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**The End of Technocracy?
No Room for a ‘Bangladesh Option’
in Pakistan**

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The End of Technocracy? No Room for a 'Bangladesh Option' in Pakistan

The Puzzle

Francis Fukuyama (1989) famously put forward the view that the universalization of Western liberal democracy is the final form of human government. The following analysis draws on the premise that there is no alternative to liberal democracy (Diamond, 2008; Diamond & Morlino, 2005) as the best form of governance. In general, the concept of 'democracy' is understood as the abstract notion of 'people's sovereignty' that is flanked by the democratic 'core values' (Brettschneider, 2006) of 'equality' and 'liberty' (Diamond & Morlino, 2005). In spite of this commonly accepted understanding, democracy is an 'essentially contested concept' (Gallie, 1956). This means that there is a widespread agreement on the abstract notion of democracy and its core values, but it remains at the centre of scholarly debate about what might be the best implementation thereof. The different understandings of how to realize these principles have led to multiple interpretations of democracy from a minimalist 'electoral' type to the more comprehensive concepts of 'participatory democracy'¹, 'deliberative', or 'strong' democracies² (Held, 2006; Croissant/Kuehn/Chambers/Wolf, 2010). There is, however, a clear notion that all power should rest in the citizenry and that the will of the citizens should be the ultimate source of legitimacy for political power and subsequent decision-making. As such, democracy is a form of government in which political power exclusively derives from the 'freely expressed will of the people whereby all individuals are to be treated as equals' (Hadenius, 1992). 'Liberal democracy' adds to the electoral minimum, a regime of fundamental civil rights, the rule of law, the institutionalization of horizontal accountability as well as civilian control over the military (Croissant/Kuehn/Chambers/Wolf, 2010). Having said this, political actors who

¹ See for example, O'Donnell/Schmitter/Whitehead 1986; Huntington 1991; Linz/Stepan 1996.

² See for example Cohen 1989; Gutmann/Thompson 2002; Barber 1984.

represent the people in the political system must depend on the approval of the governed and must act according to civic consent. This is all well and fine in theory, but so far the political reality in Pakistan is quite different.

In the first months of 2013, the likelihood of an extra-constitutional caretaker government as seen in Bangladesh between 2007-2009 (also known as the 'Bangladesh Option' or 'Bangladesh Model') has become a leading topic in Pakistan among political observers and especially the country's private media. But besides a weak reference to what this means –a quiet coup in Bangladesh, engineered by the army in January 2007 and legitimised by the judiciary which resulted in a two-year suspension of democracy in favour of an unelected administration of 'technocrats'³– not much is known about the Bangladesh Option and the implications of the responsible caretaker government. (The Economist, 19.1.2013; Ahsan, 2011). Although there are some studies that analyse the caretaker government of 1996 and 2001 as well as the consolidation of democracy in Bangladesh, relatively little attention has been paid to the role of the caretaker government of 2007-2009 thus far. There is a lot of emphasis on and appraisal of the achievements of this technocratic and military backed interim government but not much has been written about the tremendously negative impacts of these governments on the observation of human rights, and democratic values, norms and procedures. Furthermore, since the caretaker government acted far beyond its constitutionally limited life span, a clear breach of democratic legitimacy was made. This is especially relevant, because, according to Shain and Linz (1992), caretaker governments may affect the constitutional framework and the nature of the future political system, the degree of political openness, its respect for human rights, or the influence of certain key institutions, especially the armed forces. These factors determine to a large extent whether a country will go down the path of authoritarianism or progresses towards democratic

³ Ahsan (2013) is emphasizing that 'caretaker governments have by and large been symbolic of administration through technocracy.

transition. Having this in mind, the paper elaborates and assesses the latest Bangladesh caretaker government in the light of its course and outcome for consolidation of democracy in Bangladesh. Furthermore, it will emphasize that the generalization which one can draw out of the Bangladesh experience of caretaker governments highlight their highly undemocratic nature. Implementing such a model in Pakistan could do additional harm to the already eroding state of democracy. This article shall therefore analyse the latest Bangladesh caretaker government through the prism of civil-military relations as well. Such a focus is relevant because the Bangladesh Option emerged not only out of a lack of civilian control over the armed forces but it also extended the political role and influence of the military in Bangladesh. Because of this, the main argument guiding this work is that any interim government like the one in Bangladesh which is outside the legitimacy of the constitution will further worsen the civil-military relations as it hampers civilian efforts to establish control over the armed forces, which is a *conditio sine qua non* for the consolidation of democracy. It is imperative that any disturbance and derailment of free and fair elections and the subsequent transfer of power has to be avoided, especially when free and fair elections are in their evolutionary stage in Pakistan.

