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Author(s): Farhan Hanif Siddiqi

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General Elections in Pakistan 2013: The Consolidation of Democracy?

Farhan Hanif Siddiqi

*Warning voices sometimes tell me that Pakistan is not ready for the democratic process. I can only reply that then Pakistan is not ready at all; for there is no alternative way of bringing about rapport between authority and people, no other avenue to national fulfillment.*¹ (Huseyn Shaheed Suhrawardy, 1957)

Introduction

Huseyn Shaheed Suhrawardy's remarks ring true even today. The proverbial question still plagues the Pakistani polity: is it ready for democracy or is it not? This question is further probed by those who question democracy in Pakistan itself and ask: does Pakistan actually need democracy or are military dictatorships more conducive to the political, social and economic development of Pakistan? That there is a disconcerting disdain with democracy and democratic procedures in Pakistan lies both at the elite and the level of the masses. Democracy and democratic governments are seen as embodiments of corruption, inefficiency and nepotism where the political institutions fail to deliver and the economic growth of the country is inhibited due to rampant corruption, kickbacks and shady deals. The opponents of democracy regard democracy as purposefully inhibiting and hence put faith in political orders where a modicum of stability (and even authority) is manifest. In such a political system, democracy is more controlled and restrained and the issue is not to have democracy but rather good governance. The disconnect is then obvious: democracy in Pakistan has never and will never ensure good governance because politicians and political parties strive for personal, and not, public gains. Good governance in Pakistan is only possible with an authoritative political system (resembling a benign dictatorship) where technocrats could drive the essential levers of Pakistan's political system, most importantly, its economy.

Dr. Farhan Hanif Siddiqi is Assistant Professor, Department of International Relations, University of Karachi.

¹ Huseyn Shaheed Suhrawardy, 'Political stability and democracy in Pakistan', *Foreign Affairs*, Vol. 35, No. 3 (Apr. 1957), pp. 424-5.

A normative tone underlines the present article. This normative tone is appreciative of political processes and democratic procedures, the strengthening of which is seen as strengthening the political stability and vitality of the Pakistani state. On the other hand, military governments and interference are seen as an essential hindrance to political stability. It is argued that democracy and democratic procedures work and endure best when practised. If denied the opportunity to sustain itself through frequent military interventions and behind-the-scene machinations, democracy and democratic procedures will remain weak and retarded.

It is in this sense that the present elections in Pakistan are remarkable. The elections follow two that were held in 2002 and 2008 after governments that came to power during these elections completed their terms in office. This is a no nonsense achievement in the case of Pakistan where only once did a political party complete its full term in office, that is, Zulfikar Ali Bhutto's government from 1972 until 1977. The elections, thus, are remarkable also for the fact that they signal a very incipient move towards the consolidation of democracy in Pakistan. The present article will broach this argument by way of assessing why democracy failed in Pakistan and what are the reasons for optimism regarding its consolidation. In the pages that follow, it will try to explicate the fact that though the military has been the ultimate determinant of Pakistani politics and politicians and political parties have more generally played to their tune, this does not in anyway discredit political parties and politicians as unimportant actors within the Pakistani political system.

Defining democracy: Minimalist (electoral) and maximalist (liberal) conceptions of democracy

Two popular conceptions exist in the theoretical literature about democracy and its underpinnings. The first conception is associated with what is a minimal (electoral) conception compared with a maximalist (liberal) undertaking. For the former, democracy is a system whereby citizens elect a government into power consisting of people's representatives who are, in turn, accountable to the electorate. The maximalist position, on the other hand, goes beyond mere elections to argue that democracy as a form of government is more substantive and that it does not merely involve elections and the electorate but a set of liberties and freedoms that the people are supposed to enjoy irrespective of any socio-economic and socio-political differences prevailing within society.

What is a democracy? Joseph Schumpeter is supportive of a minimalist conception of democracy and is critical of the classical 18th

century understanding of democracy according to which, 'the democratic method is that institutional arrangement for arriving at political decisions which realises the common good by making the people itself decide issues through the election of individuals who are to assemble in order to carry out its will.'² Schumpeter problematises the notion of the 'common good' of the people by arguing that the notion itself is conceived as prior to the system of election whereby elected officials are brought into the government. Simply stated, the classic doctrine of democracy is bent on the assumption that in a democracy the citizens possess a collective notion of a 'common good' which is then instrumentalized in the election of people's representatives who are chosen primarily so that the 'common good' is realized. Schumpeter argued that there is 'no such thing as a uniquely determined common good that all people could agree on or be made to agree on by the force of rational argument.'³ This is so because of the 'fundamental fact that to different individuals and groups the common good is bound to mean different things.'⁴ Abandoning the classical definition of democracy and its emphasis on the 'general will' of the people, Schumpeter makes the element of electing people's representatives as the cornerstone of his understanding of democracy. According to such an understanding, 'the democratic method is that institutional arrangement for arriving at political decisions in which individuals acquire the power to decide by means of a competitive struggle for the people's vote.'⁵

