
Pakistan's Army: New Chief, traditional institutional interests

Introduction

A year after speculation about the names of those in the race for selection as the new Army Chief of Pakistan began, General Qamar Bajwa eventually took charge as Pakistan's 16th Chief of Army Staff on 29 November 2016, succeeding General Raheel Sharif. Ordinarily, such appointments in the defence services of countries do not generate much attention, but the opposite holds true for Pakistan. Why this is so is evident from the popular aphorism, "*while every country has an army, the Pakistani Army has a country*". In Pakistan, the army has a history of overshadowing political landscape - the democratically elected civilian government in reality has very limited authority or control over critical matters of national importance, such as foreign policy and security.

A historical background

The military in Pakistan is not merely a human resource to guard the country against the enemy but has political wallop and opinions. To know more about the power that the army enjoys in Pakistan, it is necessary to examine the times when Pakistan came into existence in 1947.

In 1947, both India and Pakistan were carved out of the British Empire. India became a democracy whereas Pakistan witnessed several military rulers and still continues to suffer from a severe civil-military imbalance even after 70 years of its birth. During India's war of Independence, the British primarily recruited people from the North-West of undivided India which post partition became Pakistan. It is noteworthy that the majority of the people recruited in the Pakistan Army during that period were from the Punjab martial races. Additionally, Punjab was the second largest province of Pakistan during that period. As a consequence, Pakistan was founded in an area that was already heavily militarized. Subsequently, the Pakistani Army was dominated by the Punjabis who till date remain the most influential ethnic group in the country in relation to security and political affairs.

When Pakistan was formed, Muslim League was not a deeply rooted political party as most of its prominent leaders were in India and when they migrated to Pakistan in the post partition period, they did not receive similar support. In the initial years following partition, the Pakistani Army was primarily occupied in restoring external (Jammu & Kashmir) as well as internal (Balochistan) order. The repeated changes of government provided impetus for military interventions and the army continued to strengthen and consolidate its power and control. The ruling class of Pakistan feared annexation by India and according to them, the country constantly had to be in a "*war-ready*" state, which ensured disproportionate power and autonomy to the security apparatus. Since its inception, the Pakistani Army has been involved in various issues concerning the state. In the course of time, a regular army which started off with arms, ammunition, soldiers and generals transformed into a well-organized corporative system.

Numerous additional observations can be made about the involvement of the Pakistani Army in the province of Punjab, which undoubtedly have fuelled the feeling of supremacy among this province and its people. Since Punjab, the most populous province of Pakistan, was heavily militarized since the British era, today more than 60% of the voters in Punjab are connected to the military in one way or another.

Vast tracts of land in west-Punjab had been awarded to retired army staff as part of various settlements for their contributions to Pakistan. The personnel in these army units served both as protectors of the civilians as well as sufferers of the post-partition violence. Notably, the Punjabi units were also utilized in Pakistan's unsuccessful attack to wrest Jammu & Kashmir from India in 1947. The legacy of Punjabis' domination in the Pakistani Army continues till today. A disproportionately large number of the top level positions in the Pakistan Army are still held by the Punjabis. Four Chiefs of Army since Pakistan's independence have been Punjabi, including the newly appointed General Qamar Javed Bajwa.

There is a deep-set resentment against the '*Punjabi army*' among other ethnic groups. The Punjabis in the army have also been accused within Pakistan itself of suppressing sub-regional ethnic politics, especially after East-Pakistan became Bangladesh. The same is true for the current Baloch movement. In 1948 and 1958, massive force was used by the army against the Baloch rebellion. In 2007, when General Pervez Musharraf was in charge, Nawab Akbar Bugti (Baloch Leader) was killed in a military operation which was heavily criticized by the general public. In addition to the above, there is another strong reason why the army from being the protectors of their people slipped into the role of being sole rulers of the country.

