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## *Corruption – an inherent element of Democracy in Pakistan?*

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The 2016 Panama Papers that were leaked, brought to light the corrupt activities of the then Pakistani Prime Minister Nawaz Sharif. Allegations related to his family's ownership of properties in Central London, which all had an unclear money trail background, were brought into question. The Supreme Court voted unanimously for his disqualification from serving as the Prime Minister on the 28<sup>th</sup> of July 2017, and despite initially denying any wrongdoing, shortly after the verdict, Mr. Sharif formally resigned from office anyhow.

No Pakistani Prime Minister has ever completed the five-year long Government term, essentially this comes down to the fact that all Heads of Government have been dismissed due to charges of corruption. This paper aims to demonstrate how corruption has proved to be an irreplaceable ingredient in the history of Pakistani democratic rule of law. Corruption in general has plagued the country and has infiltrated the socio-economic and political landscape. From Heads of State, to judiciary and to local police officers, corruption has found to be present in many areas of Pakistan's society. However, the paradox pertains that none of the Military Generals have ever faced a verdict for corrupt practices. This enforces the question of whether Army governance is the answer to terminating corruption in Pakistan, or whether it is fundamentally down to the fragile criminal justice institutions who do not have the courage to pursue responsibility from the Military, but do so only for the civil Administration. For the purposes of this paper, first the theoretical foundation of the corruption phenomenon will be discussed, followed by an analysis and a historical overview of the cases of Pakistani officials, allegedly involved in such conduct.

### Introduction

The orthodox definition of corruption is the abuse of entrusted power by an individual in position of authority who has responsibilities to the public. Such fraudulent behaviour often implies pursuit of personal gains. Corruption has a very broad spectrum and encapsulates, for instance, misuse of State assets by Governmental bodies, payment of kickbacks in illicit transactions, bribes, embezzlements, misappropriation of funds and public resources, extortion and nepotism. Yet, it could manifest itself through less obvious activities that are deemed legal or borderline legitimate, such as lobbying or State capture, where a party's political self-interest controls the country's decision-making course of action in order to achieve its own goals through concealed means. The various meanings of corruption indicate that it is a fluid and volatile concept. Corruption is perceived through numerous conflicting and overlapping terms, yet the prevailing ones are of illegality and breach of duty. Corruption is a reflection of the cultural, political and economic framework of a given State and as such, corruption could be an answer to inadequate or disadvantageous regulations generated by officials. When institutions responsible for oversight of rules are acting inefficiently, or incompetent individuals are placed

in a position of power, people could take advantage of these asymmetries of monitoring and get around the enacted law.

Corruption could arise at different levels. Petty corruption is found at the execution end of public services, where the citizens encounter State representatives, whereas grand scale corruption, comprises the highest strata of governance and requires deeper infiltration into the political, judicial and economical establishments. If a State fails in curbing its malfeasance due to organizational shortcomings, political, economic or social instability, corruption might become endemic, pervade the system and lead to a sustainable corrupt hierarchy. Indicators of systematic corruption are conflicting interests, discretionary policies, low degree of transparency, monopolization of power, scarce wages and freedom from liability. Nevertheless, these indexes are not enough to detect corruption, since it is a clandestine affair difficult to observe and estimate.

### Corruption in Pakistan

Pakistan has struggled with the problem of corruption since it came into being in 1947, directly after the partition of British India. As a result, Pakistan inherited not only the British legal framework, but also the institutions prominent with their powerful bureaucratic elite trained to serve British rule. In addition, the anti-corruption laws of Pakistan were set up to protect the political entity rather than the society at large. Considering this, it does not come as a surprise that the anti-corruption laws were virtually separated from the public's interests. The subsequent changes in regimes between Military and civilian institutions due to multiple successful coups d'états further impaired and diminished the efficacy of the anti-corruption bodies. Such statement could be validated by observing the lack of any major improvements concerning tackling corruption in any civilian government. This article aims to highlight that the same applies for the military, even though it has opportunely remained absent from the public domain. Quintessentially, Pakistan has always been governed by a permanent bureaucracy.