Adam Przeworski provides a cogent defence of the minimalist conception of democracy by linking the conception of democracy with peaceful resolution of conflicts assuming, in essence, that all societies are riven by conflicts of a political, economic, cultural or moral nature. Democracy is better because 'the mere possibility of being able to change governments can avoid violence' and that 'being able to do it by voting has consequences of its own.'⁶ Przeworski puts emphasis on voting but at the same time lays emphasis on political forces to obey with volition the election results. That is, one political force assumes its position in power while the other accepts its defeat (and also the fact that people have not chosen them) and waits for the next elections with the hope that it is elected into power at the expense of the incumbents. This is what makes

² Joseph Schumpeter, 'Capitalism, socialism, and democracy' in Robert Dahl, Ian Shapiro and Jose Antonio Cheibub (eds.), *The Democracy Sourcebook* (Cambridge Massachusetts: MIT Press, 2003), p.5.

³ *Ibid.*, p.6.

⁴ *Ibid.*

⁵ *Ibid.*, p.9.

⁶ Adam Przeworski, 'Minimalist Conception of Democracy: A Defense' in *ibid.*, p.13.

democracy endure and is credited as 'the miracle of democracy that conflicting political forces obey the results of voting...Incumbents risk their control of governmental offices by holding elections. Losers wait for their chance to win office. Conflicts are regulated, processed according to rules, and thus limited. This is not consensus, yet not mayhem either. Just limited conflict; conflict without killing.'⁷ Besides voting and elections, Przeworski also puts into contention three additional caveats including economic, political and institutional factors which are essential if democracy is to survive within a country: '(1) democracies are more likely to survive in wealthy countries (countries with a per capita income of less than \$6000 are prone to experience phases of democracy while countries above \$6000 last forever); (2) they are more likely to last when no single political force dominates; and (3) they are more likely to endure when voters can choose rulers through elections.'⁸

Larry Diamond brings in normative considerations by focusing on the notion of 'liberty' as the sine qua non of a democratic state.⁹ Diamond defines liberty or 'the term *liberal* to mean a political system in which individual and group liberties are well protected and in which there exist autonomous spheres of civil society and private life, insulated from state control.'¹⁰ Moving further than the electoral, minimalist conception of *representative democracy* provided for by Schumpeter and Przeworski, Diamond stakes a claim for the notion of *liberal democracy*. The idea of liberal democracy is closely associated with that of human rights and entails the 'freedoms of the individual to think, believe, worship, speak, publish, inquire, associate, and become informed, and the freedoms from torture, arbitrary arrest, and unlawful detention as well as enslavement and genocide.'¹¹ In an important departure from the notion of electoral or representative democracy, Diamond argues persuasively that electoral democracy does not necessarily entail a liberal democracy. Diamond is critical of the Schumpeterian understanding of democracy for it leaves open the possibility that multiparty elections may be limited to citizens who are recognized as legitimate persons of the state and leaves out minorities or strictly debars them from contesting elections or attending to their legitimate interests.

Only liberal democracy has the propensity to cater to the interests of the society as a whole but, for that to transpire, three conditions are

⁷ Ibid., p.16.

⁸ Ibid.

⁹ Larry Diamond, 'Defining and Developing Democracy' in *The Democracy Sourcebook*, p.29.

¹⁰ Ibid.

¹¹ Ibid., p.30.

essential in prompting the establishment of a genuine liberal democracy: a) the political arena should be constitutive of only those people who are accountable to the electorate. This brings forth the condition that the military and other similar actors do not have a say in the political process; b) the political elite at the very top should not only be accountable to the electorate but should also have horizontal accountability in which a system of checks and balances ensures the responsibility of institutions to one another. This constrains one pillar of the state from becoming all too powerful; c) an elaborate provision for individual and group freedoms that are protected through the rule of law. Most importantly, such individual groups and freedoms exist irrespective of caste, class, gender or creed and are facilitated 'through ongoing processes of articulation and representation, beyond periodic elections.'¹²

