



FUTURE OF  
DEMOCRACY &  
**CIVIL-MILITARY**  
*Relations* in PAKISTAN  
**Developments in 2017**

a study by PILDAT



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PILDAT is an independent, non-partisan and not-for-profit indigenous research and training institution with the mission to strengthen democracy and democratic institutions in Pakistan.

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## Preface

The state of Civil-Military relations in Pakistan continues to be the biggest stumbling block to consolidation of democracy in Pakistan. While the relations have never followed the intent of the Constitution and therefore have never been ideal, developments in 2017 have brought further critical challenges for Pakistan's democratic future.

As an independent think tank dedicated to strengthening democracy and democratic institutions, PILDAT believes an objective analysis of the current challenges must be carried out to develop policy recommendations that can help steer the country and its democratic order at this time.

Studying and analysing civil-military relations is a flagship area of PILDAT's work. With the belief that at this time state of civil-military relations in Pakistan is the single most important factor upon which the quality of democracy in Pakistan depends, PILDAT began its work in the area in 2004. PILDAT's work has ranged from undertaking research and study in issues relating to civil-military relations in Pakistan and cataloguing the best strategies and practices to improve civil-military relations in other countries with similar transitions to democracies after prolonged military rules. Facilitating the formation of a Dialogue Group on Civil-Military Relations, PILDAT has continued to promote and facilitate civil-military dialogue process. International Conferences and regional dialogues on the subject have also been a key plank of PILDAT's initiative. The key outcome of PILDAT's focus has been defining and creation of space for credible, fact-based and non- emotive discussion on the issues affecting civil military relations and to facilitate dialogue in the public domain that the civil-military equation, as experienced in Pakistan, is detrimental to Pakistan's journey towards democratic consolidation. PILDAT has contributed a rich body of knowledge in the area spanning over 170 publications and growing, which are developed through research and study, including regional and international comparative analyses, and proposals for reforms for democratic consolidation through improving civil-military relations in Pakistan.

This PILDAT study attempts to provide an objective analysis of recent developments and is based on individual interactions and interviews with influential and knowledgeable cross-section of country's civil and military elite who have first-hand knowledge of the key developments affecting Pakistan's democratic order and civil-military relations. These persons have included senior politicians, former key ministers, opinion makers from the media, legal and constitutional experts, seasoned MPs and former military officials. The interviews for the study were conducted using the *Chatham House rule* and has used interactions to capture various perspectives and outlines recommendations and reform proposals.

Lahore  
December 2017



## Introduction

Ascendancy of the military to political power has been a recurrent feature of Pakistan's governance. It has manifested in various ways ranging from direct assumption of power, displacement of one civilian government by another, manipulation of divided political and societal forces, making policy inputs from the side-lines to threaten or actual use of coercion in support of their demands.

As Pakistan turns 70, it has been ruled directly by Military for over 30 out of 70 years while not a single elected Prime Minister of Pakistan has, so far, been able to complete the Constitutional tenure of 5 years in office. Other than 4 direct interventions by the military since Pakistan's independence in 1947, successive military commanders have exercised de-facto authority on crucial aspects of national security management including regional and international affairs. As a result, state of civil-military relations in Pakistan is the single most important factor upon which the quality of democracy in Pakistan depends.

With Pakistan's Supreme Court disqualifying Mr. Nawaz Sharif, Pakistan's Prime Minister elected to office on June 01, 2013 through the 10<sup>th</sup> General Election in Pakistan, for being 'not honest' under Article 62(1)(f) of the Constitution,<sup>1</sup> critical challenges have appeared on the democratic horizon for Pakistan that require to be understood and addressed.

The 6-member 'Joint Investigation Team-JIT' which submitted a report to the Supreme Court based on which the Court gave its decision included two serving military officers from Inter-Services Intelligence (ISI) and Military Intelligence (MI). Earlier than that, the expansion of a looming shadow of military's over-reach in civilian, political and policy affairs was already becoming a concern based on the belief that sucking military into non-professional spheres would be at the cost of their primary focus of the defence of the country. Legitimate questions were raised that not only that military institutions such as the ISI and the MI do not have the professional role to investigate white collar crime, the Honourable Supreme Court should not have inducted military agencies into highly politicized Panama Case enquiry.<sup>2</sup>

Widespread local and international media reports

indicate that instead of being received as a Supreme Court verdict, the disqualification is seen by a large number of persons as being orchestrated by the Army in what appears to be a Get-Nawaz agenda. While some resorted to whispers and innuendo on media, others, including the international media considered the disqualification to be an outcome of sour civil-military relations and questioned future of democracy in Pakistan. National media offered analyses that said “*elected governments in Pakistan have less to fear from the Indian army than from their own;*” and that “[Pakistan's] security establishment regularly betrays contempt for civilians. There is a view that elected governments are regarded as unwanted pregnancies, to be aborted whenever need be, to save the motherland. The latest still-birth is the ouster of a third-time prime minister Nawaz Sharif.”<sup>3</sup> The criticism of the disqualification was even more scathing in international media which said that “*the judicial farce that resulted in Sharif's most recent ouster demonstrates that the courts remain tools for the generals to clip democracy's wings.*”<sup>4</sup>

## Key Questions

Do sour civil-military relations indeed provide the singular lens to view and interpret the developments? If the innuendo is correct and military has an axe to grind, is it only directed at Mr. Sharif or no elected Government is immune to that? The study investigates this through interactions and interviews on a number of questions:

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***JIT included two serving military officers from ISI and MI while legitimate questions were raised that not only military institutions do not have professional role to investigate white collar crime, Supreme Court should not have inducted military agencies into highly politicized Panama Case enquiry***

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1. Nawaz Sharif steps down as PM after SC's disqualification verdict – Dawn, July 28, 2017

2. PILDAT Monitor on Civil-Military Relations in Pakistan | Jun 2017: <http://www.pildat.org/eventsdel.asp?detid=941>

3. F. S. Aijazuddin, An Unburied Lion – Op-ed in Dawn, August 10, 2017: <https://www.dawn.com/news/1350643/an-unburied-lion>

4. The Only Enemy Pakistan's Army Can Beat is Its Own Democracy: FP: <http://foreignpolicy.com/2017/08/09/the-only-enemy-pakistans-army-can-beat-is-its-own-democracy/>



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***Is there a specific policy/doctrine by the Military on Pakistan's stance in relations towards India, Afghanistan & the USA? What is the cornerstone of that policy? In case there is a disagreement between the Civilian elected Government, who is to be the final arbiter on what policy should be adopted by Pakistan?***

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1. What are the factors behind the disqualification of Mr. Nawaz Sharif? Is it legal issues alone or Military had a role to play in pursuing the case?
2. In his various public appearances, Mr. Sharif has been hinting at a "hidden hand" behind his disqualification. Should Mr. Sharif be specific about those 'hidden hands'?
3. What were the major irritants in Civil-Military Relations under the tenure of Prime Minister Sharif?
4. Is there a specific policy/doctrine by the Military on Pakistan's stance in relations towards India, Afghanistan & the USA? What is the cornerstone of that policy? In case there is a disagreement between the Civilian elected Government, who is to be the final arbiter on what policy should be adopted by Pakistan?
5. In the case of disagreement, does the Military resort to destabilising an elected Government that represents the citizens' aspirations?
6. Recommendations to diffuse the crisis and offer policy reforms to address the civil-military equation

## The Context

The seeds of disquiet between the civil elected governments and the military have indeed played a part in straining the relations between the elected Government of Mr. Sharif and the Pakistan Army. The cleavages were on public display, perhaps by design, many a times, during the course of the tenure of Gen. Raheel Sharif, Chief of Army Staff who served from November 2013-2016 and later General Qamar Javed Bajwa who took the charge of the office of the Chief of Army Staff in November 2016. Table 1 carries a detailed timeline of major irritants in civil-military relations under the tenure of Premier Sharif until November 2017.

Under the leadership of both the Chiefs of Army Staff, the overreach of the Army and the role of the COAS continued to grow in national, regional and foreign policy issues. The international profile of the COAS continued to increase under Gen. Sharif and is carried out under Gen. Bajwa as in their individual capacities of COAS, each held exclusive interactions with international political leadership.

By the end of Gen. (Retd.) Raheel Sharif's tenure, the civil-military imbalance in Pakistan seemed to have increased, with the Military leadership seemingly establishing itself as the final arbiter on national security and certain domains of our foreign policy. The elected Government, on the other hand, appeared to be relegated to either an auxiliary role, or a parallel national security regime. There were various contours of this imbalance, including public disagreements upon the implementation of the National Action Plan; an increased domestic and international profile of the COAS; an operation in Karachi, which increasingly took a political hue; increased preponderance in internal security by the Military due to weak policing; creation of a security doctrine, which linked criminality, corruption and terrorism; and, most importantly lack of institutionalization in matters of national security. All of these issues seemed to come to a head with the daily *Dawn's* exclusive story of October 06, 2016, which brought out into the open the civil-military friction that had been brewing for a long time. Therefore, although a narrative of the civil-military leadership '*being on the same page*' was perpetuated partly through these 3 years, the relationship remained frayed at best.