Under Pakistani laws, corruption is designated as a crime and corrupt officials are held accountable and are subject to severe punishment, yet this takes place chiefly on paper since often society tends to normalise and excuse certain fraudulent activities. The National Accountability Bureau (NAB), established by the Military government in 1999, is the main anti-corruption agency, which tackles cases of corruption, yet it is highly constrained by scarce funding and shortages of personnel. The anti-corruption laws consider any abuse of public power as a crime deserving of up to 14 years of imprisonment, however, no one has ever been subject to this verdict. In societies with high degrees of social polarisation, such as Pakistan, social conditions tend to induce an environment where the use of public power for personal gains is likely to obtain social recognition and appreciation. This could be perceived as the '*moral view of corruption*', where an act of corruption derives its legitimacy from a context in which a holder of public office receives and returns favour to his kinship, associates and followers.

## Case Studies incriminating Democratic Prime Ministers

### Nawaz Sharif

Nawaz Sharif's history of fraudulent conduct dates back long before the Panama-Gate scandal. As President of the Pakistan Muslim League-N (PML-N) and owner of Ittefaq Group, a major steel mill conglomerate, he has been one of the wealthiest Pakistani business magnates and industrialists, and also one of the most prominent Pakistani political figures for the last three decades. As a protégé of the longest serving Head of State, the Military leader General Zia ul-Haq, who was in power from 1977 to 1988, Sharif was first appointed as the Minister of Finance for the province of Punjab. Patronaged by an unstable coalition of conservatives, he was elected as the Chief Minister of Punjab in 1985, re-elected in 1988 and eventually succeeded in becoming the Nation's Prime Minister in 1990. Nevertheless, later on it was alleged that the election was manipulated by the powerful Pakistani intelligence agency, Inter-Services Intelligence (ISI), channelling millions of Rupees into his election campaign.

Sharif's first Administration was terminated when the then President, Ghulam Ishaq Khan dismissed him on corruption charges. Although the Supreme Court overturned the dismissal, both men were ultimately pressured to resign in 1993 by the then Army Chief Abdul Waheed Kakar, which eventually precipitated the 1993 General Elections, when Benazir Bhutto came into power. After becoming Prime Minister again, in 1997, Nawaz Sharif appeared to exercise control over the political landscape and the country's major institutions, yet his second term also suffered discords with the Judiciary and the Military. Sharif was forced to relieve General Jehangir Karamat from command, despite the latter's support in the authorisation of Pakistan's nuclear tests programme in 1998. Many senior State officials fiercely expressed their criticism and showed opposition to the Prime Minister for acting in such manner. The former Treasury Minister Sartaj Aziz's in a retrospect claimed that:

*"It came to the conclusion that in relieving General Jehangir Karamat, Prime Minister Sharif had committed a "blunder". He also failed to recognize that despite his heavy mandate, it was not advisable for him to dismiss two army chiefs in less than a year. In doing so he had overplayed his hands and effectively derailed the democratic process for nine long years..."*

The question remains, what sort of democratic process was present in Pakistan if the Army, indeed, was pulling the strings. General Karamat was replaced with General Pervez Musharraf in 1998, whose initiation of the Kargil War against India led to a deterioration of his relation with Sharif. When Nawaz Sharif attempted to relieve Musharraf from his command on 12<sup>th</sup> of October 1999, the Military staged a successful coup d'état and overthrew the Prime Minister and his Government. Mr. Sharif was sentenced to life imprisonment on charges of corruption, kidnapping, attempted murder, and hijacking and terrorism over the diversion of Musharraf's plane when it was low on fuel, alongside with prohibition for life for any involvement in political activities. Mr. Sharif's overthrow by Musharraf illustrated the perilous reality for any Pakistani politician who has tried to limit the Army's influence in Pakistan with its history of coups.

Fortunately for him, a deal arranged by the late Lebanese Prime Minister Rafiq Hariri, rescued him from being put behind bars and instead he was exiled to Saudi Arabia. At that time many

Pakistanis felt relief, portraying him as corrupt, inexperienced and driven by thirst for power and dominance. His return at the political stage in 2007, following negotiations with the Army, was met by surprise and his victory in 2013 was even a greater shock. However, one of the reasons behind his return, was Benazir Bhutto's homecoming after a self-imposed exile in London and Dubai. Saudi Arabia argued that if Pakistan could accept a democratic-socialist female leader, alleged to be involved in large scale corruption, to return to the country, then the conservative Sharif who was also under verdict should be allowed to come back as well.

The Panama Papers trial has banned Nawaz Sharif once again from public office, yet it still remains to be seen whether the *'three strikes and out'* doctrine exists on Pakistani soil.