Introduction - Contextualizing the Caretaker Government Phenomenon in Pakistan

Based on the criteria of liberal democracy, most international analysts agree that Pakistan is a failed democracy. Upon its inception, Pakistan was envisioned to be a parliamentary democratic system, but due to the country's unfortunate colonial legacy and its post-Partition political developments it never became a part of the story of the global triumph of democracy. This is because the process of democratization in the country was and is not a linear one. In other words, there is no clear-cut juncture, as in India (apart from the 1975-1977 state of emergency under the Indira Gandhi-administration), where the transition after

the end of the authoritarian British Raj marked and uninterrupted, linear process of stabilisation and consolidation towards democracy. Instead, Pakistan's political dynamics are characterised by a persistent oscillation between elected political authoritarianism and military or semi-military regime types (see tables 1 & 2). After the transformative period of military-bureaucratic domination between 1947 and 1972, the country witnessed – interrupted by two military interregnums– three rudimentary attempts towards democratisation (1971-1977, 1988-1999, 2008 onwards, see Table 1).

Table 1: Patterns of Rule in Pakistan

Structure of Leadership*	Duration	Period
Direct Military Rule	17 years	1958-1962: Ayub Khan 1962-1971: Yahya Khan 1977-1985: Zia-ul-Haq 1999-2002: Pervez Musharraf
Elected government under a military president**	15 Years	1962-1969: Ayub Khan 1985-1988: Zia-ul-Haq 2002-2007: Pervez Musharraf
Elected government under a civilian president ***	11 years 1988-1999	(1) 1988 - 1990: Benazir Bhutto (2) 1990 - 1993: Nawaz Sharif (3) 1993 - 1996: Benazir Bhutto (4) 1997 - 1999: Nawaz Sharif (5) 2008 – 2013: Yousaf Raza Gillani/ Raja Pervez Ashraf
Semi-Civilian (non-elected) political government****	11 years 1947-1958	(1) 1947-1951: Liaquat Ali Khan (2) 1951-1953: Muhammad Ali Bogra (3) 1953-1955: Chaudry Muhammad Ali (4) 1956-1957: Husey Shahhed Suhrawardy (5) 1957-1958: Sir Feroz Khan Noon
Civil-Military Equilibrium *****	6 years	1971-1977: Zulfikar Ali Bhutto

Notes: * The formulated structures of leadership for the various periods represent models to express the dominant style of governance and political management; Interim-governments and Prime-Minister under Military President/rule are not taken into account; ** Also referred to as a post-military period, this specifies the military exercise of political influence via a retired or serving general as president; *** Also known as the 'Rule of Troika', the armed forces influence the political decision-making-process under civilian governments from the sidelines; **** supremacy of non-parliamentary forces (bureaucracy) under formal parliamentary rule; ***** The rule of Z.A. Bhutto is called Equilibrium here, not Civilian Supremacy despite the fact that civilians had gained extensive civilian control, but the governmental limits were still set by the military.⁴

⁴ Source: Own compilation based on Rizvi (2004:3), Cohen (1984:6-10), Waseem (2007:5).

In this context one has to state that on one side the democratic transitions were caused and facilitated by political interventions of the armed forces, but on the other side, the democratisation phases were conditioned and hampered by the military. This was mostly because neither the non-elected bureaucrats (who were running the affairs of the country during the initial years until the first coup by General Ayub Khan in 1958 was staged), nor the following alternating governments of elected politicians (i.e. civilians) and militaries were able and willing to establish functional and effective political institutions. Consequently, a dysfunctional 'pseudo-democratic' political system based on patron-client relationships in which the major civilian institutions were paralysing each other was established and political decisions were made by a small group of exclusive feudal and industrialist elites, which is often referred to as 'The Establishment'. One of the most revealing features that seriously inhibit the quality of democracy is the continuous truncation of the electoral process. Since its independence in 1947, Pakistan has experienced a troubled electoral history. It took more than two decades until the country saw its first general elections in 1970 which resulted in the secession of East Pakistan (present-day Bangladesh) due to the fact that the authoritarian rule did not accept the election results. Since then, all elections until 2008 after the latest military ruler, Pervez Musharraf, resigned were consistently rigged by the country's armed forces and intelligence agencies.