One particular manifestation of the civil-military imbalance associated with Gen. (Retd.) Raheel Sharif was his larger-than-life profile both internationally and at home. This was perpetuated through the

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***Civil-military imbalance in Pakistan seemed to have increased, with the Military leadership seemingly establishing itself as the final arbiter on national security and certain domains of our foreign policy. Elected Government appeared to be relegated to an auxiliary role***

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extraordinary pro-activeness exhibited by the ISPR, which was seen to be taking the lead even on announcements such as the formation of Military Courts or of Provincial Apex Committees. It is a debateable point whether this scenario developed because of civilian authorities complacency in giving out the information efficiently and effectively. The resultant creation of a messiah-like image of the COAS is perhaps best epitomized by the popular tagline of #ThankYouRaheelSharif. This was also accompanied by a reported regrettable culture of media advice by the ISPR, leading to concerted media management.

Thus, at the beginning of the tenure of incoming COAS Gen. Qamar Javed Bajwa, an anxiety may have existed that this was a tough act to follow for Gen. Qamar Javed Bajwa as if he failed to maintain the media standing surrounding Gen. (Retd.) Raheel Sharif, the public might needlessly question his performance. Instead of a careful rollback of this policy so as to protect the military and its leadership from any unwarranted criticism, gradually, the role and personal publicity of Gen. Qamar Javed Bajwa have only grown with time. From announcing *Umrah* for Pakistan cricket team at winning Champions Trophy to holding Youth Seminars; from ending political *dharnas* to international visits and receiving diplomatic dignitaries, COAS Bajwa is as active on the diplomatic front, if not more, as his predecessor.

## Major Irritants in Civil-Military Relations in Pakistan

Following are major issues of concern and irritants and apparent causes of continuing polarisation:

1. Civilian space is shrinking in Policy Spheres

2. Elected Governments and political leadership is ceding space through lethargic and slow decision-making at the top executive level
3. Military is increasing its overreach into areas outside of its professional domain including domestic issues (development of FATA & Balochistan, Economy, Regional & Foreign Policy)
4. Palpable apparent and verbally confirmed tension between military establishment and a popular political party is spilling out in the public leading to the conclusion that civil-military relations have moved into an era of 'open warfare'. According to some analysts and media comments, a Military-Judiciary nexus is seemingly created to manage and undercut a popularly-elected party
5. Military is accused of brokering political alliances
6. Foreign countries are apparently and increasingly reaching out to the military because they perceive power to be residing there.

This has meant an alarming increase of a legitimate concern in Pakistan that military that is being sucked into non-professional spheres and it should resist temptation of trying to fix every problem.

The disqualification of Premier Sharif took place in this context. To many experts, the military's perceived hidden hand orchestrated the disqualification. That military wanted Mr. Nawaz Sharif out at any cost is a stance that has been corroborated by many in the civilian and military circles. That Mr. Sharif was disqualified for “*having failed to disclose his un-withdrawn receivables*” and “*having furnished a false declaration under solemn affirmation*”<sup>30</sup> in a case that was based on Panama papers is termed by many to be an indication of claims in international media that Pakistan's Supreme Court is ‘*collaborating with the Pakistan Army against civilian rulers*’.<sup>31</sup>

Following the NAB references against Mr. Sharif and his family, legal experts quoted NAB officials saying that while apparently NAB has to work under the SC's appointed Supervisory Judge, NAB is really answering to the Military (ISI & MI) in these proceedings.<sup>32</sup>

Experts were also asked whether Mr. Nawaz Sharif as the elected Premier is the anathema for the military or there is a general distrust. While civilian experts believed that independent stance of no elected Premier

on foreign and internal security policies is favourably suited to the military which has its own perspective on national security issues, experts belonging to the military seemed to concur with the perspective in a different manner by saying that the weaknesses and inability of the civilian elected politicians to understand and develop cogent policy options for Pakistan remains the major irritant and distrust of the military in politicians. “*Politicians do not read and do not think and certainly do not focus on critical policies including defence, national security and foreign affairs,*” believed the military experts whose perspective was similar to the erstwhile DG ISI Mr. Pasha who was reported to have said in his testimony to the Abbottabad Commission that civilians have “*no culture of reading*” important government documents, and as Mr. Pasha saw it, their “*thinking process was also non-existent.*”<sup>33</sup>

There is a consistent perception among the public that Mr. Nawaz Sharif does not get along with the Military - but Ms. Benazir Bhutto also did not work; Mr. Zardari did not work, Mr. Shaukat Aziz had no political legitimacy and Mr. Sharif's personality is difficult - which begs the question as to who can the Military work with, civilian experts said. The issue, therefore, is broader and includes any and every civilian elected to office who rightly believes that having been elected by the people of Pakistan, it is his or her territory to govern, which includes not just building motorways and highways, but govern in terms of making decisions that have an impact on national security and welfare of the State, said the civilian experts. On the other hand,

***There is a perception that Mr. Nawaz Sharif does not get along with the Military, but Ms. Benazir Bhutto also did not work; Mr. Zardari did not work, Mr. Shaukat Aziz had no political legitimacy and Mr. Sharif's personality is difficult - which begs the question as to who can the Military work with?***

30. For details, please see [Full text of Supreme Court order in Panama Papers case, Dawn, July 28, 2017: https://www.dawn.com/news/1348209](https://www.dawn.com/news/1348209)

31. For details, please see: 'With Nawaz's ouster, Pakistan Military's chokehold over parliament tightens,' The Wire, Mohammad Taqi, July 31, 2017, accessed on August 01, 2017 at: <https://thewire.in/163101/nawaz-sharif-pakistan-military/>

32. Interviews conducted for the Study

33. Pakistan's civil-military imbalance. The bad in Abbottabad: The Economist, July 11, 2013: <https://www.economist.com/blogs/banyan/2013/07/pakistan-s-civil-military-imbalance>

**Table 1: Regional & International Visits and Interactions of COAS in 2017**

No.	Month	Visit	Details
1	November 2017	Visit to Iran	COAS met with Iranian President, Foreign Minister, Chief of General Staff (CGS), Defence Minister.
2	October 2017	Visit to Afghanistan	COAS met the Afghan President one-on-one, and held delegation level talks with the Afghan Government representatives.
3	October 2017	Visit to Middle East (Kingdom of Saudi Arabia and UAE)	COAS met the ruler of Dubai and Prime Minister of the UAE. Later, he flew to KSA, where he met Saudi Crown Prince.
4	September 2017	Visit to Australia	COAS met the Australian Army Chief, Australian Foreign Minister, and Defence Minister as well as Australian Senate's Committee for Foreign and Defence Affairs, Australian Chief of Defence Staff and visited the Australian Strategic Policy Institute and the Office of National Assessment.
5	June 2017	Visit to Turkey	COAS received briefings on regional security at the Turkish Land Forces Headquarters, and met Chief of Turkish General Staff. Later, he met Turkish President, Turkish Defence Minister and Turkish Prime Minister.
6	April 2017	Visit to UK	COAS visited the UK Ministry of Defence, where he met UK Chief of Defence Staff (CDS), Special Representative on Afghanistan and Pakistan and also US Resolute Support Mission (RSM) Commander. He addressed UK think tank International Institute for Strategic Studies, as well as Royal United Services Institute (RUSI).
7	March 2017	Visit to Qatar	The COAS called on the Qatari Minister of Defence Affairs and Chief of Staff of Qatar Armed Forces. He also met Prime Minister of Qatar, Commander Qatar Emiri Land Forces, and Commander Qatar Emiri Guard. He also met Emir of Qatar.
8	March 2017	Visit to China	COAS met Executive Vice Premier, Vice Chairman Central Military Commission, Chief of Joint Services Department and Commander People's Liberation Army (PLA). He also met Chinese Foreign Minister.
9	January 2017	Visit to Kingdom of Saudi Arabia	COAS met with the King of Saudi Arabia, Deputy Crown Prince and Defence Minister.