### Benazir Bhutto & Asif Ali Zardari

Benazir Bhutto, daughter of the Former Pakistani Prime Minister and President Zulfikar Ali Bhutto, and also an Oxford and Harvard graduate, has always presented herself as the guardian of the deprived and underprivileged and a promoter of freedom of democracy. In a Harvard commencement speech in 1989, she argued how the greedy politicians have pillaged the resources of developing countries, used and betrayed their common people and stripped them off from the means necessary to address their socio-economic problems.

During her two terms in office as Prime Minister, the first ever woman who became a Head of a Muslim State, she acquired wealth, assets and property worth hundreds of millions of dollars. Her first Government was dismissed on the 6<sup>th</sup> of August 1990 by President Ghulam Ishaq Khan after she was accused of corruption. After the dismissal, the Pakistani Government released orders to the Inter-Services Intelligence to investigate the accusations and when Nawaz Sharif became the new Prime Minister the prosecution proceedings against Benazir Bhutto were additionally reinforced. Pakistani Embassies through Western Europe, such as in France, Switzerland, Poland, Spain and Britain were directed to investigate the matter further.

The corruption past of Benazir Bhutto became apparent during the ruling of the Pakistani Army Chief, General Pervez Musharraf, when an informant leaked documents which were obtained from Jens Schlegelmich, her Swiss lawyer and a close family friend. The original price the seller stated was \$ 10 million, yet eventually the deal was concluded at \$1 million in cash. The leaked papers comprised of bank statements from various accounts in Dubai and Geneva; letters from senior officials promising payoffs, with details of the made payments; memorandums detailing meetings at which these "commissions" and "remunerations" were agreed on, and certificates incorporating the offshore companies used as fronts in the deals, many registered in the British Virgin Islands. The documents also uncovered the essential role played by Western institutions in sealing the deals. Apart from the companies that made payoffs, and the network of banks that handled the money - which included Barclay's Bank and Union Bank of Switzerland as well as Citibank - the arrangements made by the Bhutto family for their wealth relied on Western property companies, Western lawyers and a network of Western friends.

Benazir Bhutto hails from a family of large landowners, who have dominated the political landscape and business scene in Pakistan since its creation in 1947. Benazir's father, Zulfikar Ali Bhutto was also an Oxford graduate who became Pakistan's Prime Minister in the 1970s, but was dislodged and imprisoned in 1977 when the then Army Chief, General Mohammed Zia

ul-Haq, staged a coup d'état. Zulfikar Ali Bhutto was hanged two years later, after he refused Zia's offer of clemency for a murder conviction that many Pakistanis viewed as politically stained. Benazir Bhutto spent the next 10 years under house arrest, in prison and in self-imposed exile, campaigning against Zia's military regime.

In 1987, Benazir married Asif Ali Zardari. The marriage was arranged and many among the public were shocked by the differences in socio-economic status between the husband and the wife. To a certain degree, the marriage aimed to protect Benazir's political career by countering conservative Muslims' comments on her unmarried status.

In 1988, Benazir became Pakistan's first female Prime Minister, after General Zia u-Haq was killed in a plane crash. In less than 2 years, Benazir was dismissed by Pakistan's President on grounds of corruption and misrule. The Government of Nawaz Sharif that succeeded her was unable to secure any convictions against Benazir or her husband before Nawaz Sharif himself, in turn, was ousted from office, also for corruption and misrule. When Benazir Bhutto was in power again in 1993, the twin posts, as Prime Minister and Finance Minister, gave her almost a free rein. She appointed her husband as the Investment Minister in 1996, reporting only to herself, which virtually made him Bhutto's right hand.

Among the transactions which her husband Asif Ali Zardari exploited, according to the leaked documents, were Defence contracts; power plant projects; the privatization of State-owned industries; the awarding of broadcast licenses; the granting of an export monopoly for the country's huge rice harvest; the purchase of planes for Pakistan International Airlines; the assignment of textile export quotas; the granting of oil and gas permits; authorizations to build sugar mills, and the sale of Government lands. The couple struggled to avoid the creation of any trail documents that would reveal their role in numerous deals and Benazir Bhutto and Zardari established a secretive method of communication by writing orders on yellow Post-It notes and attaching them to official files. After the deals were finalised, the notes were removed, destroying all trace of involvement.