Keeping this trajectory in mind, the question that arises today is whether the last five years were just a brief intermezzo of elected governance after which the military top brass may once again find it necessary to take matters 'more formally' into their own hands. It is in this context that several observers claim that Pakistan is *not* on the eve of a critical juncture that will break the patterns of traditionally military-dominated politics which would subsequently lead to a consolidation of democracy. They are convinced that the basic determinants which were responsible for military takeovers in the past have not changed

fundamentally. Protagonists of this point of view are of the opinion that one has to expect once again a 'visible intervention' by forces who are not in favour of a democratic transfer of power (from one civilian government to another one), which would be a first in the country's troubled political transitions. This debate gained momentum after statements of Pakistani Senator Raza Rabbani who warned about potential attempts of initiating a political rollback by anti-democratic forces by undermining the constitutional and political achievements of the current government. He even went a 'dramatic step' further by raising serious concerns about the potential threat of the establishment of an extra-constitutional caretaker government in order to derail the upcoming elections. This alarm signal seemed even more plausible in the context of the sudden appearance of the influential cleric Muhammad Tahir-ul-Qadri who demanded the resignation of the current government before the end of its term in favour of an extra-constitutional caretaker government of technocrats which should have the support of non-electoral institutions, namely the Supreme Court and the military.

Aside from Qadri's 'anti-democratic harassment', in March 2013 in Pakistan's chequered political landscape a democratically elected civilian government has completed its full five-year term. At the end of the government's term, power was handed over to a caretaker set-up which paved the way for a democratic transfer of power following the general election on May 11th. Nevertheless, the country's formidable socio-economic and political challenges combined with widespread popular dissatisfaction over the performance of the leading politicians (especially the last government during the presidency of Asif Ali Zardari) make that there was and still is much talk about the necessity of a 'Bangladesh Option' for Pakistan.

Table 2: Dissolutions of Governments/National Assemblies: 1947-2009

Year	Parliament Dissolved by	Dismissal of Government	Type of Dismissed Government	New Leadership Habitus	New Installed Regime-type
1953	Ghulam Muhammad (Appointed Civilian ⁺)	Khawaja Nazimuddin (Appointed Civilian ⁺)	Civilian (Bureaucratized)	Governor General** (civilian)	Civilian (Bureaucratized)
1954	Ghulam Muhammad (Appointed Civilian ⁺)	M. Ali Bogra (Appointed Civilian ^{***})	Civilian (Bureaucratized)	Governor General (Bureaucrat)	Civilian (Militarized-Bureaucracy****)
1957	General Iskander Mirza (Elected Civilian ⁺)	H. Shaheed Suhrawardy (Appointed Civilian ^{**})	Civilian	Governor General (Militarized-Bureaucrat ⁺⁺⁺)	Civilian (Militarized-Bureaucracy)
1958	General Iskander Mirza (Elected Civilian ^{+ *****})	Malik Feroz Khan Noon (Appointed Civilian ^{****})	Civilian (Militarized-Bureaucracy)	President (Bureaucrat)	Civilian (Militarized-Bureaucracy)
1958	General Ayub Khan (Military, by Coup)	Iskander Mirza (Elected Civilian)	Civilian (Militarized-Bureaucracy)	C-in-C (Chief Martial Law Administrator), later President	Military
1969	P General Yahya Khan (Military, appointed)	General Ayub Khan (Military, by Coup)	Military	C-in-C (Chief Martial Law Administrator)	Military
1977	P General Zia-ul-Haq (Military, by Coup)	Zulfikar Ali Bhutto (Elected Civilian)	Military	C-in-C (Chief Martial Law Administrator)	Military
1988	General Zia-ul-Haq (Military, by Coup)	M. Khan Junejo (Appointed Civilian)	Military	President	Military (civilianised)
1990	Ghulam Ishaq Khan (Civilian ⁺)	Benazir Bhutto (Elected Civilian)	Civilian (Militarized-Bureaucracy)	President (Bureaucrat)	Civilian (militarized-bureaucratic influence)
1993	Ghulam Ishaq Khan (Civilian ⁺)	Mian Nawaz Sharif (Elected Civilian)	Civilian (Militarized-Bureaucracy)	President (Bureaucrat)	Civilian (militarized-bureaucratic influence)
1996	Farooq Leghari (Civilian ⁺)	Benazir Bhutto (Elected Civilian)	Civilian (Militarized-Bureaucracy)	President	Civilian (militarized-bureaucratic influence)
1999	Pervez Musharraf (Military)	Mian Nawaz Sharif (Elected)	Civilian (re-Civilianised-	COAS (Chief Executive); later President	Civilian (militarized-bureaucratic)