**Table 2: Call-ons & Interactions of COAS with Visiting Foreign Dignitaries and Ambassadors in Pakistan**

No.	Date	Call Ons/Interactions
1	November 24, 2017	Turkish Ambassador to Pakistan met the COAS at the GHQ to bid farewell to the COAS at the end of his tenure in Pakistan.
2	November 21, 2017	Assistant Foreign Minister and Special Envoy on Korean Peninsula Affairs of China and newly appointed Chinese Ambassador to Pakistan, called on the COAS at the GHQ.
3	November 17, 2017	Special Envoy on Afghan Affairs, Ministry of Foreign Affairs of People's Republic of China met with the COAS.
4	November 09, 2017	US Ambassador to Pakistan met with the COAS, at the GHQ.
5	October 13, 2017	Ambassador of Kingdom of Saudi Arabia called on the COAS at the GHQ.
6	October 12, 2017	A U.S. delegation comprising Deputy Assistant to the President and National Security Council Senior Director for South Asia, Acting Assistant Secretary of State and US Ambassador to Pakistan called on COAS at the GHQ.
7	September 26, 2017	Ambassador of China to Pakistan met the COAS at the GHQ.
8	September 22, 2017	British High Commissioner to Pakistan called on the COAS at the GHQ.
9	September 21, 2017	German Ambassador to Pakistan called on the COAS at the GHQ.
10	September 20, 2017	Afghan Ambassador to Pakistan called on the COAS at the GHQ.
11	September 18, 2017	Turkish Ambassador to Pakistan called on the COAS
12	August 25, 2017	Afghan Media Delegation met with the COAS
13	August 23, 2017	US Ambassador to Pakistan called on the COAS.
14	August 09, 2017	Saudi Deputy Defence Minister, while on a visit to Pakistan, called on the COAS.
15	August 02, 2017	Afghan Ambassador to Pakistan called on the COAS.
16	July 13, 2017	Canadian High Commissioner to Pakistan called on the COAS at the GHQ.
17	July 12, 2017	Ambassador of France to Pakistan called on COAS at GHQ.
18	July 02, 2017	Delegation of US Senate (Armed Services Committee) called on the COAS at the GHQ. The delegation was taken to South Waziristan, and briefed about the security situation.
19	June 25, 2017	Chinese Foreign Minister and his delegation called on COAS.
20	June 12, 2017	British High Commissioner to Pakistan called on the COAS at the GHQ.
21	June 06, 2017	Russian Ambassador to Pakistan met the COAS.
22	June 05, 2017	Ambassador of Japan called on COAS.
23	May 22, 2017	US Ambassador to Pakistan called on the COAS at the GHQ.
24	May 04, 2017	German Special Representative for Pakistan-Afghanistan met the COAS .

**Table 2: Call-ons & Interactions of COAS with Visiting Foreign Dignitaries and Ambassadors in Pakistan**

No.	Date	Call Ons/Interactions
25	May 03, 2017	Iran's Foreign Minister met with the COAS at the GHQ.
26	April 19, 2017	Ambassador of Iran to Pakistan called on the COAS.
27	April 14, 2017	Afghanistan's Ambassador to Pakistan met the COAS at the GHQ.
28	April 11, 2017	US Ambassador to Pakistan called on the COAS.
29	March 27, 2017	Minister of Defence and Military Veterans Affairs South Africa called on the COAS at the GHQ.
30	March 06, 2017	Ambassador of Germany to Pakistan called on the CJCSC at GHQ.
31	March 04, 2017	Ambassador of Iran to Pakistan called on COAS.
32	February 28, 2017	Russian Ambassador to Pakistan called on the COAS.
33	February 09, 2017	US Secretary of Defence had a twenty minutes telephone conversation with the COAS.
34	January 27, 2017	German Ambassador to Pakistan met the COAS at the GHQ.
35	January 20, 2017	Ambassador of Kingdom of Saudi Arabia called on the COAS at the GHQ.
36	January 18, 2017	Ambassador of United Arab Emirates (UAE) met the COAS.
37	January 15, 2017	COAS made a telephone call to Afghan President to condole the loss of life in terror attacks in Afghanistan.
38	January 13, 2017	Chinese Ambassador to Pakistan called on the COAS at the GHQ.
39	January 06, 2017	British High Commissioner to Pakistan called on the COAS at the GHQ.



Pakistan Army has genuinely come to believe that the civilians consist of 2 groups: either they are corrupt or they are incompetent and some of them are both corrupt and incompetent and therefore have no interest, idea or conviction about welfare of the State and if the Army does not step in to save the day, the country will suffer. The Military also genuinely believes, since the time of Gen. Zia-ul-Haq, that they have a responsibility beyond the territorial frontiers of Pakistan to also protect the ideological frontiers of the country. Here too, they are convinced that every civilian government is weak. While there are no two views about the requirements for each political party and resultant government to be efficient and honest, it is not the constitutional job of the Military to sit in judgement of elected governments. Worldwide, even in developing democracies, the challenges of governance are overcome through sustenance of the system in which citizens vote governments in and out, believed civilian experts.

Mr. Nawaz Sharif's Government has been weakened since the beginning of the current term in June 2013 by the Military, believed some experts. The first of such efforts was the PTI and PAT *dharna* in 2014. Everyone in Government believed that martial law was in the offing and ministers had even packed their offices. It was so humiliating that a Prime Minister elected by the people of this country was orchestrated to be put under a siege in the very Prime Ministers House. The whole world watched this embarrassing saga while Pakistan could not host the Chinese President due to visit in September 2014 where CPEC agreements would have been signed, said experts.

Responding to a question on what could have driven such a wedge between the Army and Mr. Sharif, both civilian and military experts opined that treason trial of Gen. (Retd.) Pervez Musharraf, refusal to grant extension to Gen. Raheel Sharif and differences in perspective, perhaps best categorised under the "Dawn Leaks,"<sup>34</sup> appear to be the main drivers of the wedge. The extension of Gen. Raheel Sharif as COAS was reportedly quite a big issue as he, again reportedly, asked Prime Minister Sharif to give him 3 more years and the Army will eliminate terrorism. However, as the reported stories go, Premier Sharif declined the proposal.

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***What could have driven a wedge between Army and Mr. Sharif? Both civilian and military experts opined that treason trial of Gen. (Retd.) Musharraf, refusal to grant extension to Gen. Sharif and differences in perspective, perhaps best categorised under Dawn Leaks appear to be main drivers***

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Those who worked with Prime Minister Sharif also added that whenever any recommendation came from Gen. Raheel Sharif as COAS or Gen. Qamar Javed Bajwa, whether it was for a job or anything else, Mr. Nawaz Sharif never said no to them. Responding to a question whether Mr. Sharif, in his capacity as PM, tried to engage candidly with the COAS/Military, experts responded that a lot of meetings used to take place between the COAS and Premier, in addition to the meetings of the NSC and COAS Gen. Sharif did not differ or even appeared to differ with the elected Government. Could Premier Sharif have done anything differently for smooth relations? Those privy to Government say they saw extensive discussions taking place on foreign and regional policy between the elected Government and the Military leadership and can not think of what could have been done differently.

Successive Chiefs of Army Staff have continued to amass more and more power over time. On foreign policy, Mr. Sharif took Chief of Army Staff and DG ISI with him on his first visit to Kabul, Afghanistan to allow for an agreed State policy, but later developments showed that COAS directly took the initiative of holding individual meetings with heads of State and Governments around the World. In Afghanistan, Gen. Sharif would even leave Pakistan's Ambassador to Afghanistan out of his meetings with the Afghan President, only taking along his military colleagues. Much like the practice in the World, virtually, in all the Pakistani missions in the world have a representative of

34. The exclusive Dawn Story of October 06, 2016 titled [Exclusive: Act against militants or face international isolation, civilians tell military which was denied both by Government and the Military, became a major controversy between the civil government and the military during the premiership of NS. The story was said to be based on conversations with Dawn of individuals present in the crucial meetings \(that\) week. In the leaked meeting, a verbal confrontation between Chief Minister Shahbaz Sharif and then DG ISI Lt. Gen. Rizwan Akhtar was narrated in which Chief Minister claimed that security establishment works behind the scenes to set certain groups free whenever action is taken against them. In the end, Prime Minister Sharif directed Lt. Gen. Akhtar to 'tour the provinces at the direction of the prime minister, issue fresh orders to ISI sector commanders and meet with provincial apex committees to chalk out specific actions that need to be taken in various provinces' and Lt. Gen. Akhtar 'readily agreed.'](#)

**Table 3: Timeline displaying major Irritants in Civil-Military Relations: 2013-2017**  
*(In chronological order beginning with developments from June 2013 going to December 2017)*