In 1995, a prominent French military contractor, Dassault Aviation, determined an agreement with Asif Ali Zardari and one of his associates for \$200 million for a \$4 billion - 32 Mirage 2000-5 Fighter Planes, which were supposed to replace two squadrons of American made F-16's. The American purchase was terminated when the Bush Administration determined in 1990 that Pakistan was covertly developing nuclear weapons. Eventually the deal collapsed when Benazir Bhutto was ousted from office. In another large scale financial scheme, a Middle Eastern gold bullion dealer, Abdul Razzak Yaqub, was alleged in depositing at least \$10 million into a Citibank account in the United Arab Emirates in Dubai operated by Mr. Zardari, after the Bhutto Government gave him a monopoly on gold imports that maintained the jewellery industry of Pakistan. Pakistan's Arabian Sea coast has long been a haven for gold smugglers. Until Bhutto's second term, the trade, worth hundreds of millions of dollars a year, was under no supervision and control, with large amounts of bullions, carried on planes and boats which travelled between the Persian Gulf and the generally unprotected Pakistani coast.

The couple also made an impressive profit from increasing Pakistan's customs revenues. Taking into account that very few Pakistanis actually pay income tax, customs revenues generate the

State's largest profits. The system has been corrupted for many years, with businesses often paying bribes to escape obligations. In the 1980s, the International Monetary Fund pushed Islamabad to rise its Government revenues and to reduce the runaway budget deficit. During Benazir Bhutto's first term, Pakistan commissioned pre-shipment audits for all major imports to two Swiss companies, Societe Generale de Surveillance and a subsidiary, Cotecna Inspection SA. However, the real objective behind this attempt in improving the financial stability of Pakistan was bringing about profit for Bhutto and Zardari, as both the Swiss companies were generating a handsome amount of money by issuing certificates under-invoicing as well as sharing the profit with those in control, through illegal means under the hidden support of the people in power. This is not unique solely for Pakistan as these Swiss companies have allegedly been involved in corruption in numerous countries, such as in Bangladesh. According to the conducted investigations, the two Swiss companies made more than \$131 million from inspecting imports into Pakistan from January 1995 to March 1997, from which the Bhutto family's cut was \$11.8 million.

The investigators' inquiry of Benazir's two terms in office unravelled a chain of luxurious overseas properties under the name of her husband and other family members. Among these are various extravagant apartments in London, such as the Rockwood, a 355-acre estate, and a \$2.5 million country mansion in Normandy, which is known as the House of the White Queen. Islamabad also requested the U.S. Justice Department to investigate other overseas bank accounts and properties, including a country club and a polo ranch in Palm Beach, Florida said to be worth about \$4 million, which were purchased by Zardari's affiliates in the 1990s.

After Benazir Bhutto was expelled from office under charges of corruption in 1996, she was sentenced to five years in prison alongside with her husband. Ironically, she persistently argued that they were deprived from a fair trial in Pakistan, since Pakistan's judiciary has a history of corruption, where witnesses, judges and prosecutors are easily bought and sold. Mr Zardari's criminal background was not limited only to the corruption charges, and he was also held for 14 months in the Karachi Central Prison, under charges of murdering Ms. Bhutto's brother.

All the aforementioned accumulation of wealth by the Bhuttos is virtually non-existent if their declared assets and income tax declarations are being reviewed. Benazir Bhutto and Zardari declared properties worth \$1.2 million in 1996 and never made the authorities aware of any foreign accounts or properties, as required by Law. Mr. Zardari declared no net assets at all in 1990, the year Ms. Bhutto's first term ended, and only \$402,000 in 1996. The highest income Ms. Bhutto declared was \$42,200 in 1996, with \$5,110 in tax. In two of her years as Prime Minister, 1993 and 1994, she paid no income tax at all. Mr. Zardari's highest declared income was \$13,100, also in 1996.

Ultimately, on 6<sup>th</sup> of August 2003, Swiss Judges found Benazir Bhutto and Asif Ali Zardari guilty of money laundering. They were given six-month suspended jail terms, fined \$50,000 each and were ordered to pay \$11 million to the Pakistani government.

### Yousaf Raza Gillani

Syed Yousaf Raza Gillani served as the Prime Minister of Pakistan from 25<sup>th</sup> of March 2008 until his retroactive disqualification and dismissal from office by the Supreme Court of Pakistan on 26<sup>th</sup> of April 2012. He, alike his predecessors, has been accused of various corruption scandals.