The areas that constituted West-Pakistan after the partition lacked highly skilled bureaucrats, lawyers, advisors and technicians necessary for the development of the country. These positions were hence filled by the educated migrants from British India. These migrants left India as they feared democracy would dissipate their privileges. The people of Punjab were not willing to hand over power into the hands of uneducated locals who outnumbered them. In essence, democracy did not suit the financial health of the feudal lords and was detrimental for the ruling elite of Pakistan. It also brought with it the threat, that an "*inferior race*" of Bengalis who were more in number, may end up ruling all of Pakistan. Therefore, the elite ruling class of Pakistan was unwilling to hand over power to the Bengalis or any other ethnic minority. In 1958, the Pakistani Army officially came into power, even though they had shared power with the elite in Pakistan for nearly a decade before that. During the period 1958 to 1971, the Pakistani Army began strengthening its roots and consolidating its grip on power in Pakistan while the political scenario was unstable and chaotic with repeated changes of the government.

"It is important to note that Pakistan's armed forces especially the army operates like a fraternity. In this environment, severe punishments to individuals or extraordinary treatment of a similar nature are viewed as undermining the morale of the institution. Side-lining undesirable individuals or rewarding others discreetly is, thus, a preferred choice", Ayesha Siddiqa-Agha, Security Analyst, Pakistan.

Role in Bangladesh's liberation war

The history of the Pakistani Army would be incomplete without mention of its highly condemnable role during East-Pakistan's (present day Bangladesh) liberation war. In December 1970, the first free and fair elections were held in Pakistan after decades of military rule. The results however came as an unpleasant surprise to the dominant Pakistan People's Party (PPP) in West-Pakistan, contesting against Awami League (AL) in East-Pakistan. The AL, located in the eastern wing, won 160 out of 300 seats in the National Assembly, creating the situation for an arrangement where PPP would have to share power with the AL in the Assembly. Unwilling to do so, PPP started negotiating with the AL about forming a new government. These negotiations reached an impasse in early March 1971. This resulted in AL supporters staging strikes and demonstrations in the capital of East-Pakistan, Dhaka. In March 1971, the genocide in Bangladesh began with the launch of "Operation Searchlight" carried out by the West Pakistani Army to suppress the protests. In eight short but horrifying months in 1971, the Pakistani Army murdered more than three million Bengalis and raped more than 200,000 women. It is worth mentioning that despite available evidence of the atrocious behavior of the Pakistani Army, then an ally of the United States (US), the international community did practically nothing to curb the escalation and halt the violations of human rights of the East-Pakistani population.

"We have chosen not to intervene, even morally, on the grounds that the Awami conflict in which unfortunately the overworked term genocide is applicable, is purely an internal matter of a sovereign state", President Nixon, US.

Army as a corporate enterprise

The businesses, benefits and non-military interests of the Pakistani Army are ferociously safeguarded while not all of them are necessarily profitable. The army business enterprises in Pakistan were initially started for the welfare of retired army staff, who operated the business enterprises leaving a small quota for the navy and air force. Later these two branches started off their own businesses, and these vast enterprises have grown to huge proportions ever since. These business units survive on government subsidies and grants; competition is scared off by military threats, and the senior employees benefit from high salary packages, with no room for accountability or scrutiny. The economic interests of the Pakistani Army in the country as well as its huge clout over the civil administration are the reasons why it is euphemistically referred to as a "parallel state".

"In 1973, almost 90% of the federal budget went to military ends. By the late 1980s, around 80% of current spending either paid off debt or funded the army", Ayesha Jalal, Professor, Tufts University. Author: 'The Struggle for Pakistan: A Muslim Homeland and Global Politics'.

There are several projects, units and housing colonies functioning in Pakistan under the administrative control of the Fauji Foundation, Shaheen Foundation, Bahria Foundation, Army Welfare Trust (AWT) and Defence Housing Authorities (DHAs).

- ***The Fauji Foundation***

The headquarters of Fauji Foundation are in Rawalpindi. The projects under the foundation include sugar mills, cereal and corn, natural gas, plastics, fertilizers, cement, power, education and healthcare. The Fauji Foundation employs six to seven thousand military personnel, mostly in middle and upper management positions. The Fauji Foundation supports welfare projects where free medical care, subsidized quality education and free technical training to over eight million ex-servicemen and their dependents is provided. As per verified foreign sources, the Fauji Foundation is worth a little more than \$20 billion.

- ***The Army Welfare Trust***

The AWT includes projects like farms, stud farms, fish farms, rice and sugar mills, cement factories, pharmaceuticals, shoes, wool, hosiery, travel agencies, aviation, commercial complexes, banking, insurance and security, with many bearing the name 'Askari' (meaning 'Soldier').

