

Scenario 31

Two Military Rulers at 180 Angles Apart:

Gen Musharraf vs Gen Ziaul Haq:

In the last quarter of 2001, Gen Musharraf had consolidated his power base as he kicked out three top generals, Lt Gen Aziz, Lt Gen Mahmud Ahmed and Lt Gen Usmani, known for their hard-line Islamic views in a major shake up in the army top brass. The changes, which coincided with attack against Afghanistan by the American and NATO forces, was seen as a part of Gen Musharraf's plan to bring liberal loyalist Generals into key positions of the Pakistan's army set up.

The said lot of newly appointed senior officers were known for their thinking favouring pro-west policies. Gen Musharraf had gone too far to please the US President Mr Bush and his team in the name of participation in 'War on Terror'. His cooperation with the Americans were applauded and thus the **'TIME' magazine of 29th April 2006** included his name in 'top 100 personalities' of the world along with those who had influenced the world opinion most.

One can recall the history when Gen Ziaul Haq had managed to hang Z A Bhutto through judicial gimmicks, the Americans were quite happy over that 'act of bravery'. The Americans had declared Gen Ziaul Haq as their right hand statesman though the Russian threats to Afghanistan were not 'fully cleared' then. But what were their inner feelings about the General, following lines from a CIA report of 1982 (since declassified) would make it clear, and though may appeal someone as a balanced report:

- *[Pakistan's President Ziaul-Haq faces growing domestic problems but no immediate threat to his rule. Gen Ziaul Haq lacks an organized constituency outside the Army; however, he could find his hold on power challenged should an opposition emerge.*
- *Gen Ziaul Haq's visit to Washington will be paralleled by the arrival in Pakistan of the most visible symbol of the new US relationship; the first six of 40 F-16 fighter aircrafts.*

Islamabad is aware that only the United States can offset Soviet pressures and provide Pakistan with the sophisticated weapons it needs. The US-Pakistan deal on economic aid and weapons sales undoubtedly has strengthened Pakistan's international position and restored some of its self-confidence.

- *Gen Ziaul Haq's hold on power remains firm for now, but his failure to fashion acceptable political institutions and win broad popular backing leave him vulnerable should he blunder, the economy stagnate, or a popular leader from masses suddenly emerge to unite the opposition.*

Although the opposition parties so far remain ineffective, there are signs of increased impatience with martial law and stronger calls for return to civilian government through elections. When change comes, it is likely to be abrupt and violent.

- *Ethnic tensions, especially in Balochistan, will continue to be an irritant, but do not threaten Pakistan's national integrity. Random terrorist actions are unlikely to bring about the downfall of the government. Terrorism weakens Gen Ziaul Haq's*

government to the extent that it undermines public confidence in the regime's ability to maintain public order.

- *Gen Ziaul Haq is generally respected or at least tolerated, in Pakistan, but he arouses no strong enthusiasm. The political parties are in disarray and unable to muster any significant opposition.*

There is diffused dissatisfaction, however, with martial law, which has continued uninterrupted for over five years. Gen Ziaul Haq thus finds himself with no direct challengers, but without any broad based popular support to protect him if unrest develops.

- *Gen Ziaul haq does have the support of Pakistan's strongest institution, the Army. He has skilfully manipulated senior officer appointments to ensure a loyal senior officers corps to ensure his smooth running.*

The Pak-Army's influence now extends into almost all areas of the society, as serving and retired Army officers have been appointed to fill positions in the bureaucracy and state-run industries. The bureaucracy has vehemently opposed this activism.

That occasions some resentment, particularly among line officers, about the Army's continued martial law responsibilities and the abundant corruption. But the military men and commanders realize that their interests are bound up with Gen Ziaul Haq and chances that a sudden coup will depose him, are minimal.