		Civilian)	Bureaucracy)		influence)
2001	Chief Executive Pervez Musharraf (Military)	President Mohammad Rafiq Tarar	Military (civilianised)	President (Self-appointed)	Civilian (militarized- bureaucratic influence)
2008	Yousaf Raza Gillani/ Raja Pervez Ashraf	Pervez Musharraf (Military)	Civilian	Prime Minister/President (civilian)	Civilian

Note: ⁺All dismissals by Civilians are backed by the Military; ^{*}selected/appointed by the cabinet, dominated by bureaucrats; ^{**} “In the newly independent dominion political authority was transferred to a Governor-General and a Constitutional Assembly the members of which were taken from those deputies of the Indian Central Assembly who had opted for Pakistan”⁵; ^{***} Governor General of Pakistan Ghulam Muhammad dismissed civilian PM Khawaja Nazimuddin; ^{****} The crucial features which turned the *Bureaucratized-Civilian* into a *Civilian-Militarized-Bureaucracy* type of regime were (1) the Amadiyya riots of 1953, which underlined the inability of civilian bureaucrats to control state affairs without military support (a process which had already started in 1948 with the police riots in Dhaka/East-Pakistan and student protests during that year); (2) that Ghulam Muhammad ensured the support of the Army for the dismissal of the Nizamuddin government⁶; ^{*****} Ghulam Muhammad (a former Army General) was, in 1956, *officially* elected President though all presidential elections are carried out indirectly by the assemblies; ⁺⁺ Appointed by Governor General (GG) of Pakistan Iskander Mirza despite the fact that he was informally forced out of office by the bureaucratic-military establishment under GG Mirza; ⁺⁺⁺ In this sense, “Militarized” means – a civilian with a military mindset based on socialization (training, education and service) in the armed forces; ^{****} Based on the 1956 constitution, Khan was appointed by the President (before Governor General).⁷

Concept of Caretaker Government – The Bangladesh Model

A peculiarity of the Constitution of Bangladesh is the provision for holding general elections under a caretaker government. According to this constitution, the term caretaker government refers to a neutral, non-partisan and non-party interim government that is responsible for ensuring free, fair and impartial general elections after a parliament’s mandate has come to an end. In order to provide the caretaker government with the necessary legitimacy, the 13th amendment to the Constitution was passed on 26 March 1996. According to this provision, such a government must take office within 15 days of the dissolution of parliament and it must organize general elections within 90 days of the dissolution as well as giving the Bangladesh Election Commission (BEC) all the support

⁵ See Zingel (2001:661).

⁶ See Khan (1967).

⁷ Source: own compilation based upon a review of literature.

necessary for holding free and fair parliamentary elections. The caretaker government consists of a Chief Adviser as its head and not more than 10 other advisers, all appointed by the President to whom it is also collectively responsible. The Chief Adviser is usually the most recently retired Chief Justice, and assumes the functions of the Prime Minister. The temporary government exercises executive powers until a new Prime Minister has been appointed and his regular Cabinet is formed. However, it is not a fully empowered interim government. Besides organizing a democratic transfer of power it is not allowed to make any policy decisions that lie beyond the electoral remit or which may influence the electoral results. It is restricted to run the necessary day-to-day administration and ordinary routine procedures of governance. Under this constitutional framework two caretaker governments have been installed so far: one in 1996 and a second in 2001 (cf. Mitra/Wolf/Schöttli, 2006:93; Molla 2000; Ahmad, 2005, PILDAT, 2006). However, in 2006 the political reality turned out to be differently. Although there was no direct military takeover, during the period from 11 January 2006 until 6 January 2009, Bangladesh lacked an elected government or a legally acting substitute. Instead, with the help of the military an administration of technocrats was set up that violated all constitutional restrictions on the functioning of a caretaker government.