- ***Askari Aviation***

Was set up merely to accommodate retired army helicopter pilots who could not get a job in the private sector. The AWT has a total of 15 business units working under its banner, in cities like Okara, Badin, Lahore, Rawalpindi, Karachi and Faisalabad.

- ***The Shaheen Foundation***

This foundation works in different sectors ranging from education to aviation. The business units like Shaheen Airport Service (SAPS), knitwear, aero-traders and SAPS Aviation College run under this foundation in cities like Rawalpindi, Karachi, Lahore and Peshawar.

- ***Bahria Foundation***

This foundation is owned by the navy. The Bahria Foundation deals in commercial complexes, trading, construction, travel agencies, paints, deep sea fishing, dredging, ship breaking, salvage and also operates a university.

- ***Defence Housing Authorities (DHAs)***

In total there are eight DHAs established in the major cities of Karachi, Lahore, Rawalpindi-Islamabad, Multan, Gujranwala, Bahawalpur, Peshawar and Quetta.

Pakistan is arguably the only country in the world, in which the jurisdiction of its armed forces is not restricted to guard its people and borders but includes involvement in business ventures. The Pakistani armed forces have diversified into fields well outside the mandate of any armed force. As per the latest World Bank survey, close to 30% of Pakistanis live below the poverty line, while the expenses of the Pakistani Army and its retired brass continue contributing to the distorted distribution of financial resources of the country. This disparity in power and distribution of resources is the prime reason that Pakistan continues to appear as a weak state.

"The USD 30 billion of direct and indirect aid which America has given Pakistan in the past 11 years has done little but enrich the military men", Christine Fair, Associate professor at the Center for Peace and Security Studies (CPASS), within Georgetown University's Edmund A.

Walsh School of Foreign Service. Author: 'Fighting to the End: The Pakistan Army's Way of War'.

Generals as Rulers

- **General Ayub Khan (10+ years)**

Trained at British Sandhurst Military College, Ayub Khan was a General and later self-appointed Field Marshal in the Pakistani Army and the first military dictator of Pakistan. His regime continued from 1958 to 1969. In 1951, he became the first native Commander in Chief of the Army. Ayub Khan also served in the civilian government as Defence and Home Minister from 1953 to 1958. He was the first and the only Field Marshall of the Pakistani Army, and assumed the Presidency after exiling President Iskandar Mirza in 1958. His regime as the President of Pakistan continued till the year 1969, when he was forced to resign amid a popular uprising in East-Pakistan. The Ayub Khan era (1958-69) is looked at as a phase of economic growth, prosperity and strengthening the position of Pakistan on the world stage. This economic growth, however, resulted in income inequalities, leading to the rise of a few influential families while leaving the masses poverty stricken. The influx of foreign capital during Ayub Khan's regime did suggest industrial growth in the country but a closer look would reveal that the growth was only driven by foreign aid. As a consequence, unemployment persisted and loans and advances by the government to the private sector were twice the size of the direct investments by the industry (1964-65). The increasing concentration of wealth and power in the hands of few, which is often misquoted as economic growth, fuelled violence among the economically disadvantaged majority. Ayub Khan's fame as the man behind the economic prosperity that Pakistan witnessed during his regime was severely tainted by his preferential treatment of West-Pakistan that rattled East-Pakistanis. He developed two of his largest legacy projects, construction of the new capital (Islamabad) and the hydel project of Tarbela in West-Pakistan. On the personal front, he was not a radical Islamist which his proclaiming of the Muslim Family Laws Ordinance in 1961 stands proof of. This law empowered women, especially in the matters of marriage and divorce. His policies discouraged polygamy, protected the rights of wives and granted the rights of inheritance to grandchildren. Despite being a modernist, he gave into religious orthodoxy which also ensured his prolonged control and power. In 1962, the constitution used "*Pakistan*" as the official name and in December 1963, the General yielded to the religious forces and changed the country's name to "*Islamic Republic of Pakistan*". His legacy remains mixed, he is credited for rather dubious economic prosperity and attempts at empowering women of the country, but at the same time, is criticized for concentrating corrupt wealth and power in a few hands which eventually led to disintegration of the nation and the creation of Bangladesh.