- *Barring an assassin's bullet, President Gen Ziaul Haq probably will maintain his hold on government over the next year. We believe, however, that increasingly open public dissatisfaction with martial law and an uncertain economic climate could - over the next one to three years - confront Gen Ziaul Haq with the choice of facing serious unrest or opting for a civilian regime under Army tutelage. Although such a regime would lack a popular consensus, it might attract enough of the moderate opposition to give Gen Ziaul Haq more time to govern Pakistan.*
- *Nevertheless, recently there have been some signs of increased impatience within key pro-Zia constituencies over the continuation of martial law and stronger calls in the country for a return to civilian government through general elections (if held).*

(Censored) the major opposition leaders are convinced the time is ripe to move against Gen Ziaul Haq. Some senior security officials believe the tide of public opinion is running against him and are increasingly sceptical about the regime's ability to contain possible internal disorders. Should the economy falter and affect the interests of the urban middle classes and their allies, opposition to Gen Ziaul Haq could increase rapidly.]

Just for a moment, if one inserts the name of Gen Musharraf where Gen Ziaul Haq's name is placed, the above statement of 1982 was holding well during 2001-2008. The CIA had not opted for a re-writing on Pakistan, they preferred to use a 'cut & paste' mechanism. The above excerpts clearly reflected that during Gen Musharraf's rule we had not moved ahead from 1982 situation. A well versed saying: '**A nation which lives through 'cut and paste' mode of history can't break the trajectory of its past.**' It mostly fits on Pakistan for all times.

Military, during Gen Musharraf's era, which was holding both power and guns, was not able to play a key role in shaping the future course of events. It should have proactively taken that its continued interference in politics and economy had weakened the Federation and its institutions as World Economic Forum's Global Competitiveness Report 2005 had (once more) indicated by rating quality of Pakistan's public institutions at 102 out of 104 countries.

Coming back to our original topic, in Pakistan, Lt Generals retire at the age of 57 or on completion of four years as Lt Generals, whichever is earlier. Gen Musharraf granted himself an extension in October 2001 when he was due for retirement as the COAS and was

supposed to hand over power to an elected political leadership before 12th October 2002 (hats off to some corrupt minds of our superior judiciary), in accordance with a judgment of the Supreme Court. That day had never seen dawn, Gen Musharraf was there as COAS (+ President) while all threatening Lt Generals were sent home.

One shouldn't be surprised, if concerned over this prospect, the US had planned so. It made no difference to the US if Gen Musharraf had been continuing in power as the President in uniform or a non-political civilian, elected in a sham election, functioning as the Prime Minister so long as the things were delivered. This is what Gen Ziaul Haq did and that is what the present PPP regime is doing in association with the incumbent COAS Gen Kiyani.

For thirty six of its 63 year's existence Pakistan has been under military rule. The military has been responsible to a great extent for Pakistan's present impasse, though the politicians were also to be blamed for the similar follies. Throughout his rule of eight years, Gen Musharraf stressed his commitment to human rights, religious tolerance and a free press. But the time proved that all his steps moved to concentrate power in his own hands, and while he talked largely of accountability he had allowed no space for holding the army or any of his corrupt army officers accountable and all the superior judiciary remained silent indirectly providing strength to the illegal and illogical military rule.

During the two Afghan Wars, one fought by Gen Ziaul Haq in 1980s and the other handled by Gen Musharraf and PPP in 2000s, Pakistan's army and their commanders played two different roles, quite opposing and at 180 angles in their objectives. Both wars were fought on Afghan soil; the previous one was for helping Afghans whereas the later was fought against them.

Keeping the political interpretations aside, one can say that the 1980's Afghan *Jihadi* war was planned and fought for the sake of Pakistan's self interests. Pakistan's intelligence had utilised his resources and men in the battle fields in a manner that ISI had surfaced as a powerful intelligence agency in the world. It is said that to curtail its power and to contain Pakistan's army to its size, the crash of August 1988 was planned and launched but still the people are astray that who was the beneficiary.