He was arrested on 11<sup>th</sup> of February 2001 by the Military Police functioning under the umbrella of the military-controlled National Accountability Bureau (NAB), over charges that he abused his position of authority while he was the Speaker of the National Assembly from 1993 until 1997. He was particularly alleged with hiring up to 600 people from among his constituents and placing them on Government payroll. He was also alleged in misplacing millions of Rupees through the misuse of official transport, official telephones, setting up of camp offices at Lahore and Multan and purchase of luxurious vehicles at higher prices than the market prices. The NAB claimed that the Pakistani Treasury suffered a loss of more than 30 million Rupees nationally, due to Gillani's actions. He was convicted to five years rigorous imprisonment by an accountability Court and a fine of 1 million Rupees. The court also barred Gillani from holding public office or obtaining any financial profits from any fiscal institutions for a period of 10 years.

Nevertheless, the legal proceedings against him were widely condemned by various individuals across the country and seen by many as politically motivated, since his party, the Pakistani's People Party (PPP), was opposing General Pervez Musharraf, who had undertaken a coercion of party members to change political fronts. People with anti-Musharraf sentiments viewed this move as a tactic to intimidate PPP members to join his party. Thus, his conviction by the Courts, which were backing up General Musharraf, and subsequent imprisonment were estimated as an act of loyalty towards the PPP, and benefited him in gathering ideological adherents and sympathizers.

*"Since I am unable to oblige them, they decided to convict me so that I could be disqualified and an example set for other political leaders who may learn to behave as good boys",* said Gillani at the time.

### Corruption in other Governmental Bodies

#### Judicial System

A well-functioning Judicial System is essential for addressing corruption effectively, but judicial institutions are themselves cancerously corruptible. Pakistan's Judiciary is characterised by insufficient resources and staff, and corruption and political interference by powerful actors further present obstacles to impartiality and fairness. Although the Supreme Court portrays itself as efficient, insufficient financial means and lack of personnel, coupled with a high-level of insecurity and high crime rates overburden local Courts and lead to negligent trials perceived as biased.

According to Transparency International Pakistan (TIP) the highest amounts of bribery in the country were spent on people affiliated with the Judiciary. The TIP Chairman, Sohail Muzaffar, along with TIP Advisory Committee Chairman, Syed Adil Gilani in a 2011 survey highlighted the delay in punitive action by State organs against corrupt elements in corruption cases like Pakistan Steel, National Insurance Company Limited (NICL), Punjab Bank, Rental Power Plants,

Karachi Electric Supply Corporation (KESC), Pakistan International Airlines (PIA), Railway and Water and Power Development Authority (WAPDA).

### Police

The effectiveness of the Pakistani police varies greatly in the country, and various reports tell of corruption, arbitrary behaviour and human rights abuses from police forces. Police in the country was observed as the most corrupt sector in a 2013 survey by Transparency International. The general population often struggle to report instances of corruption which they encounter with the police because of fear for reprisals. In 2005, Prime Minister Shaukat Aziz ordered an investigation into claims by a 23 year old woman who alleged that, in retaliation for attempting to reveal police corruption, the police falsely detained her for fifteen days and raped her.

### Public Utilities

Irregular payments, bribes and gifts are commonly exchanged when obtaining public services and licences. The majority of consumers admit to illegally reducing their utility bills, especially water and electricity, while others reported being harassed with inflated bills intended to solicit bribes. In addition to that, one in three companies expects to receive gifts when constructing water connections, generating permits or operating licences.

### Corruption among the Pakistani Military

After this overview of the entire spectrum of corruption, which has intoxicated the public and political life in Pakistan, one would undoubtedly place under suspicion the fact that no Pakistani Army General has ever been incriminated in any such acts. If all departments of the Pakistani governmental and public life are implicated in gross corrupt activities, how is it possible that



*General Raheel Sharif and Prime Minister Nawaz Sharif.  
Picture credits: DAWN News*

only the Army remains an exception to the rule? Does this mean that military environment is miraculously immune and sterilised from fraudulent and illegal actions, or simply that such ‘incidents’ within the most powerful institution in Pakistan have been conveniently swiped under the carpet?

Although the Pakistani Military is ostensibly responsible for the security and defence affairs of the State, it has proved its strong influence and control on large shares of the economy, despite Pakistan having an elected civilian Government. The Pakistani Army holds a lion's share of the State budget and is not accountable to the Government for its expenditure.

The Military has been widely perceived as the most qualified, efficient and a highly disciplined organization, yet some of its officers have been connected to corruption cases recently. However, scandals involving the Army are oftentimes whitewashed and retired officers are brought back into service in order to deal with their cases through closed-door court-martials. Even if, in rare cases, someone is found guilty, he has never been imprisoned but only forced to step down or stripped of some privileges.