- **General Yahya Khan (3 years)**

Yahya Khan was a martial law administrator and later the President of Pakistan. Yahya Khan was educated at Punjab University and later graduated from The Indian Military Academy, Dehradun. He served in Italy and the Middle-East during WWII and after serving in the war with India over the

Kashmir region, he became Pakistan's youngest Brigadier General at the age of 34 and its youngest General at 40. He became Commander in Chief in 1966. President Ayub Khan resigned in March 1969 and Yahya Khan took over as President and continued from 1969 to 1971 as the ruler of the country. Yahya Khan, after taking over the presidency, enforced martial law by suspending the constitution in 1969. As briefly mentioned earlier, in 1971, a serious conflict erupted between the central government and the AL of East-Pakistan. The AL, led by Mujibur Rahman, demanded autonomy for his half of the geographically divided country. Yahya Khan responded by ordering his army to suppress the AL, an action that ignited a violent civil unrest. His orders were carried out with much brutality that led to the influx of millions of East-Pakistani refugees into India, which became involved in the conflict in December 1971, after the Pakistani air force launched a pre-emptive strike on airfields in India's north-west region. India retaliated with a coordinated land, air and sea assault on East-Pakistan and compelled the Pakistani Army to surrender at Dhaka where more than 90,000 Pakistani soldiers were taken prisoners of war. East-Pakistan became an independent country with the name Bangladesh, and Yahya Khan resigned in December 1971, in disgrace. Zulfikar Ali Bhutto, who was then the foreign minister, replaced Yahya Khan and put him under house arrest. He played no further politically important role and died of over-indulgence in alcohol in Rawalpindi in 1980. He is viewed largely negatively by Pakistani historians, and is considered among the least successful of the country's leaders.

- **General Zia-ul-Haq (11 years)**

Zia-ul-Haq completed his initial education in Simla and graduated from the St. Stephen's College of the University of Delhi. He participated in WWII, and in Pakistan's war against India in 1965. In 1975, Prime Minister Zulfikar Ali Bhutto promoted him to Lieutenant General, and in 1976 he elevated him as the Chief of Army Staff. In 1977, disobeying a civil order, Zia deposed Prime Minister Bhutto in a military coup and declared martial law, which continued till 1985. In September 1977, Prime Minister Bhutto was arrested by the army on charges of authorizing the murder of a political opponent, Nawab Muhammad Ahmad Kasuri, in March 1974. The trial proceedings started in October 1977, and continued till March 1978, when Bhutto was declared guilty of murder and hanged on 4 April 1979. The hanging of an elected Prime Minister by the military was condemned by the international community and by lawyers and jurists across Pakistan. After Bhutto's death, Zia-ul-Haq, President since 1978, settled to the task of redesigning a political system for Pakistan. He considered himself a devout Muslim and believed that religion must guide Pakistan's institutions in all aspects of daily life. Zia also played a major role in the Soviet War in Afghanistan by accepting aid from the US and Saudi Arabia for the '*Mujahedeen*'. In December 1979, when the Soviet Union invaded Muslim Afghanistan, Zia thought that religion was the only way to bring Pakistanis and Afghans to stand together and fight against an aggressive invader. Islamization became the guiding principle to reassure unity and as a protection against all threats. While using religion to establish his legitimacy, Zia-ul-Haq played a major role in assisting the Afghan resistance, the '*Mujahedeen*', against the Soviets. This culminated in the Soviet Union's withdrawal in 1989, however, with this withdrawal there was an inflow of several million Afghan refugees into Pakistan, most of whom were housed in camps not far from Pakistan's eastern border. Pakistan had limited resources to assist the refugees or the Afghan '*Mujahedeen*', and

aid was sought from other Muslim states, especially Saudi Arabia. In essence, the whole operation was a proxy war of the US managed by its Central Intelligence Agency (CIA). Zia-ul-Haq promoted a political system guided by religious principles and traditions and called for criminal punishments based on strict interpretations of Islamic law. He also insisted upon banking practices and economic activity that followed Islamic guidelines. He strengthened ties with China, the European Economic Community and the US, while relations with neighbor India worsened because of the *Siachen Conflict* and the accusation that Pakistan was aiding the *Khalistan Movement* in India's Punjab. Zia died along with several of his top military officials and two American diplomats in a mysterious plane crash near Bahawalpur on 17 August 1988. The cause of the air crash has never been fully determined. Zia-ul-Haq, an Islamist Military Commander, was Pakistan's longest serving Head of State.