Stepan and Linz bring into contention the concept of 'consolidated democracies.' Consolidated democracies endure and persist only when three minimal conditions prevail: a) the first condition relates to the existence of a state. The argument is that a state is needed with its authoritarian (albeit legal as argued by Weber) features which ensures that citizens' rights are protected, that all elections are held accordingly under the framework of a legitimate law which only the state can provide for. Hence, 'no state, no democracy'; b) a second condition relates to the processes of democratic transition which means simply that free and contested elections are held which ensure a smooth transition of power; c) third, 'no regime should be called a democracy unless its rulers govern democratically.' Regimes are not democracies if the leaders 'infringe the constitution, violate the rights of individuals and minorities, impinge upon the legitimate functions of the legislature, and thus fail to rule within the bounds of a state of law.'¹³

Assessing Stepan and Linz, one may conclude that the concept of 'consolidated democracies' includes both electoral and liberal features of democracy, although with an additional caveat, which relates to the existence of the state. The state is supposed to provide overall protection, authority and legality to its citizens without which democracy cannot function. For example, if the conflict over the state and its authority is widespread amongst the *demos*, the state's capability and capacity to provide for effective governance will be compromised. Once this comes about and governance, in essence, is compromised, an illegitimate polity comes into existence characterized by electoral fraud and corruption and

¹² Ibid., p.35.

¹³ Juan J. Linz and Alfred Stepan, 'Toward Consolidated Democracies,' *Journal of Democracy* 7, No. 2, April 1996, pp.14-15.

with it a big question mark over the legitimacy of political elites as rulers of the country. Democracy, in such a milieu, is a mere farce and it is in this sense that the state is essential to the effective functioning of democracy. Furthermore, elections are necessary but not sufficient and democracy can be credited as such only if the rulers adhere to the constitution and do not usurp the rights of individuals and minorities.

Democracy in Pakistan: Reasons for failure

Generally, academics and political commentators have presented a pessimistic account of the probable consolidation of democracy in Pakistan. What follows is an overview of such accounts and the reasons which signal a change in political culture and participatory politics in Pakistan in the 21st century. However, before embarking on a detailed assessment of the state and future of democracy in Pakistan, a brief mention of the tense dialectic between the military establishment and politicians must be made. More often than not, the military establishment is thought of as the ultimate mover and shaper of Pakistani politics while politicians are considered subservient and silent spectators with no real power of their own. A quick look at Prime Minister Mohammad Khan Junejo's government in power, considered to be one of the weakest governments in Pakistan's political history, will demonstrate why this is not the case.

After holding party-less elections in 1985, General Zia-ul-Haq introduced sweeping changes in the 1973 Constitution, including the insertion of Article 41 (7) that allowed him to hold the office of the president as well as that of Chief of Army Staff (COAS).¹⁴ Zia also reserved for himself the power to dismiss the elected government as president through Article 58 (2) (b), if he was of the firm view that the federal government could not be carried on in accordance with the Constitution and an appeal to the electorate was necessary.¹⁵ It is interesting to note that despite such political and constitutional safeguards, including a supposedly weak and docile government and prime minister, as subsequent events and performance of the government proved, Zia was not entirely dominant within the new political setup. The government, under Prime Minister Mohammad Khan Junejo, challenged some of the important precepts not only of Zia's domestic policy, but also his foreign policy. Though Junejo was supposed to be a lackey of Zia and was probably picked because of his docility, he asserted himself within

¹⁴ Saeed Shafqat, *Civil-Military Relations in Pakistan: From Zulfikar Ali Bhutto to Benazir Bhutto* (Boulder: Westview Press, 1997), p. 213.

¹⁵ Hasan-Askari Rizvi, *Military, State and Society in Pakistan* (London: Macmillan Press, 2000), p. 186.

the political system and this became a cause of his eventual dismissal in May 1988. The political process was undoubtedly on a collision course with the bureaucratic-military establishment. Stated below are some of the points of conflict between the president and prime minister:

- In July 1986, Prime Minister Junejo after his successful visit to the United States, replaced Major General Naik Mohammad as Director, Intelligence Bureau without informing Zia and appointed a civilian, Aslam Hayat, as his successor.¹⁶
- During the same year, 1986, Junejo removed Mahbub-ul-Haq and Attiya Inayatullah (Zia's protégés) from their cabinet posts and appointed Yasin Wattoo, a former PPP leader and minister as finance minister. He also refused extensions of tenure to General K.M. Arif and General Rahimuddin, close associates of Zia, and played a key role in the selection of Mirza Aslam Beg as Vice COAS.¹⁷
- In November 1987, Junejo unceremoniously removed Lt. (Retd.) General Sahibzada Yaqub Khan as foreign minister (another Zia protégé) and appointed Zain Noorani as minister of state for foreign affairs. Junejo appointed Lt. General (Retd.) Majeed Malik, the Chairman of the Public Accounts Committee of the parliament to head the Federal Anti-Corruption Committee and also spoke enthusiastically about reducing defence expenditure.¹⁸
- In 1987, during his budget speech, Junejo did the unimaginable and unthinkable when he referred to the generals of the Pakistan Army as 'royal people.' Criticizing the generals for the fact that the Soviet invasion of Afghanistan had made them rich, Junejo said that 'we will put the Generals in Suzuki cars.'¹⁹
- Lastly, and most importantly, Junejo called an All Parties Conference on the Afghanistan issue to garner support for his stated objective of ending the war in Afghanistan and also to pursue the peace process in Geneva. He sent Minister of State