The caretaker government of 2007-2009 in Bangladesh

Since the introduction of the institution of caretaker government⁸, political parties, due to the excessive politicisation of the country's institutions, have recurrently been in conflict with each other over the formation of these forms of interim administrations (cf. Masum, 2009:4). In 2006 this led to an extremely violent confrontation between supporters of the

⁸ As mentioned above, the institution of caretaker government was introduced in 1996. However, already in 1990 Bangladesh witnessed its first interim government of Acting President Chief Justice Shahabuddin Ahmed (Ahmad, 2005:15-16).

Awami League (AL) and Bangladesh Nationalist Party (BNP) which paralysed the political system (Data, 2010:2; Odhikar, 2009). In consequence, under the directives of the military,⁹ the first caretaker government in 2006 of Iajuddin Ahmed, which faced harsh political resistance, was forced to resign, the scheduled elections were postponed indefinitely, and a second caretaker government under Chief Adviser¹⁰ Fakhruddin Ahmed was installed (Codron, 2007:93). These two facts, the government being set up under a state of emergency -which continued until briefly before the national elections were held in December 2008 (Livsey, 2009)- and the almost two-year tenure which exceeded the constitutional limit of 90 days, provided Ahmed's administration with significant powers. This was especially prevalent due to the fact that Fakhruddin was not acting like the head of a caretaker government (Datta, 2009:18), making key decisions concerning all kinds of crucial policy matters which were beyond the constitutional mandate. In order to elaborate on this more systematically, the article borrows a concept from civil-military relations theory which analytically distinguishes five decision-making areas: elite recruitment, public policy, internal security, national defence, and military organization¹¹. Elite Recruitment defines the rules, criteria and processes of recruiting, selecting and legitimising political office holders, which means the degree of openness of the political processes to competition, and the degree of participation, the inclusiveness of political competition (Dahl, 1971: 4–6). Public Policy comprises the rules and procedures of the processes of policy-making ('agenda-setting', 'policy-formulation', 'policy-adoption') and policy-implementation regarding all national policies except the narrowly understood aspects of security and defence policy.

⁹ The military clearly declined such allegations (Rahman, 2008:14) and then Chief of Army Staff General Moeen U. Ahmed stated: "the present government is not a national government supported by the army. It is an independent, non-partisan caretaker administration" (Reuters, 28.8.2007). However, a statement of the Law and Information Adviser Mainul Hosein can be seen as a confirmation of the strong influence of the armed forces in politics: "our present government is a national government, army-backed government" (Hosein quoted in The Daily Star, 28.8.2007). See also Rahman (2008:1) and The Economist (24.2.2007).

¹⁰ Chief Adviser of a caretaker government is equivalent to the Prime Minister. However, one has to emphasize that he is not elected but appointed by an elected civilian, the President. A caretaker government consists of one Chief Advisor and 10 Advisors.

¹¹ See in detail: Croissant/Kühn/Chambers/Wolf (2011, 2010).

Internal Security entails the decisions and concrete actions regarding the preservation and restoration of domestic law and order, including counterinsurgency operations, counterterrorism and domestic intelligence-gathering, daily law enforcement and border control (Collier, 1999; Trinkunas, 2005). National Defence includes all aspects of defence policy, ranging from the development of security doctrines to the deployment of troops abroad and conduct of war (Alagappa, 2001; Trinkunas, 2005). The area of Military Organisation comprises decisions regarding all organizational aspects of the military institution, including the 'hardware', that is, the military's institutional, financial and technological resources, and the 'software' of military organisation, for instance, decisions on military doctrine, education, and personnel selection (Bland, 2001; Cottey et al, 2002).

To begin with, the mere fact that the army had been able to form an unconstitutional government indicates that there was no institutionalized control over the military regarding elite recruitment, which comprises the processes of selecting, recruiting, and legitimizing political office holders. Furthermore, this government depended heavily on the support of the armed forces which automatically gave the army significant power in all decision-making areas. In other words, soldiers rather than the people defined 'who rules and who decides who rules' (Taylor, 2003:7). Therefore, Bangladesh became 'a de-facto military controlled state' (Fair/Ganguly, 2007:17). This became evident in several measures and proposals by the top brass. Most notable has been Chief of Army Staff (COAS) General Moeen U. Ahamed's understanding of why the Westminster parliamentary type of democracy in Bangladesh failed. This resulted in his suggested solution of forming a 'new political leadership' and also floated the idea for the need of a 'democracy with Bangladeshi characteristics' (Roy, 2013). According to Moeen, Bangladesh's democracy had to be reviewed and the constitution had to be revised (Rahman, 2008:15). Therefore, he promoted the idea of a balanced power-sharing arrangement between the President and Prime Minister which included the notion that the President asserts the right to dismiss

the elected Prime Minister and his cabinet as well as to dissolve the government. As a consequence, this would revoke the achievements regarding the process of democratic transition and formal civilian control, especially through the establishment of a parliamentary system.