- **General Pervez Musharraf (9 years)**

Born in Delhi, Pervez Musharraf studied Mathematics at the Forman Christian College in Lahore. In 1961, he entered the Pakistan Military Academy and was commissioned to an artillery regiment in 1964. In 1965 during the India-Pakistan war, he served as Second Lieutenant in the Field Artillery regiment. During his military career, Musharraf served in several appointments and commanded an artillery brigade by 1980s. In the 1990s, he was promoted to Major General and assigned an infantry division. In 1998, he was elevated and personally promoted by Prime Minister Nawaz Sharif to be the Chief of Army Staff and Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff Committee. From May to July 1999, Pakistan and India took up arms once again and a war broke out along the northern borders of India and Pakistan, referred to as the *Kargil conflict*. The operation was planned and executed while Musharraf was Chief of Army Staff under Prime Minister Sharif. Pakistani forces intruded and occupied strategic positions on the Indian side of the Line of Control (LoC - de facto border in Jammu & Kashmir), prompting an Indian counter offensive in which Pakistani forces were pushed back to their side of the original LoC. US President Bill Clinton gave Prime Minister Sharif a warning to stand down and under further international pressure, Sharif later ordered the troops to pull back to Pakistani-controlled territory, a move that angered the military. Prime Minister Sharif held General Musharraf solely responsible for the Kargil debacle and on 12 October 1999, Sharif unsuccessfully attempted to dismiss Musharraf from his position as Commander-in-Chief of the army. In retaliation, the army staged a bloodless coup, Musharraf took over Pakistan and subsequently placed Prime Minister Sharif under strict house-arrest, later exiling him to Saudi Arabia. In June 2001, Musharraf formally appointed himself as the President and reinstated the constitution in 2002, though it was heavily amended with the Legal Framework Order (LFO) - a provision which extended his term as President for another five years. In 2007, Musharraf sought re-election to the Presidency, but faced opposition from Pakistan's Supreme Court, primarily over the issue of his continuing desire to serve simultaneously as both President and Chief of Army Staff. He suspended the constitution for the second time, citing terrorist threats as a reason and declared an emergency while dismissing the Chief Justice, and replacing other justices of the Supreme Court. Many political leaders of the opposition were arrested and strict restrictions were imposed on independent press and media. In the wake of nation-wide protests by the judiciary over the sacking of the Chief Justice, Musharraf's position dramatically weakened in early 2008. The PPP won the next elections and on 22 March 2008, Syed Yusuf Raza, a former Parliament

Speaker's name was forwarded as a candidate for prime minister to lead a coalition government against Musharraf. The coalition continued to mount pressure and on 7 August 2008, they sought Musharraf's impeachment for "*eroding the trust in the nation*", compelling Musharraf to finally resign on 18 August 2008. It is believed that had the impeachment taken place, he would have faced serious charges of corruption and allegations of murder in relation to Akbar Bugti's and Benazir Bhutto's deaths.

This quick peek into the history of the Pakistani Army gives an idea of the policies of the most powerful Generals who served for the longest periods in Pakistan. This also reveals that all four of these Generals eventually made their way into politics and served as Presidents, disobeying civil order and keeping democracy at bay.