¹⁶ Saeed Shafqat, op. cit., p. 216.

¹⁷ Ibid.

¹⁸ Ibid., pp. 216-217.

¹⁹ Quoted in Rasul B. Rais, 'Pakistan in 1987: Transition to Democracy', *Asian Survey*, Vol. 28, No. 2, Feb. 1988, p. 131.

for Foreign Affairs Zain Noorani to sign the Geneva Accords, apparently without the consent of the President. Zia believed that this amounted to trivializing the sacrifices of the Afghan Mujahideen.²⁰

The above facts prove that Junejo was no underdog within the political system engineered by Zia himself. Junejo, as prime minister, was assertive and took decisions which irked Zia and the military establishment. In instituting changes within the command structure of the intelligence agencies as well as removing ministers loyal to Zia, Junejo proved that the government was a whole lot more than a mere puppet of the military establishment. The government was proactive and vibrant enough to dictate to Zia its stance on the Geneva Accords and its eventual dismissal in May 1988 proves that Zia feared that if the political process was allowed to run its course, it could well prove disastrous to his military-dominated regime.

This aspect of civil-military relations in the recent literature is rather under- explored and under-emphasized. In a most recent article on Pakistan, two seminal experts on Pakistan, C. Christine Fair and Sumit Ganguly argue that the failure of democratic consolidation in Pakistan has to do with 'the failure of civilian democratic institutions to fully abandon authoritarianism even when the military is not in power.'²¹ Furthermore, 'throughout the period of democracy in the 1990s, the political parties were willing to use the army to undermine their opponents, prorogue the parliament and bring about early elections.'²² In a similar vein, Shafqat argues that the greatest stumbling block in democratic development has been the contradictory behaviour and attitude of Pakistani political leaders and elites.²³ Shafqat lambasts the political elites, for they struggled for democracy but once entrenched in power, 'strengthened authoritarian attitudes rather than promote democratic norms, flout rule of law and defy tolerance of any political opposition.'²⁴ In addition, Shafqat argues that the disappointment is not with democracy as a form of government but with the conduct and

²⁰ Ibid., p. 217.

²¹ Sumit Ganguly and C. Christine Fair, 'The structural origins of authoritarianism in Pakistan,' *Commonwealth and Comparative Politics*, Vol. 51, No. 1, 2013, p. 124.

²² Ibid., p. 138.

²³ Saeed Shafqat, 'Democracy in Pakistan: Value Changing and Challenges of Institution Building,' *The Pakistan Development Review*, Vol. 37, No. 2, Winter 1998, p. 283.

²⁴ Ibid., p. 284.

behaviour of parliamentarians and political parties who are expected to make democracy work.²⁵

In contrast to Shafqat, Waseem puts forth the overweening influence of the army as a key determinant of Pakistan's political development and the resultant inhibition of democracy in the country. However, interestingly, Waseem then turns attention towards the dichotomy between constitutional and military politics by pointing to a paradoxical tendency within Pakistan by arguing that 'a military government is in some respects a constitutional government.'²⁶ The reasoning behind this statement, according to Waseem, is that in Pakistan 'all the four military governments sought to keep the prevalent constitutional set-up intact, with the exception of those articles and clauses which related to the elective principle in one way or another.'²⁷

Lieven believes that Pakistan's political future is tied with the army and that 'any effective and lasting Pakistani government, of whatever political complexion, has to include the army as a de facto partner in power.'²⁸ Lieven sees this phenomenon as essentially inhibiting in the consolidation of democracy- hence his preference for the term 'civilian government'- because the 'army will remain the single most important institution in Pakistani society.'²⁹ Hoffman takes into regard structural factors including the role of the military in the non-establishment of democracy in Pakistan and views Pakistani democracy as a form of 'temporary democracy'- a democratic regime that only comes into existence because the outgoing authoritarian regime knows that it is unlikely to survive.³⁰ Analyzing the formation of democratic governments in Pakistan in the 1990s through a rational-choice approach, Hoffman argues that the military allowed for democracy and democratization because of a 'short and long-term cost-benefit analysis in which rational elites chose to temporarily disengage from politics, knowing that they would have ample opportunity to return to political life later.'³¹ The short-term costs involved the military extricating itself from political processes while long-term benefits impinged upon the fact that the

²⁵ Ibid.