Demands expressed towards military accountability and transparency have never been a popular election slogan because this could bear a high cost for politicians, including the possible divergence of democracy or production of false corruption cases against vocal politicians. It is claimed that in the private circle, both senior and junior Army officers silently admit or at least do not disprove the existence of corruption, yet often they assert that the military has its own internal mechanism, which deals with fraudulent conduct and breach of discipline.

On the 21<sup>st</sup> of April, 2016 the then Army Chief, General Raheel Sharif sacked 6 Army officers, including two high-ranking Generals, over allegations of corruption, thus portraying an image of a virtuous man who is committed to eradicate corruption, even at the price of punishing his own people. This was seen by many as an unheard-of act in a country, where the Army still has the final say in Defence, Security, Foreign Affairs matters and virtually all aspects of governance. The dismissed Army officers, who were not tried for corruption, but for 'financial irregularities' and 'misappropriation' were only sent into early retirement and were deprived from certain privileges. The event came into being when politicians and public officials were also facing huge criticism over their own corruption scandals.

When applying a closer look, one could raise the adequate question of why these corrupt Army personnel were not arrested and awarded with the corresponding legal punishment designated in the Penal Code. The way in which this incident has unfolded feeds the impression that the Pakistan military personnel receives a preferential treatment to the degree of being above the law of the country. By choosing a few scapegoats from the entire herd of black corrupt sheep, General Raheel Sharif attempted to convert himself into a national icon, while undermining the power and image of the then Prime Minister Nawaz Sharif, who was at that time under judicial scrutiny due to the revelations of the Panama papers.

The sacked Army personnel were serving on deputation in the Frontier Corps in Baluchistan, a subsidiary force responsible for maintaining law and order in the conflicts- and insurgency ravaged region. This incident further substantiated the general viewpoint that Baluchistan is governed by a corrupt and fraudulent administration. Apart from the annual aid accommodated by the Federal Government, billions of dollars have been invested there via the criticized and ambitious China-Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC). Having such astronomical amounts of money deposited in a country with a problematic history of misappropriation of funds, suggest where big chunks of money might end up. The Pakistani Army is culpable of depriving the indigenous people and the region from billions, essential for their development while this form of exploitation is equally present in the North West Frontier Province (NWFP) and the disputed territory of Gilgit-Baltistan (Part of Jammu & Kashmir State).

Ironically, in 2017, Raheel Sharif, was himself at the epicentre of a controversy after documents, leaked to the media, revealed that he had been given land worth 1.35 billion Rupees (\$14 million) by the Army without the authorisation of the Government.

*"The corruption in the Pakistani military is as rampant as in any other state institution. The Army is involved in the smuggling of oil and narcotics through the borders of the western Baluchistan province. The military also makes money through its checkpoints in*

*the restive province. All drivers have to bribe the officers to pass through these posts. These are just a few examples" - Arif Jamal, a US-based Islamism- and security analyst.*

## Conclusion

What are the solutions to the clandestine corruption in the Military?

Merely the dismissal or the stripping of privileges cannot be seen as the answer, as it does not tackle the root cause of the issue. A matter of even greater concern is the fact that it seems as if only the governmental and public officials are portrayed as corrupt and ineffective, whereas Army personnel in those rare cases where it has been implicated in fraudulent behaviour, is justified as occasionally misguided but still having Pakistan's best interests at heart. Corruption, money laundering and the illegal purchase of (overseas) assets by Governmental officials, members of the ruling elite in Pakistan and Army personnel is not a new phenomenon. The pervasiveness of corruption, lack of institutional isomorphism and social cohesion in the country is visible throughout all echelons of public life.

A lion's working hours are only when he is hungry; once he is satisfied, the predator and prey live peacefully together. In Pakistan, however, it seems as if both politicians and Army officers are never able to satisfy their hunger for power and wealth, which leaves the country swinging for decades in a cradle of political anarchy and unlawful rule, where the common people are left vulnerable and helpless, with no prospects for peaceful development. Corruption at the highest levels remains a major challenge for the country and prevents any meaningful step towards social reforms. A change in policy, complemented with strengthening of democratic institutions including the judiciary have become prerequisites for the development of the country.

There is a pressing need of unveiling the truth, irrespective of the culprits, in order for justice to prevail or at least to increase the 'feel' among the general masses, that corruption cannot go unpunished.

The people deserve a corruption-free Pakistan, based on mechanisms of accountability led by honest leaders; Civilian and Military.



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