Outgoing Chief of Army Staff, General Raheel Sharif

The country witnessed Raheel Sharif as their 15th Chief of Army Staff, appointed by Prime Minister Nawaz Sharif on 29 November 2013. Raheel Sharif came as what may be referred to as a "*breath of fresh air*" for the people of Pakistan, for he was neither a Prime Minister nor a President. In fact for the first time in the history of the Pakistani Army, a General retired on time, after serving a full tenure of three years. His operation called the Zarb-e-Azb against the Tehreek-e-Taliban terrorists in North Waziristan and the Karachi cleansing operations made him immensely popular and significantly brought down terrorist violence and crime rates in these areas. He is widely credited for launching an anti-corruption drive, mostly focused against politicians, building on the foundation laid during Pervez Musharraf's regime, who enacted the National Accountability Ordinance (NAO) in 1999, a law to pursue the corrupt and track looted money. General Sharif dismissed 13 of his officers, including a Lieutenant General, a Major General and five Brigadiers as part of his anti-corruption operations. He also developed a new brigade-level military unit to help protect and secure the China Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC) which runs through the Balochistan province and Gilgit Baltistan, part of the disputed territory of Jammu & Kashmir. General Sharif helped to develop Pakistan's indigenous defense industry which resulted in savings of more than \$1.14 billion of Pakistan's foreign exchanges over a year and half. Regarding foreign policy, he was no different than his predecessors as he overruled Nawaz Sharif on any attempted peace proposals or talks with India. General Sharif lost his uncle Major Aziz Bhatti in 1965, in the war against India and later lost his brother Major Shabbir Sharif in the war of 1971 against India. It is widely believed that General Sharif nurtures a grudge against India since 1965 and has always maintained an anti-India stance.

Appointment of General Bajwa

Bajwa is the seventh Punjabi to head the army and the fourth General from the Baloch Infantry Regiment (14 Baloch) to make it as chief after Yahya Khan, Aslam Beg and Ashfaq Pervez Kayani. His name was recommended by the outgoing Army Chief, General Raheel Sharif. Notably, he was the junior-most in the pecking order of the current cohort of three star Generals of the 62nd Pakistan Military Academy long course who were eligible for selection. Born in 1960 to a Punjabi Jat family from Ghakhar Mandi, Punjab, the Bajwas are known as '*the clan of the hawk or falcon*' - a prominent Jat

clan hailing from Sialkot and Narowal districts of Punjab. General Bajwa, was commissioned on 24 October 1980, in the 16th Baloch Regiment and has had an impressive military career. In 1992, he served as a Major in the 5th Northern Light Infantry Regiment in Kashmir. As a Lieutenant Colonel, he served in X Corps, stationed in Rawalpindi and as a Brigadier, he served as the Chief of Staff at X Corps and also commanded a division in the Northern Areas as Formation Commander. Bajwa has commanded a brigade in the United Nations Peacekeeping Mission in Congo in 2007, while serving as a Brigade Commander under former Chief of Army Staff of the Indian Army, General Bikram Singh. General Bikram Singh described Bajwa as a *“thorough professional”*. In May 2009, Bajwa was promoted to the rank of Major General and served as the Force Commander of Gilgit Baltistan. In August 2013, he was promoted to the rank of Lieutenant General and served as a Corps Commander X Corps. In 2014, Bajwa served as Colonel Commandant of Baloch Regiment and a year later he was appointed as the Inspector General of Training and Evaluation at the General Quarters Pakistan, where he was Principal Staff Officer to General Raheel Sharif. Bajwa has commanded the important 10 Corps in Pakistan, which is responsible for guarding the area along the LoC with India. He has an extensive experience in handling Kashmir affairs and Gilgit Baltistan where he served as a Force Commander in the past. His appointment not surprising as he has served for a long time confronting India across the Kashmir-front in different assignments and is considered an expert on the Kashmir-issue. General Raheel Sharif’s popularity will be a challenge for Bajwa, apart from fighting deteriorating relations with neighboring Afghanistan and India as border clashes escalate, as well as numerous conflicts with militants inside Pakistan and the Baloch rebellion. However, following the line of his predecessor, not much change is expected in Pakistan’s foreign policy.

Bajwa’s appointment & China Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC)

General Bajwa’s expertise on the Kashmir-issue makes him an ideal choice for the position of the Chief of Army Staff, considering the state of Pakistan’s recent foreign policy that has been in disarray. Besides his expertise in Kashmir and Gilgit Baltistan, it is important to note that he also served as an instructor at Command and Staff College in Quetta, the provincial capital of Balochistan and knows the terrain well. This suggests a direct link between his appointment and the infamous CPEC, a politically-charged economic project which aims at upgrading Pakistan’s infrastructure and broadening economic links between Pakistan and China. Jammu & Kashmir is at one edge of CPEC and Balochistan at the other. Separatist movements are heating up and there is a constant unrest in Balochistan over the resources that will be used for the construction of this corridor without commensurate returns to Balochistan. An Army Chief who is familiar with Balochistan would be an ideal choice to suppress Baloch separatist movements, ensuring that the CPEC is not interrupted in any manner.