No.	Date	Development
01.	April-May 2014	The decision taken by the Federal Government to pursue a Treason Trial against Gen. (Retd.) Pervez Musharraf for his imposition of Emergency in November 2007, and the latter's indictment on May 31, 2014 create irritants in civil-military relations.
02.	April 2014	Irresponsible statements of the Government Ministers regarding the trial created the perception that the Federal Government was conducting the trial to only settle personal scores. <sup>5</sup>
03.	January 2014	The former President's dash to the Armed Forces Institute of Cardiology (AFIC) on January 02, 2014 (ostensibly due to critical health concerns) and his long sojourn there as he was discharged on April 3, 2014 – a stay of 3 months - gave the impression as if the Military leadership was sheltering him from facing legal proceedings. The Federal Minister for States and Frontier Regions, Lt. Gen. (Retd.) Abdul Qadir Baloch, MNA, also asked the Army Chief to move the former dictator out of the Military hospital as his prolonged stay over there was damaging the reputation of the Military'. <sup>6</sup>
03.	April 2014	Assassination attempt on Mr Hamid Mir, senior journalist of Geo Television, served to cast a long shadow on civil-military relations in Pakistan. Geo Television, using the sound bites of Hamid Mir's brother, launched a 24-hour long ferocious and unprecedented campaign against the Inter-Services Intelligence (ISI) and its Director General, Lt. Gen. Zaheer ul Islam, blaming him personally and the ISI as an institution for the attempt on the life of Hamid Mir. Although the ISI reports to the Prime Minister and technically works under Prime Minister's office, Prime Minister's office maintained a deafening silence while the media house, through its popular TV channel and several newspapers, went on an irresponsible rampage against the ISI and its head. The Pakistan Electronic Media Regulatory Authority (PEMRA) simply took no notice of this vicious campaign. Once a public backlash began to appear, the public relations wing of the Armed Forces, ISPR, also tried to rebut the accusations. In a stark contrast to his and his Government's total inaction in the case of defending the ISI or its chief, Prime Minister, Nawaz Sharif, showed extra-ordinary swiftness to convene a high level meeting on a Sunday (April 20) and announced the constitution of a very high level judicial commission to probe into attack on Mr. Mir, consisting of three supreme court judges (The Hamood ur Rehman Judicial Commission formed to probe the dismemberment of Pakistan in 1971 had two judges of the Supreme Court along with a high court judge). The Prime Minister also undertook an extraordinary step of visiting convalescing Hamid Mir in a Karachi Hospital the next day (21 April) along with his Minister of Defence and Minister for Information. The Information Minister, speaking to media on the occasion, said that Prime Minister's visit to Hamid Mir was a show of solidarity with the reason ( <i>Daleel</i> ) and Intellect ( <i>Danish</i> ) opposed to the sling ( <i>Ghulail</i> ) – a message that was open to diverse and somewhat dangerous interpretations in the charged atmosphere. <sup>7</sup>

5. For example, during April 2014, the Federal Minister for Defence, Khawaja Muhammad Asif, MNA ridiculed Gen. (Retd.) Pervez Musharraf by saying that the latter puffed up his chest because he used to be wearing a life jacket. The Federal Minister for Railways, Khawaja Saad Rafique, MNA also said that the former ruler committed the 'mother of crimes' by abrogating the Constitution time and again. During the period, a speech made by the Federal Minister for Defence, Khawaja Muhammad Asif, MNA also went viral on the internet and on TV channels in which he directed scathing criticism at the Military and alluded to their failures in all the wars. For details, please see the heading titled Mercury rising in Civil-Military relations, on page 02 of the PILDAT publication Monitor on Civil-Military Relations in Pakistan, April 01, 2014-April 30, 2014, which can be accessed at: [http://www.pildat.org/publications/publication/CMR/MonitorOnCivil-MilitaryRelationsinPakistan\\_April012014\\_April302014.pdf](http://www.pildat.org/publications/publication/CMR/MonitorOnCivil-MilitaryRelationsinPakistan_April012014_April302014.pdf)
6. For details, please see the heading Indictment of Gen. (Retd.) Pervez Musharraf, on page 03, of the PILDAT publication titled Monitor on Civil-Military Relations in Pakista, March 01, 2014-March31, 2014, which can be accessed at: [http://www.pildat.org/Publications/publication/CMR/MonitorOnCivil-MilitaryRelationsinPakistan\\_March012014\\_March312014.pdf](http://www.pildat.org/Publications/publication/CMR/MonitorOnCivil-MilitaryRelationsinPakistan_March012014_March312014.pdf)
7. For details, please see the PILDAT publication titled Monitor on Civil-Military Relations in Pakistan, April 2014, which can be accessed at: [http://www.pildat.org/publications/publication/CMR/MonitoronCivil-MilitaryRelationsinPakistan\\_April012014\\_April302014.pdf](http://www.pildat.org/publications/publication/CMR/MonitoronCivil-MilitaryRelationsinPakistan_April012014_April302014.pdf)



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04.	August - December 2014	<p>PTI and the PAT begin a <i>dharna</i> in August 2014, which led to significant doubts about the continuity of the elected Government, and were considered by many to be orchestrated by the establishment to reduce the elected Government's preponderance and sway <i>vis-à-vis</i> the Musharraf Treason Trial. The ISPR statement '<i>all stakeholders to resolve prevailing impasse through meaningful dialogue in larger national and public interest</i>'<sup>8</sup> showed as if the Military leadership was treating <i>both</i> the protestors and the Government at par, and sitting in judgment about their conduct. Because of this equidistant position of Army, Gen. Raheel Sharif was asked to mediate in the crisis, although at whose behest, was a matter of much controversy. Prime Minister Nawaz Sharif, during the Joint Session of the Parliament, had stated that the PTI and PAT chiefs had made the request, with Dr. Tahir-ul-Qadri and Mr. Imran Khan claiming the opposite.<sup>9</sup></p> <p>Mr. Javed Hashmi accused Mr. Imran Khan of following a “scripted plan” on the behest of the Military.<sup>10</sup></p> <p>The ISI chief, Lt. Gen. Zaheer-ul-Islam was replaced with Maj. Gen. Rizwan Akhtar.<sup>11</sup> The appointment of the new DG ISI was significant at a time when the Army was accused of involvement in the political crisis of the twin sit-ins seeking to overthrow the incumbent PML-N government. The ISI chief, Lt. Gen. Zaheer-ul-Islam, was considered to be pushing for the Premier's ouster as Government sources claimed they had evidence of the ISI “backing Imran to get rid of Nawaz.”<sup>12</sup></p>
05.	January 2015	<p>The formation of Military Courts, paved by the Parliament passing the 21st Constitutional Amendment, 2015 (that had a sunset clause of two years and later reconstituted for another two years in January 2017) after the Peshawar Tragedy, signified yet another institutional imbalance for Pakistan's civil-military relations as all political parties agreed to the constitution of military courts after the military indicated its support for such a move.</p> <p>Following the amendment, formation of the Provincial Apex Committees, without any constitutional or legal basis<sup>13</sup> have been a peculiar by-product of the NAP in the centre and provinces, giving military commanders a commanding seat at the executive table. Important decisions regarding the provinces' internal security emanated from the Apex Committees</p>
06.	April 2015	<p>The Federal Minister for Interior, Chaudhary Nisar Ali Khan, MNA, in his remarks of April 13, 2015, acknowledged the presence of 'an irritant' in civil-military relations but was confident that these would be overcome.</p>
07.	May 2015	<p>Lt. Gen. Naveed Mukhtar, Commander V Corp (Karachi) delivered an extraordinary speech in May 2015 openly criticising the elected Sindh Government. Considering that Lt. Gen. Naveed Mukhtar's speech represents a well-considered institutional view of the Military, he said “police and administration should be free from political interference” in Sindh along with the resolve to “bring the Karachi Operation to its logical conclusion.” Corp Commander expressed concerns regarding the distribution of development funds by the Sindh Government by saying that “parallel governments and centres of power must</p>

8. For details, please see Army calls for restraint, dialogue on August 20, 2014: <http://nation.com.pk/20-Aug-2014/army-calls-for-restraint-dialogue>

9. For details, please see SC dismisses all petitions seeking PM Nawaz's disqualification, Dawn, December 09, 2014, as accessed on May 10, 2015 at: <http://www.dawn.com/news/1149778>

10. For details, please see Javed Hashmi announces resignation from PTI, Dawn, October 1, 2014: <https://www.dawn.com/news/1135523>

11. For details, please see Lt. Gen. Rizwan Akhtar to take reigns of the ISI today, the Express Tribune, November 08, 2014, as accessed on June 08, 2015 at: <http://tribune.com.pk/story/787606/lt-gen-rizwan-akhtar-to-take-reins-of-isi-today>

12. For details, please see Pakistan Army Chief Holds Off Generals Seeking PM's Ouster, Reuters, September 05, 2014 at Voice of America: <http://www.voanews.com/content/reu-pakistan-army-debate-prime-minister-nawaz-sharif-ouster-protests/2439957.html>

13. The ISPR issued a Press Release regarding the formation of Apex Committees on January 09, 2015 may be accessed at: [https://www.ispr.gov.pk/front/main.asp?o=t-press\\_release&date=2015/1/3](https://www.ispr.gov.pk/front/main.asp?o=t-press_release&date=2015/1/3)