Moeen proclaimed that Bangladesh had to develop its own brand of democracy to overcome the country's poor governance: 'We cannot go back to an elective democracy where corruption in society becomes pervasive, government suffers in terms of security and violation of rights and where political criminalisation flattens the very survival and integrity of the state' (The Daily Star, 2.4.2007). Therefore the country not only had to build a new democratic system but also needed a 'new leadership at all levels' (Rahman, 2008:15). To make this new leadership emerge, 'power must be balanced, not tilted towards any family and dynasty' (The New Age, 3.4.2007). In order to operationalize COAS Moeen's vision, it was vital that the military gained decision-making power in internal security. Subsequently, special acts were passed, e.g. Emergency Powers Ordinance 2007 (EPO) and Emergency Powers Rules (EPR), which granted the military extraordinary powers and impunity and led to the suspension of numerous fundamental rights such as the freedom of movement, association, expression and assembly (Odhikar, 2009:5). In consequence, normal political activities were criminalized and public access to information became limited (Livsey, 2009:21). Furthermore, the armed forces gained control over all security forces, since all other security forces, e.g. Bangladesh Rifles (BDR)¹², Rapid Action Battalion (RAB), Police, as well as the intelligence agencies Directorate General of Forces Intelligence (DGFI), National Security Intelligence (NSI) and Special Branch (SB), were operating as joint forces under the leadership of the military. These are clear indications that, with Fakhruddin's takeover of office, the 'military was given power and responsibility for maintaining law and order in the country' (Datta, 2009:16), leading to

¹² Officially renamed into Border Guards Bangladesh on January 23, 2011.

military dominance in internal security.

Regarding Military Organisation and National Defense one has to note, although the Defense Ministry under the constitution became subordinated to the President, real power over it remained with the caretaker government. Given its dependence on the military's good will to remain in office¹³, the President did not exercise his powers to challenge the support of the caretaker government for the armed forces (International Crisis Group, 28.4.2008:16-17). Thus, the armed forces regained its influence over the DGFI, which functioned as a proxy for the armed forces in decision-making and in cooperating with the caretaker government. As such, the DGFI not only became the main driving force behind the government but also the prime decision-maker with almost the 'final say on anything the CTG does' (International Crisis Group, 28.4.2008:16). Both, COAS Moeen and DGFI chief Major General Golam Mohammed did not hesitate to take a public stance on national issues and policies (Codron, 2007:106). Furthermore, the strong influence of the army in decision-making in these areas can be seen in the extraordinary growth of the defence budget for 2008-09. With close to a billion Dollar (Tk 64.08 billion or US\$ 934 million), it was not only 10 billion Takas more than in 2007 and 2008 but it also marked the highest defence allocation in the entire history of the country (Zonaki, 2008; Ilahi, 2008). At the same time this ignored necessary allocations for other state institutions like the judiciary (Zonaki, 2008). Another indicator for the strong influence of the armed forces is the upgrade of the post of the CAS/COAS from a Three-Star to a Four-Star General, and the following promotion of subordinate officers.¹⁴ Furthermore, several retired and active officers were appointed to higher offices in the government and in various public sector institutions (Bhattacharjee, 2010:17, 28; Datta, 2009, 56-57).

However, offering a 'low visible' channel of influence, the use of the DGFI indicates

¹³ Its tenure expired in September 2007, but the army granted him the permission to stay on longer.

¹⁴ E.g. Principal Staff Officer Major General became Lieutenant General, Commandant of National Defense Academy Major General Lieutenant General, and Deputy Director of DGFI, Brigadier General was promoted to Major General (Bhattacharjee, 2010:17, 28).