Impact on Nawaz Sharif’s government

In 2013, Prime Minister Sharif had appointed General Raheel Sharif as the Chief of Army Staff on the basis of his reputation as being professional and disinterested in politics. Sharif expected him to accept civilian supremacy but was soon proved to be naïve. General Raheel Sharif urged Prime Minister Sharif

to resign when the names of some of the Prime Minister's family members appeared in the Panama Papers leak. The civil administration's attempts to embark on peace talks with India were also overruled by the General. General Sharif and Prime Minister Sharif have never been able to agree on improving relations with neighboring countries on account of the military's obsession with security concerns while ignoring the economic and political dimensions. Nevertheless, General Bajwa's appointment is most likely also influenced by his apparent pro-democracy credentials.

“One of the factors that may have favored Bajwa's appointment is that he was the only commander who opposed military intervention when Imran Khan, the cricket star-turned opposition politician, staged a four-month long protest in Islamabad in 2014”, Mutahir Ahmed, a professor in the International Relations Department at the University of Karachi.

Any changes in Pakistan military's dominance over foreign policy or in its authoritarian character is highly unlikely. General Bajwa, may not plan a military coup against Prime Minister Sharif, like Pervez Musharraf did, but going by the political history of Pakistan, it does not matter what kind of individual a General is when it comes to military interference in civil affairs. Generals will continue to dictate, regardless of constitutional or democratic appropriateness. Furthermore, Sharif is under pressure over a court investigation concerning Panama Papers leak, in which his children are said to have used offshore companies to make investments. This has weakened his position in the country.

Policy Changes?

Defence Minister Khawaja Asif has maintained that the military policy will continue without any immediate change. He said that *“The focus will remain on country's eastern border (with India) and the armed forces backed by the nation will meet all challenges. The legacy of General Raheel Sharif would continue in the light of the examples he set”*. In May 2014, Indian Prime Minister Narendra Modi had invited Sharif for his swearing-in ceremony followed by his unexpected Lahore visit in December 2015 on Prime Minister Sharif's birthday. Seemingly, Prime Minister Sharif has been interested in fostering liberal economic policies and relations with the neighboring countries. However, the most powerful institution of the country, the Army, appears not to have agreed with this approach. The series of events in 2016, such as the Pathankot attack, Uri attack and the most recent attack in Nagrota (all in Indian Administered Jammu & Kashmir), which caused the death of 35 Indian security personnel, support this hypothesis. Despite Nawaz Sharif's reactive attempts to improve relations with India, the outgoing Army Chief, Raheel Sharif, has maintained a strong anti-India posture and scamped these efforts. General Bajwa's appointment comes amidst strained Indo-Pak ties after the Uri terror attack that led to India's surgical strikes on terror launching pads in Pakistan Administered Jammu & Kashmir. The attack in Nagrota *'coincided'* with the day General Bajwa took charge as the new Army Chief. It is likely that General Bajwa will inherit the *“Anti-India”* legacy of his predecessor(s) and a halt to jihadi proxies in the current geopolitical scenario remains highly unlikely.

The military has been de facto in charge of the country for nearly 70 years since the time Pakistan came into existence. The deep-rooted anti-India stand and inflexible hostility is not expected to change by merely the change of the Chief of the Army. In this backdrop, answer to the question *“Will the new Army Chief make any immediate difference to the current level of violence across the LoC and*

halt the support to terror groups”, would be negative. Historic distrust between the civil and military leadership and the army’s megalomaniac track-record support the notion that *‘the institution is stronger than the individual’*. In this milieu, no let-up in violent cross-border terrorist attacks on the Indian side of the LoC can be expected in the foreseeable future. The well-oiled infrastructure for terror created over decades by the Pakistani Army and intelligence agencies would ensure this. The real and long-term benefits of this to the political and economic wellbeing of Pakistan, and to the cause of regional stability may be dubious, but till such time as the Pakistani Army recognizes this the situation will not change. The moot point is whether General Bajwa does?



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