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07.	May 2015	come to an end in the province.” In an apparent rejoinder issued by the Chairperson of the PPP, and the former President of Pakistan, Mr. Asif Ali Zardari, in which he did not directly refer to the Corp Commander's speech, but made a vague allusion to it, he urged restraint from any 'lecturing', all the while iterating that the people should be the judge of the performance of the elected Sindh Government. <sup>14</sup>
08.	November 2015	Press Release issued by the ISPR criticized the Government for its governance, especially in the context of the implementation of the National Action Plan stating that <i>'while appreciating progress of ongoing operation and Intelligence Based Operations (IBOs), their achievements and effects, COAS underlined the need for matching/complimentary governance initiatives for long-term gains of operation and enduring peace across the country'</i> ; rejoinder issued by the Government the next day saying that implementation of NAP is a shared responsibility. <sup>15</sup>
09.	March 2016	COAS directed concerned commander and intelligence agencies to commence operations against perpetrators of the terrorist attack in Lahore on March 27, 2016; It was not clear if the operation could be directly ordered by the COAS and whether any consultation took place with the Provincial Government of the Punjab or the Federal Government prior to the operation.
10.	May 2016	According to a Press Release issued by the ISPR, the Pakistan Army handed over a newly constructed border crossing facility at Angoor Adda to the Afghan authorities. Apparently, this had been done without consultation with the Federal Ministry of Interior, with Chaudhry Nisar Ali Khan, MNA writing a letter to the Prime Minister, expressing his reservations over it.
11.	May 2016	One-on-one meeting held between the Prime Minister and the COAS. Media reports on the meeting suggested that the COAS had asked the Prime Minister to resolve the Panama Papers crisis <i>'as soon as possible'</i> .
12.	October 2016 – May 2017	The Dawn story of October 06, 2016 titled <a href="#">Exclusive: Act against militants or face international isolation, civilians tell military</a> which was denied both by Government and the Military, became a major controversy and cause for an investigation known as “ <i>Dawn Leaks</i> .” <sup>16</sup> The issue of 'Dawn Leaks' Inquiry hit a new high on April 29, 2017, after a letter of the Prime Minister Office on the Dawn Leaks Inquiry Committee appeared on the social media and communicated the Prime Minister's approval of the withdrawal of the portfolio of the Special Assistant to Prime Minister on Foreign Affairs Syed Tariq Fatemi and proceedings under Efficiency and Discipline Rules 1973 against Rao Tehseen Ali, Principal Information Officer (PIO) of the Ministry of Information. The same day, DG ISPR Maj. Gen. Asif Ghafoor tweeted 'Notification on Dawn Leak is incomplete and not in line with recommendations by the Inquiry Board. Notification is rejected.' <sup>17</sup> The

14. For details, please see the PILDAT publication titled Monitor on Civil-Military Relations in Pakistan, May 2015, which can be accessed at: [http://www.pildat.org/Publications/publication/CMR/MonitorOnCivil-MilitaryRelationsinPakistan\\_May012015\\_May312015.pdf](http://www.pildat.org/Publications/publication/CMR/MonitorOnCivil-MilitaryRelationsinPakistan_May012015_May312015.pdf)

15. The ISPR statement read as follows: “While appreciating progress of ongoing operation and Intelligence Based Operations (IBOs), their achievements and effects, COAS underlined the need for matching/complimentary governance initiatives for long-term gains of operation and enduring peace across the country. Progress of National Action Plan's implementation, finalization of FATA Reforms, and concluding all ongoing JIIs at priority were highlighted as issues which could undermine the effects of operations.” Complete statement can be accessed at: [https://www.ispr.gov.pk/front/main.asp?o=t-press\\_release&date=2015/11/10](https://www.ispr.gov.pk/front/main.asp?o=t-press_release&date=2015/11/10)

16. The exclusive Dawn Story of October 06, 2016 titled [Exclusive: Act against militants or face international isolation, civilians tell military](#) which was denied both by Government and the Military became a major controversy. The story was said to be based on conversations with Dawn of individuals present in the crucial meetings (that) week. In the leaked meeting, a verbal confrontation between Chief Minister Shahbaz Sharif and then DG ISI Lt. Gen. Rizwan Akhtar was narrated in which Chief Minister claimed that security establishment works behind the scenes to set certain groups free whenever action is taken against them. In the end, Prime Minister Sharif directed Lt. Gen. Akhtar to 'tour the provinces at the direction of the prime minister, issue fresh orders to ISI sector commanders and meet with provincial apex committees to chalk out specific actions that need to be taken in various provinces' and Lt. Gen. Akhtar 'readily agreed.'

17. Tweet also released in the form of a press release that can be accessed at: [https://www.ispr.gov.pk/front/main.asp?o=t-press\\_release&id=3952&cat=army](https://www.ispr.gov.pk/front/main.asp?o=t-press_release&id=3952&cat=army)

No.	Date	Development
12.	October 2016 – May 2017	Tweet of DG ISPR was finally withdrawn on May 10, 2017 through an ISPR Press Release in which it was clarified that the Tweet was 'not aimed at any government office or person.' The press release also went on to reiterate its 'firm commitment and continued resolve to uphold the Constitution of the Islamic Republic of Pakistan and support the democratic process.' The Interior Ministry issued a notification on the Inquiry Committee Report on the same day in which the noticeable new entry compared to the leaked letter of the Prime Minister Office of April 29, 2017 was the endorsement of the 'action already taken by the Federal Government against Senator Pervaiz Rashid.' <sup>18</sup>
12.	January – November 2016	The extension of Gen. Raheel Sharif remained a topic of much debate and discussion and an important issue for civil-military relations even though in January 2016, a public statement by the ISPR refuted the rumours regarding the extension of the COAS' service. This, however, did not put an end to the matter. Mysterious banners appeared in the major cities of Pakistan (sponsored by a political party called 'Move On Pakistan') calling on the COAS Sharif, in a thinly veiled manner, to impose martial law. After his retirement, many TV anchors said that Gen. (Retd.) Raheel Sharif had personally pressurised Prime Minister Sharif for extension of his service, which the Prime Minister refused. <sup>19</sup>
13.	December 2016	Gen. Raheel Sharif as CoAS had protected Gen. (Retd.) Pervez Musharraf from his treason trial, claimed Gen. (Retd.) Musharraf. 'Gen. (Retd.) Raheel Sharif had <i>'a role to play in releasing the pressure behind the scenes ... Once he [Gen. (Retd.) Raheel Sharif] got the Government to relieve the pressure that they were exerting, the courts gave their judgment and allowed me to go abroad for treatment'</i> . Earlier, Federal Minister for States and Frontier Regions, Lt. Gen. (Retd.) Abdul Qadir Baloch, MNA, made a statement during a television programme that saving Gen. (Retd.) Pervez Musharraf <i>'had the signatures'</i> of Gen. (Retd.) Raheel Sharif. <sup>20</sup>
14.	November 2016	The change of command of the Chief of Army Staff witnessed in November 2016 was seen as a modest win for the maturing of system in Pakistan.
15.	April 2017	The Joint Investigative Tribunal (JIT) announced by the Supreme Court to investigate the Panama Case on April 20, 2017 included one member of the Military Intelligence and one of the Inter-Services Intelligence. The inclusion was not questioned by Mr. Nawaz Sharif or the Federal Government. However, PILDAT believed that the inclusion was unprecedented and inappropriate as neither the two agencies held any expertise in investigating matters of finance and law, nor was it advisable to involve military in a highly politicised issue. The Supreme Court gave the JIT two months to investigate the Sharif family and then deliver its findings  The Corps Commanders' Conference however supported the inclusion stating that <i>'Institution through its members in JIT shall play its due role in a legal and transparent manner fulfilling confidence reposed by the Apex Court of Pakistan.'</i> <sup>21</sup>
16.	June 2017	Prime Minister Nawaz Sharif was asked as a witness to appear before the JIT while he appeared on June 15.
18.	July 28, 2017	Supreme Court of Pakistan disqualified Mr. Nawaz Sharif for being 'not honest' under Article 62(1)(f) of the Constitution. <sup>22</sup>

18. A copy of the notification can be viewed in the news report, Interior Ministry notification echoes ISPR stance, Dawn Leaks matter 'settled,' May 10, 2017, which can be accessed at: <https://www.geo.tv/latest/141238-Interior-Ministry-notification-echoes-ISPR-stance-Dawn-leaks-matter-settled>

19. For details, please see: <http://www.awaztoday.pk/News-Talk-Shows/163349/Raheel-Sharif-Ne-Extension-Lenay-Ki-Koshish-Ki-Thi-Mohammad-Malick-Reveals.aspx>

20. The interview was aired on November 27, 2016 on Geo Television by Mr. Saleem Safi. The complete interview can be see at: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=dJokqlrueDY>

