the air that the military was supporting Imran Khan Procession against the Nawaz government. Later his participation in elections and results was counted as military support. The pivotal role of the Pakistan army in the war against terrorism had been taken for granted and US officials stated for more. This US discouragement and thanklessness provoked Pakistan Military to say no more. In all these internal and external political conditions General Bajwa influenced the foreign policy.

Conclusion

Foreign policy is planned to work in favor of state which can elevate the nation in the international community. The states use it more to benefit their security, encouragement, and for building national interest among other states. The states build their policies and the interests keep changing regarding other states. The foreign policy reflects the size of the state. Pakistan being a small state formulates its foreign policy under the influence of the military leadership. International politics and national political instability causes such dynamics that Pakistan military has to come over to influence foreign policy process in different times.

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