Ikram Sehgal had differentiated between the two army dictators [but then Gen Musharraf had just started his governance] in daily **'the News' dated 9th October 2001** saying that:

'Continuity demands that Gen Musharraf see out his full term as President starting from the day he leaves his office of COAS. As President he still remains the Supreme Commander of the Armed Forces. Unlike Gen Ziaul Haq who manipulated his subordinate appointments to remain in power, Gen Musharraf seems to be a self-confident product of his colleague's aspirations for a better Pakistan, as it appears.

Does he need to hang onto various jobs out of a prime motivation of his own security? If I am not mistaken about the man's character he will not allow his colleagues and so-called friends to influence him to manipulate things very much as the late Gen Ziaul Haq did, instead he will boldly follow the full transparent route in processing the sanctity of appointments and tenures thereof in the Armed Forces.'

But, Mr Sehgal, Gen Musharraf did not allow his *'friends to manipulate things'*; however, he had simply preferred to lie down before the American President, CIA and Pentagon.

Referring to Irfan Siddiqui in daily **'Jang' dated 18th August 2011:**

- In the Afghan War of 1980s, Gen Ziaul Haq had opted to help the oppressed ones and to stand in front of a super power whereas in the second Afghan war, Gen Musharraf & PPP regimes exactly did the same but in reverse order.
- Gen Ziaul Haq was fighting against an aggressor then super power [Russia] whereas Gen Musharraf & PPP regimes preferred to stand by the assailant super power [America].

- Gen Ziaul Haq had taken decision for the sake of Islamic brotherhood keeping Afghanistan's geo political position in mind whereas Gen Musharraf & PPP governments took decisions for the sake of strengthening their own rule keeping America's obedience in sight.
- Gen Ziaul Haq had kept America at a distance despite utilizing their military and financial aid. No American military or political person was allowed to keep direct contact with Afghan Mujahideen. All ammunition or other aid was distributed through Pakistan's ISI and no US official could interfere in Pakistan's war policy or strategy.

Contrarily Gen Musharraf & PPP regimes placed Pakistan's military air bases, air space, naval coasts, road infrastructure, army and the ISI at the disposal of Americans.

- Gen Ziaul Haq and the then ISI had taken all the strategic decisions at their own to achieve their targets whereas Gen Musharraf and his subsequent PPP regime passed on their powers and prerogatives to Washington and the Americans made decisions to be acted upon by us.
- Gen Ziaul Haq remained involved in Afghan war for nine years but Pakistan was not converted into a battlefield whereas Gen Musharraf brought war into Pakistan and innocent blood of thousands of civilians and army men was visibly seen on our soils throughout seven years of war for his part and ensuing years of the PPP's rule.
- Gen Ziaul Haq ended all training camps in Afghanistan which were known as hostile to Pakistan but Gen Musharraf and the PPP regimes themselves aided Indian, Israeli, American and Afghan antagonistic groups to develop their anti-Pakistan training sites in both countries.
- Gen Ziaul Haq had continued developing Pakistan's nuclear program during his nine years of Afghan war whereas Gen Musharraf disgraced Dr Qadeer Khan, kept him in home custody. During his tenure and succeeding PPP's regime allowed Americans to speak almost daily that '*Pakistan's nuclear arsenal are not safe*'.
- Gen Ziaul Haq kept the whole nation involved in Afghan war whereas Gen Musharraf could not take the nation into confidence for a day even in connection with American crusade. During latter's eight years war followed by PPP's rule, hatred for Americans, as per various survey reports of 2010, had touched a level of 84% once, the all times low.

Furthermore, Gen Ziaul Haq had snubbed all those separatist movements which were being nurtured in Afghanistan with the help of Indian RAW but during Gen Musharraf's & PPP regimes all those nurseries of autonomist and nationalist groups got a new life again. The spill of hard luck for general populace of Pakistan continues as since the end of latest saga of military rule in 2008, the succeeding PPP regime proved that political leadership is equally awful, terrible, dreadful, appalling and horrific.

It is for the historians and students of current affairs to ascertain that how the two military rulers had behaved in our recent past.