21. ISPR Press Release can be accessed at: [https://www.ispr.gov.pk/front/main.asp?o=t-press\\_release&cat=army&date=2017/4/24](https://www.ispr.gov.pk/front/main.asp?o=t-press_release&cat=army&date=2017/4/24)

22. [Nawaz Sharif steps down as PM after SC's disqualification verdict – Dawn, July 28, 2017](#)

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19.	August 2017	Ousted Premier Sharif addressed rallies on GT Road on his way from Islamabad to Lahore saying “for 70 years, no prime minister has been allowed to complete his tenure. This is not an insult of your prime ministers, but of the 200 million people of Pakistan. You vote a prime ministers into power, and some dictator and some judge comes along and rips up your ballot paper and hands it back to you.” <sup>23</sup>
20.	August 2017	Ahead of the official celebrations where traditionally the President of Pakistan, as head of the State, hoists Pakistan's flag with Premier and service chiefs in attendance - the COAS General Qamar Bajwa hoisted the largest national flag in the history of Pakistan at Wahgah border at midnight between August 13 and 14. The flag hoisted by the COAS was reportedly the largest flag in the history of Pakistan with the size of 120 feet by 80 feet. Hoisted on a 400 feet high pole, the flag is said to be the highest in South Asia and the 8 <sup>th</sup> highest flag in the world.
21.	October 2017	In one of the most blatant face-offs in civil-military relations in recent times, the Federal Interior Minister, in full view of the nation, was denied access by Rangers into the Federal Judicial Complex in Islamabad on the day of hearing of former Prime Minister Mr. Nawaz Sharif's trial. When the Interior Minister asked the soldier on duty at the gate to call the commander present inside, the commander did not show up. Mr. Ahsan Iqbal openly and rightly claimed that, legally, the Ministry of Interior is the administrative Ministry of the Rangers. The Interior Minister had reached the Judicial Complex to personally ascertain the situation as several other PML-N leaders and media persons were denied entry, and the civil administration had claimed that the Rangers were not requisitioned by them. The Interior Minister was visibly upset at the treatment and the TV channels showed him saying that “ <i>this is not a banana republic...</i> ” and that “ <i>Two States cannot function within one State.</i> ” <sup>24</sup>
22.	October 2017	Mr. Khurram Dastgir Khan, MNA, Federal Minister of Defence, as reported by ISPR “ <i>called on the Chief of Army Staff</i> ” at the GHQ on October 10, 2017, whereas it should have been the other way around. Mr. Khuram Dastgir Khan also <i>called on</i> the newly appointed Chief of the Naval Staff, Admiral Zafar Mahmood Abbasi, at the Naval Headquarters in Islamabad on October 23, 2017.
23.	November 2017	In a Press Conference held on November 11, 2017, Mr. Mustafa Kamal, Chairman Pak Sarzameen Party (PSP) said that the deal between the PSP and Mr. Farooq Sattar's Muttahida Quami Movement-Pakistan (MQM-P) was brokered by Sindh Rangers. He said that “ <i>today I want to tell all of Pakistan that, yes, the establishment called us and made us meet Farooq Sattar. When we reached, Sattar was already there and it was on his request that we were called. This did not happen a few hours ago. Sattar and his team have been calling us with help from the establishment for the past eight months.</i> ” <sup>25</sup>  Responding to the statement by Mr. Mustafa Kamal, DG Rangers Major General Mohammad Saeed, said that Sindh Rangers Director General Maj Gen Muhammad Saeed said that the military establishment did not support any particular political party in Karachi. “We just don't want a clash between them.” “Since September 2013, we have had an intense interaction with all political parties that were allegedly involved in committing violence in Karachi. However, we have not dictated any organisational policy for the political landscape of the metropolis.” Saeed went on to say that during the meeting [between MQM, PSP and LEAs] a military official might have shared an opinion that an alliance would be in the interest of the city, “but this is not our institutional policy.” <sup>26</sup>

23. GT Road rally: 'Only the people should kick out those they vote into power.' Nawaz says in Jhelum, Dawn, August 10, 2017:

<https://www.dawn.com/news/1350757>

24. Punjab Rangers chief told to explain court takeover: Ahsan Iqbal, DAWN, October 04, 2017, as accessed on November 03, 2017 at

<https://www.dawn.com/news/1361590>

25. Establishment brokered MQM-PSP alliance meet at Sattar's request: Mustafa Kamal, Dawn, November 11, 2017:

<https://www.dawn.com/news/1369842>

26. Establishment has not supported any particular political party, clarifies DG Rangers Sindh, Dawn, November 14, 2017:

<https://www.dawn.com/news/1370273>



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24.	November 2017	<p>signed by the Government with protesters through the corroboration of the Army –marked a disappointing watershed in the history of Pakistan. That the Army, tasked by the Federal Government, facilitated an agreement that capitulated the State to demands of a mob has all but disastrous connotations written all over it. Subsequent statements by the leader of the protest and actions, such as the DG Rangers distributing cash amongst <i>dharna</i> protesters, have not only raised serious questions about the writ of the Government and the State but also about the role of the Armed Forces during the protest.</p> <p>The disturbing facilitation by the Army can be best summed up using the words of Islamabad High Court Judge, Justice Shaukat Aziz Siddiqui, who termed it “alarming,” that a serving military officer signed [the agreement] as guarantor (In fact, the exact word in the agreement was <i>bawisat</i> or ‘through’), and that the COAS and his team were thanked separately in the agreement for helping reach the agreement. “<i>Prima facie, [the] role assumed by the top leadership of army is besides the Constitution and law of land. Armed forces, being part of the executive, cannot travel beyond its mandate bestowed upon it by the organic law of the country, i.e., the Constitution.</i>” Chastising the Army for their role, the Judge said “<i>Army officers eager to participate in politics should first return their guns to the State, take retirement and then join politics.</i>”</p> <p>Chief of Army Staff reportedly declined to involve the troops to end the 19 day long sit in at the <i>Faizabad</i> interchange. In a meeting with Prime Minister, he opposed the Army's use of force against its own people since the population's trust in the institution of the Army “can't be compromised for little gains.”<sup>27</sup></p> <p>Earlier, the advice by the Chief of Army Staff, Gen. Qamar Javed Bajwa, to the Prime Minister Shahd Khaqan Abbasi through a telephonic conversation was made public precisely through a tweet by the DG ISPR as the Government carried out an operation on the directives of the Islamabad High Court on November 25. The COAS - “<i>suggested to handle the Islamabad dharna peacefully to avoid violence from both sides as it is not in national interest</i>” said the DG ISPR's tweet which gave the impression as if the Army has a role above and beyond the executive of the State and that it equated both the State, and the protesters holding the State hostage. Similar advice and the tweet were earlier directed at the elected Government during the PTI-PAT <i>dharna</i> that held the capital hostage in 2014 by an erstwhile DG ISPR during the term of another COAS who advised “<i>all stakeholders to resolve prevailing impasse through meaningful dialogue in larger national and public interest.</i>”<sup>28</sup></p> <p>Announcing the end of the <i>dharna</i> in a Press Conference on November 27, 2017, Mr. Khadim Hussain Rizvi highlighted the role the Chief of Army Staff played to resolve the issue. He said, “<i>Mohtaram General Qamar Javed Bajwa Sahab ne apne khasoosi numaiinde hamare pass bheje. Hum ne kaha kay hum ne hakumat se baat nahin karni. Ye hamari qatil hai. Hamare beesiyon karkunaan ko unhon ne bilawaja shaheed kiya. Aur mulk kay halaat taizi se kharab hone ki taraf ja rahe thay tou General Sahib ne zaati dilchaspi li, aur apni team bheji, kay hum iss main zamin bantey hain. Aap k mutalibaat hum purey karwatey hain. Unn ki taraf se Mohtaram Major General Faiz Hameed (Director (Internal), ISI) tashreef laey, aur hamara muahida unn kay sath hua. Zahid Hamid ka istifa hamarey Shuhada kay khoon ki qeemat nahin hai. Ye tou Khatm-e-Nabuwwat ka jo masla tha, us ki waja se iss ka istifa aaya... Baqi hum aur bhi mutalibaat kar sakte thay. Iss waqt hum General Sahab ko jo bhi kehney, unhon ne maan jana tha. Lekin logon ney kehna tha kay ye tou hakumat uthane ke liye aye hain. Hum ne</i></p>

27. [An overview of the crisis that forced the government to capitulate, Dawn, November 27, 2017: https://www.dawn.com/news/1373200](https://www.dawn.com/news/1373200)

28. For details, please see Army calls for restraint, dialogue on August 20, 2014: <http://nation.com.pk/20-Aug-2014/army-calls-for-restraint-dialogue>