that the military preferred not to become involved in politics in a too obvious manner. But the armed forces still tried to establish an institutional role for themselves, ensuring that they would have an effective political voice. Therefore, the DGFI facilitated the creation of new institutions, e.g. in March 2007 'National Coordination Committee to Combat Corruption and Serious Crimes' (NCC), in order to build a new political leadership. To ensure the influence of the army, the DGFI placed active-duty and retired military officers in senior posts. For example, all general officers commanding (GOCs) were members of the NCC which was headed by a Major General of the Armed Forces. Furthermore the NCC office was set up at the army's headquarters (Codron, 2007:105; Khalil, 26.9.2007). In fact, this can be seen as an indicator for the strong influence of the armed forces on the NCC and the imbalance of power between military and caretaker government. Similar processes happened not only in the NCC but in other eminent political bodies too, like the Election Commission and the Anti-Corruption Commission (ACC). The latter was headed by a retired army chief. In the absence of an elected Prime Minister, a not-functional Presidency, and the fact that the military-controlled NCC supervised (and commanding) all law-enforcing agencies and was entrusted with special powers over other state agencies, civilian control over the military and security-related public policy issues has appeared to be a total misnomer. This includes non-security related public policy. For example, the caretaker government granted the military increased influence over business activities compared to previous civilian governments, e.g. in 2007 the military took over management of Bangladesh Diesel Plant Ltd and 2008 the state-owned enterprise North Bengal Paper Mill. Furthermore, the army gained leverage in certain lucrative civilian sectors such as the distribution of basic victuals at 'fair prices' (*daal bhaat*) or the Biman Bangladesh Airlines Limited (Bhattacharjee, 2010:2). There is no doubt that the activities of the NCC, ACC and Election Commission under the guidance of the DGFI aimed to prepare the ground for a civilian leadership change in the context of the elections in preparation. Therefore, they

attempted the following strategy: First, to expel the two leaders Begum Khaleda Zia and Sheikh Hasina Wajed from the country, described as 'Minus-Two-Formula'; secondly, the initiative to replace the senior leadership with a more junior generation. Third, to replace 'old' political parties by creating new ones, e.g. with the help of Nobel Laureate Dr. Mohammed Yunus it was intended to build the *Nagorik Sakti* (Citizens Power). However, due to the lack of support from society for an uncertain third force and the strong linkages of the well-established BNP and AL with their supporters at the grassroots level, the military failed (International Crisis Group, 28.4.2008:16-17). Fourth, via the Election Commission, several electoral regulations were issued. For example, a new system for registering of political parties was introduced, which had a significant impact on the ability of political parties to take part in electoral competition. Due to various requirements like the improvement of intra-party democracy and transparency, the number of parties able to take part was reduced from around one hundred to thirty-eight. Another measure was the redrawing of boundaries of close to 45% of the electoral constituencies affecting the electoral prospects of parties. The most crucial activity, carried out directly by the military, was the producing of a reliable voters' list (which included the elimination of 12 million fake voters) and the introduction of a national identity card to avoid electoral fraud.¹⁵ Fifth, an anti-corruption drive was inaugurated. Due to the fact that plans to exile Hasina and Zia did not work out, the NCC used corruption charges to remove them from the political landscape (Datta, 2009:28-31). Therefore, the joint forces launched a clean-up operation against the party organisation of both, the AL and the BNP. The plan was to break down the power base of Hasina and Zia in order to marginalise them in the political landscape of Bangladesh (Habib, 2007). To sum up, as the military intervened at a time of the deepest political crisis after 1990 to 'protect democratic norms' it was initially welcomed by civil

¹⁵ See for more details Bangladesh Election Commission, Project: Preparation of Electoral Roll with Photographs and Facilitating the Issuance of National Identity (ID) Card, http://www.ecs.gov.bd/English/MenuTemplate1.php?Parameter_MenuID=56&ByDate=0&Year=.Devin.

society (Pattanaik, 2010:12). In order to avoid isolation and condemnation (Data, 2010:3) by Bangladesh's donors, a power-sharing between the military and technocrats (non-elected civilians) was arranged and negotiated with the international community, including an extra-constitutional two-year window. However, besides some achievements which were positively perceived (e.g. ID cards and fixed voters list), the caretaker government failed to achieve most of its major aims. This was because of consumer price inflation¹⁶, national catastrophes, and external shocks like the economic crisis of 2008 which put pressure on the regime. In consequence, the society, political parties and their support bases (especially associated students, youth and labour organisations) were increasingly demanding the return to electoral democracy and the restoration of civilian rule (Muni, 2009:7). This was an essential change, since until then no one really opposed the caretakers (International Crisis Group, 28.4.2008 & 11.12.2008). Additionally, the judiciary felt encouraged to start challenging the caretakers' legitimacy. The frequent outbursts of popular anger furthermore forced external actors to promote elections without any further delays, the withdrawal of the state of emergency and to distance themselves from the military-backed government (Livsey, 2009, 26; Datta, 2009:43). In addition to that, sections of society that were co-opted by soldiers (like business people/industrialist or media) were withdrawing their support. Differences between the election commission and the army became more apparent, e.g. about the scheduling of the elections. Ultimately, it became increasingly difficult to implement reforms, which was most obvious in the failed attempt to create a National Security Council (Islam, 2008). A successful implementation would define the most far-reaching institutional role in the country's decision-making process for the military. But serious concerns among politicians, civil society and media about potential ambitions of the COAS to assume the office of President and as such be in charge of the most significant decision-making body for all security-related issues, raised vehement