No.	Date	Development
24.	November 2017	<p><i>koi aur baat nahin ki hai. Ab jo hamare darmiyaan muahida hua, iss main General Sahab khud bhi zamin hain.</i> "[Honourable General Qamar Javed Bajwa Sahab sent his special representatives to us. We said that we do not want to speak to the Government. They are our murderers. They killed tens of our workers for no reason. And the situation in the country was deteriorating fast. So, General Sahab took a personal interest in the situation, and sent his team to us to be guarantors. They said that they would get our demands accepted. From their side, Honourable Major General Faiz Hameed (Director (Internal), ISI) came to us, and we made an agreement with him. Zahid Hamid's resignation is not the price of the blood of our martyrs. His resignation is to resolve the issue of Khatm-e-Nabuwat... We could have made further demands. At this time, General Sahab would have given us anything we would have asked for. But then people would have said that we came to dismantle the Government, so we did not talk about anything else. Now the agreement that took place between us, General Sahab himself is also a guarantor in it.]<sup>29</sup></p> <p>The agreement brokered by the Army and signed by the Federal Government, specifically thanks the COAS and his team for their facilitation.</p>
25.	December 2017	<p>Defence Minister only a facilitator, not boss of Pakistani defence organization: On December 30, Federal Minister of Defence, Engr. Khurram Dastgir Khan, MNA, made highly significant pronouncements on civil-military relations and the role of Minister of Defence. Talking to Mr. Saleem Safi in his talk show <i>Jirga</i>, Mr. Khan said that there is indeed '<i>tanao</i>' or tension in civil military relations in Pakistan. He also said that Defence Minister is not the boss or in-charge of Defence Organization, as is the diktat of the Constitution; that Defence Minister is merely a facilitator at best and most of the time even marginalised at that while Prime Minister directly deals with leadership of the Armed Forces. Some of the key excerpts paraphrased below from his interview are:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>We [PML-N] have learnt that individually good relations between Services Chiefs and PM do not solve issues in civil-military relations. There have to be good inter-institutional relations</li> <li>We have to "search for truth in facts;" that while the Constitution is an ideal and inspiration but facts, on the ground, are different</li> <li>National Security Committee (NSC) is perhaps the best forum for dialogue on civil-military relations and now we [PML-N Government] are using it more regularly</li> <li>PML-N party leader Nawaz Sharif felt that merely winning the next election would be meaningless unless "<i>awam ka haq-i-hakmiat</i>" or the people's right to rule was not established and accepted. PML-N will go to the next General Election with the manifesto of supremacy of people</li> </ol> <p>When asked what is the minor difference of opinion on foreign relations between the civilian Government and the Armed Forces, he said that they are absolutely on the same page as far as relations with the US are concerned but on Afghanistan there are minor issues. He rather profoundly said that "<i>ham bar bar yeh clarity chahtey hain Afwaj-e-Pakistan sey keh jo kuch bhi Afghanistan mein ho raha hai, us ka koi ta'aluq Pakistan sey nahin hona chahiye.</i>"</p>

29. Press Conference of Mr. Khadim Hussain Rizvi, November 27, 2017, Islamabad Dharna ENDS Announcement, YOUTUBE, November 27, 2017, as accessed on December 04, 2017 at [https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=0cn\\_RJ1efNE](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=0cn_RJ1efNE)

the ISI who have their own line of communication to the DG ISI and COAS – a communication which is not necessarily shared with the civilian elected leaders while telegraphs of ambassadors are marked to COAS and DG ISI as well. This disconnect was also documented in the Abbottabad Commission report that talked of the similar “*disconnect between the civilian and intelligence administration*,” in particular between the country's government and its top spy agency, the military-run Inter-Services Intelligence directorate (ISI).<sup>35</sup>

Some, however, also believe that it is the responsibility of elected Prime Ministers to carry every institution along. The stature of the office of Premier demands that Prime Minister leads the country with harmony with all State Institutions and not create unnecessary dissonance. Pakistan is categorised as a Security State by many and therefore security establishment will always need to be consulted. If the security establishment has a doctrine about regional relations, there is no harm in taking that into considerations. History of decision making in Pakistan has also proved time and again that political parties must make decisions for overall stability and sustainability of democracy. Political decisions based on narrow personal interests have ultimately harmed prospects and sustainability of democracy in Pakistan.

Military indeed has a doctrine on foreign policy, especially on relations with India, especially the Kashmir issue, trade with India and Afghanistan, believed both civil and military experts. However, Military is also stuck in policies developed in 1980s and requires to update those with changing scenarios, opined military experts. The civil side, including

civilian bureaucracy does not bring to the table any well-considered policy options. In an informed policy discussion, civilians do not stand ground as the policy options proposed by them are developed without thorough homework. “There is no policy vigour on the civilian side,” lament military experts. Though Nawaz Sharif has a vision and policy on relations with India, it suffers from same weak grounds. The Government capitulated on the question of banning the Jamaat-ud-Dawa (JuD) and Hizb ut-Tahrir (HuT); only Military defended the banned organisations because even the United Nations as well as the United States distinguishes between terrorists and freedom fighters,” opined military experts. The military is willing to listen if there are cogent arguments in an institutionalised forum of dialogue. Both sides may present their views but they do not talk in the National Security Committee (NSC); they merely talk at each other and hence differences of opinion are expressed in open forums. Contrary to the popular belief, military is a very democratic institution; it promotes policy debates even up to the level of the meetings of the formation commanders who, in the case of a disagreement, go even by voting on an agenda, said one Military expert.

“*We are not un-parh (illiterate) in the military and there is a lot of emphasis on education*,” said military experts. In comparison, politicians believe that it is their *munshi's* (roughly equivalent to a personal assistant or secretary) job to read and write for them and not theirs. That attitude is unworkable towards a sustainable democratic governance rooted in well-developed policies. For instance, military is very well aware that development and defence spending have to go hand in hand or we face a scenario that of USSR or what we experienced in East Pakistan. On Afghanistan, the concept of 'strategic depth' is to ensure a peaceful western border which stems from the perspective that if we have hot borders on both eastern and western fronts, the entire Army will be engaged with only frontier corps remaining to deal with other emergencies which is not desirable. Therefore, a peaceful, stable and friendly Afghanistan is in the interest of Pakistan. Military insists that Afghanistan Government should include Pashtuns as a key part of Afghanistan population. Vis-à-vis India, military understands that we can not match Indian spending on budget and there has to be another way to fight a war and defeat the cold-start doctrine. While military may rely on non-State actors, they do not constitute more than ½% of military strategy, said military experts.

***NS Govt. has been weakened since June 2013 by the Military, believed experts. First such effort was PTI and PAT dharna in 2014. Everyone in Govt. believed martial law was in the offing and ministers had even packed their offices. It was so humiliating that elected PM was orchestrated to be put under a siege***

35. Pakistan's civil-military imbalance. The bad in Abbottabad: The Economist, July 11, 2013: <https://www.economist.com/blogs/banyan/2013/07/pakistan-s-civil-military-imbalance>

By its training, military sees black and white; there is no grey. Either someone is a friend or a foe. But politicians work with a lot of grey. Military needs more than a seat at the table of decision-making. It wants politicians to be prepared and be knowledgeable. Sustainability of system is the most important consideration and military wishes to improve the democratic system.

Military experts also agreed that while final authority on decision-making should constitutionally be that of elected Governments, their incompetence makes military jittery to let them remain fully in-charge. They agreed that for the outside world, it does create multiple power centres and shows a divided house.

Why resort to weakening the writ of elected governments in the case of a policy disagreement? After all, civilian governments are elected by the citizens and are not governments of enemy countries. In destabilising governments, how much is too much and what is a red line, military experts were asked. It should not happen in an ideal world; however, it does, they said.





## Conclusions

There are indeed full-blown, out-of-control, critical issues and irritants in civil-military relations as experienced today in Pakistan. Where military overreach in policy spheres is unprecedented, it tries to justify that on the reason that politicians and elected governments are corrupt, ill-organised and have no capacity for the required, knowledgeable thought process that can develop cogent policy options for the welfare of the State and citizens. This perceived weakness of the civilian political leadership by the military also leaves the country's security, as well as its 'ideological security' in the lurch. Military simply has to step in to save the day. However, it wants to preferably do so from the sidelines and not by taking reigns of power directly.

Political leadership especially the civilian governments share the responsibility as well as blame for receding civilian authority because in the face of a military used to its ascendant ways, political leadership has failed to strengthen national institutions and has often preferred political expediency over merit. Successive civilian elected governments have been remiss in institutionalizing national security management through an ingrained consultative process on vital national strategic issues. In part, this has also strengthened the military perception that elected governments are neither serious nor methodical in making well-considered decisions on vital national security issues.

However, the Military leadership can not continue to believe that the final onus of deciding 'national interest' rests on them. For democratic governance to take root in the country, Military can not insist on its interpretation of the national interest relating to any issue including regional and foreign relations and the security policy. PILDAT believes that

Military needs to recognize that the elected Government is the final arbiter on national interest matters. The people of Pakistan have mandated them to do so. Although the Military leadership may have its views on national security, and it should present its views as effectively as it can at all appropriate fora, the mandate for the final decision resides exclusively with the Elected Governments. Even if the Elected Government makes any mistakes in this regard, these should be recognised as the risks associated with any decision-making. After all, military governments too have not been immune to making serious mistakes in the past.

Similarly, PILDAT believes that elected governments are not elected so as to work as monarchies and have to follow institutionalised consultative system of decision-making. Cabinets, both at the Federal and Provincial levels, need to be empowered to make all major decisions in an informed manner. The system of weekly cabinet meetings should be strictly followed and decision-making by circulation should not be adopted. Members of the cabinet should be encouraged to express their views freely while an issue is discussed.

Political parties, whether or not in power, can also not be absolved of the blame. No meaningful consultation appeared to be taking place on matters of national security within political parties. Decision-making process in almost all parties is so arbitrary and whimsical that it inspires little confidence in their decision-making.

Much the same inability is evident in the Parliament and its relevant Committees to develop the requisite oversight of the executive in general and defence and security sector in particular. Recent examples of the capitulation of the elected Government to the *Faizabad* protestors finds its roots in almost complete failure of all political parties in not being mindful of the sensitivity of the subject while *en masse* agreeing on amending the Elections Bill 2017 relating to a candidate's belief in the finality of the prophethood of Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him) and replacing the Khatm-e-Nabuwwat oath with the words "I believe" in place of "I solemnly swear."

From the constitutional perspective, rule of law has to govern the State and citizens. In the face of such stark and glaring gulfs in the perceptions of the civil and the military, the State has to develop widespread consensus in institutions in critical foreign policy and strategic areas. Political Parties have to prepare themselves by creating within them structures on policy development.

### **Democratic Oversight on Defence**

Constitution of Pakistan designates the elected Federal Government to have control and command over the Armed Forces. However, the intent of the Constitution is not followed in practice when the sitting Defence Minister claims merely to be a "facilitator" and not the boss or in-charge of Defence Organization. The first logical step, therefore, is to strengthen democratic oversight of defence. PILDAT proposes following recommendations:

1. Democratic control on Defence can only be established through an effective Ministry of Defence (MoD). The Ministry needs to be the principle authority in all matters of policy, finance and budget of the defence sector
2. Federal Minister of Defence must be a part of all meetings of any service chief and the Prime Minister unless an extra-ordinary situation warrants otherwise
3. MoD should be manned, in the main, by professional career bureaucrats except where the nature or duties of the post mandate that it should be filled by a serving officer of the armed forces
4. Ministry of Defence, Services Headquarters, Joint Chiefs of Staff Committee and National Security Committee should develop close coordination in terms of policy input and strategic thinking
5. While the State has been battling with a number of national security issues over the years, there is a critical need to address these issues in a holistic manner through preparing a well-coordinated and comprehensive national security and defence policy of Pakistan. Once the policy is final and made public, a periodic *Defence and Security Review of Pakistan must be prepared and made public* based on the national security and defence policy of Pakistan.
6. Defence Council' should be activated and strengthened by regular meetings (at least once a quarter) of the Defence Council chaired by the Federal Minister of Defence to co-ordinate the defence, foreign and finance policies of Pakistan, and to approve major works including induction of new weapon systems proposed by the Joint Chiefs of Staff Committee. The Defence Council is provided for in the Rules of Business of the federal government.
7. A spokesperson of the Ministry of Defence should be appointed to speak on behalf of the Ministry on all defence and security affairs including those relating to the Armed Forces of Pakistan. A military spokesman may join too when operational details of the military are the subject.

8. MoD must review and oversee industrial, business & commercial interests of the Armed Forces and bring these in line with the rules and practices especially relating to transparency and accountability in other spheres of Government
9. MoD must prepare proposals to strengthen the higher defence organisation. While the PML-N Government deserves credit for putting in place the required structure of National Security Committee, NSC is only a part of the higher defence organisation (HDO) structure of Pakistan, which largely, has not been reformed since 1976. Detailed recommendations are contained in PILDAT paper titled ***Restructuring Higher Defence Organisation in Pakistan***.
10. All Defence Agreements/MOUs should be presented to and ratified by the cabinet. In selective cases, the ratification by the parliament may also be considered.

### Need for Institutional Dialogue

Perhaps the most telling statement indicating the need for an institutional dialogue has been made by Federal Minister of Defence, Mr. Khurram Dastgir Khan, MNA, when he said that *“We [PML-N] have learnt that individually good relations between Services Chiefs and PM do not solve the issues in civil-military relations. There have to be good inter-institutional relations.”*

A real dialogue between civil and military has to be promoted through existing institutional structures chief among which is the National Security Committee (NSC). PILDAT believes an inter-institutional Dialogue is indeed required. Its not just required because Pakistan's Supreme Court has disqualified another premier from holding office through the working of a JIT including serving military officers from ISI & MI, but it has long been required due to a continuing lack of constitutional equation between institutions. Such a dialogue, however, can not be a one-off, time-barred event. It has to be a continuing dialogue that brings to table *all stakeholders that are genuinely intent on resolving the crucial challenges and engage in understanding perspectives instead of talking at each other.*

### Who should host the Dialogue

It is a pity that despite having institutions already in place to engage in a dialogue, successive governments and institutions have chosen not to fully utilise them. Lets see what can be some of these institutions

### National Security Committee

The National Security Committee provides the best forum where such a dialogue can take place on national security issues. The NSC, however, has to be a consultative forum and not a decision-making body, to conduct such a dialogue. The NSC should meet more frequently and regularly and its support infrastructure as originally envisaged should be strengthened in the form of various committees and think tanks.

- a. **NSC Meetings dedicated to strategic Civil-Military Issues:** Civil-Military Dialogue on long term strategic issues like the Key strategic foreign relations and long-term security perspective is extremely important to understand each others' perspective and to develop a unified national position. Since Understanding divergent perspectives and reaching a common ground can not be accomplished in one or a few meetings. This requires consistent, regular and long-term engagement. At least one meeting in a month (preferably) or two months be devoted to these strategic subjects alone. There may be other NSC meetings to deal with routine operational matters but one meeting each 30 or 60 days should be dedicated to strategic issues.
- b. **Research and Planning Infrastructure at NSC:** NSC meetings, especially on strategic questions, need to have high quality research input. Various Civil and Military institutions may have their own research inputs but NSC needs to have its own infrastructure to collate the available research and carryout its own original research, where needed, in order to assist NSC in informed decision-making. When the NSC (originally as Cabinet Committee on National Security) was formed back in 2014, an independent secretariat and two subsidiary bodies, the Planning Committee and an Advisory Board were also to be established along with it. However, it has not come into our knowledge how the two subsidiary bodies are functioning and whether they are operational at all. It would be in the best interest of the country to operationalize them to assist the NSC.

### Expanded Civil-Military exchange at NDU

While NSC remains the apex body for civil-military exchange of views, a more informal but extremely useful exchange at second, third and fourth tiers of civil-military leadership may also be facilitated. National Defence University (NDU) has been conducting such an interaction in various courses and workshops. The Government of Pakistan especially the

Ministry of Defence may look at the possibility of further facilitating and streamlining such dialogues in collaboration with NDU management.

### **Mechanism of Dialogue**

- a. The dialogue has to be initiated with all stakeholders agreeing to resolve the malaise of institutional disconnect harming Pakistan. Interlocutors and stakeholders must agree on the agenda and timeline of the dialogue
- b. Inter-institutional dialogue must not be used as an opportunity of pointing fingers. A fruitful dialogue forum can not be used as a means to humiliate, humble or criticise any institution but as a forum to listen to and understand each others' perspectives and find a way forward that harnesses those perspectives for the ultimate benefit to the country and the citizens.
- c. Perhaps by nature, politicians require publicity and media for every initiative. A dialogue of this nature, however, must not be open for publicity. Dialogue must be held away from the gaze of media and must follow strictly the rules of non-attribution

### **Proposed Agenda**

The most crucial questions that constitute the agenda of the dialogue are as follows:

- i. Objective identification of irritants in inter-institutional relations
- ii. Inter-institutional perspectives on irritants and major national issues
- iii. On matters of national concern, including security, Constitutional and legal issues, while everyone needs to be on board, who should be the final, lawful and authoritative arbiter on decision-making in case of disagreement?
- iv. Developing of policy reform proposals, with defined targets timelines and performance indicators.
- v. National Security Policy and Strategies to implement the agreed policy.



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