¹⁶ Especially rice, which has soared 60-80% (Tharoor, 2008).

resistance against this proposal. The fact that the caretaker government was supporting this idea aggravated such critics. Consequently, the COAS had to give up this vision. Realizing that the caretaker administration was unable to attract any real domestic and international appeal, at the end of 2008, the armed forces reluctantly gave in to new elections.

Conclusion

Despite the misuse of the caretaker government, Bangladesh was able to contain the unrestricted struggle between the two leading political camps AL and BNP, self-interest of civilian leadership, creating chaos and anarchy in a dysfunctional political party system. At least temporarily, the military-backed interim administration was able to restore a certain kind of stability and subsequently maintained Bangladesh's status as an electoral democracy, as proved in the 2008 index of free and fair elections (Freedom House, 2010). But one has also to state that this was accompanied by extraordinary violations of fundamental rights of the citizenry. In the context of the military-organized 'clean-up' of the political landscape, around 200,000 people were arrested under charges of political or financial corruption (Momen, 2009:69). At the same time, extraordinary human rights violations by the security forces were reported. However, the persistent and widespread use of preventive detention without charge or trial, numbers of extra-judicial killings and tortures etc. is not new for the Bangladeshis. But the fact that immunity for the violation of civil rights through the law enforcement personnel was more or less officially granted was a new dimension which will remain as serious aberration in the future process of democratic consolidation (cf. Amnesty International, 2008). By assessing this, one has also to mention that the caretaker government did not help to strengthen civilian institutions. In other words, the military created a situation in which the civilian institutions were able to

carry out their basic function but remained weak. Furthermore, instead of forming a so called 'new political leadership', the caretakers were hindering the political parties as well as civil societies to generate qualified leadership. Last but not least, since the caretaker government got appointed with the support by the military and did not feel the need to act according the civic consent. In contrast, the individual preferences and will of the people got ignored in the political decision-making. In other words, there was neither any responsiveness nor accountability of the caretakers towards the Bangladeshi people. In result, the ability and openness of Bangladesh's political system and the country's leading political elite to accommodate the citizens interests got severe truncated.

By observing and evaluating the latest Bangladesh caretaker government - besides religious fundamentalism and nationalism- 'technocracy' must be seen as one of the major challenges for liberalism in South Asia, especially in Bangladesh and Pakistan. Therefore, it does not come by surprise that the current democratically elected government in Bangladesh abandoned the old concept of caretaker government. Hence, today Bangladesh remains a fragile democracy.

To sum up, being confronted with such an experience, the anti-democratic forces in Pakistan have to understand that the 'magical incantations' of 'technocracy' are nonsense. No technocratic (interims) government is superior to a democratic government in a long term perspective. Beside very few remarkable achievements of the latest caretaker government in Dhaka, most of their policies and actions were not sustainable. In Pakistan, the latest military government showed that the soldiers are not much better than the civilians when it comes to good governance. The military, as soon as they act substantially outside their core business –i.e. defending the country– acts as venal, chaotic and self-interested like politicians. Finally, one should recall that a technocratic caretaker government clearly lacks a democratic mandate (Shain/Linz, 1992). Even if the performance of an elected government is pathetic, military and associated technocrats

have to realise that the 'people representatives' have the right to make mistakes. This is because only a popularly chosen government assumes legitimate power and has the right to govern.

To conclude, the paths to democracy are numerous and diverse but a technocratic caretaker government as suggested by Qadri and other anti-systemic-forces is without doubt the wrong way. However, until the elections are not carried out, there is still no guarantee, if the actual caretaker government and the establishment will 'make or break' the chances for a future democratic scenario for Pakistan.

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