²⁶ Mohammad Waseem, 'Causes of democratic downslide,' *Economic and Political Weekly*, Vol. 37, No. 44/45, Nov. 2-15, 2002, p. 4534.

²⁷ Ibid.

²⁸ Anatol Lieven, 'Pakistan's surprising stability,' *Asian Affairs*, Vol. 39, No. 1, 2008, p. 63.

²⁹ Ibid.

³⁰ Michael Hoffman, 'Military extrication and temporary democracy: The case of Pakistan,' *Democratization*, Vol. 18, No. 1, February 2011, p. 76.

³¹ Ibid., p. 78.

military was in control of political processes and calculated the failure of political governments to govern which 'would eventually create an environment in which much of the Pakistani public would actually hope, and perhaps even ask, for the military to return to politics.'³²

Diamond invokes structural conditions including ethnic and sectarian heterogeneity, weak institutionalization leading to crime, destabilizing law and order as well as a weak economy, all militating against the establishment of democracy in Pakistan.³³ Akbar Zaidi presents a sociological analysis of why democracy has failed to take roots in Pakistan and argues that democracy in Pakistan is improbable because the middle classes, the vanguard of the revolution and liberal democracy generally, display a conservative tendency in that they have considerable access to the state and the nexus of power in Pakistan. This implies that they do not have a need for democracy and accountability because their perceived self-interest in terms of guaranteeing socio-economic benefits to their own class is safeguarded through the state structure, whether authoritarian or democratic. Zaidi further argues that the military tends to dominate state, society and politics in Pakistan, because of the failure of civil society in Pakistan.³⁴ According to him, 'Pakistan's civil society has had a key role in strengthening and supporting military government in Pakistan at the cost of democracy. Members of the intelligentsia and academics in Pakistan have done no better and have had no qualms in supporting military rule in preference to Pakistani style dysfunctional democracy. Unlike many other countries, in Pakistan, civil society actors and groups have been collaborationists, not confrontationalists, working with military governments, not against them.'³⁵

So, who is to blame for the failure of democracy in Pakistan? Is it the military's rational actor choice or strategy (Hoffman), the army's centrality as an institution of governance and control (Lieven), the failure of politicians (Ganguly, Fair, Shafqat) or the role of the conservative middle class (Zaidi)? The crux of the problem has to do with the nature of the relationship between the military and governmental elites. If one accedes to the argument that military intervention in political processes caused the failure of democracy then the accompanying role of politicians and political parties who legitimized military rule or instrumentalized

³² Ibid., p. 85.

³³ Larry Diamond, 'Is Pakistan the (reverse) wave of the future?', *Journal of Democracy*, Vol. 11, No. 3, July 2000.

³⁴ S. Akbar Zaidi, 'State, Military and Social Transition: Improbable Future of Democracy in Pakistan', *Economic and Political Weekly*, Vol. 40, No. 49 (Dec. 3-9, 2005), p. 5178.

³⁵ Ibid.

the military to entrench themselves in power, as in the 1990s, cannot be ruled out. If one blames the politicians, then their autonomous decisions (as witnessed during Junejo's government in the 1980s and also in the 1990s) were essentially checked by the army disallowing the politicians with a measure of autonomy and independence. More than blaming one institution or the other, it is imperative if one concentrates on the 'nature' of the relationship between the army and politicians. As the current elections and recent developments in Pakistan indicate, important changes are affecting Pakistan's polity, specifically the relationship between the politicians and the military and between the politicians themselves and it is to these changes that we now turn attention.

Democracy in Pakistan: Prospects for consolidation

Considering the above-stated theory of democracy, and evaluating it as it exists in Pakistan, provides for an interesting analysis and a sense of optimism regarding its eventual consolidation. Starting with Schumpeter and his conception of a minimalist democracy where people's vote decides who comes into power and who does not, Pakistan conforms to this facet of democracy. Elections are being held now and they have been held previously in order to determine people's choices. However, the timing of elections has been the most important challenge for Pakistani democracy. In the 1990s, after elections were held, no government completed its five-year term in office. This phenomenon underwent a radical and much needed change in the 2000s when elections resulted in the formation of new governments which then completed their five-year term in office.

The 2000s also identify a significant change in the democratic processes and political culture of Pakistan in another sense. This has to do with what Przeworski states is the assumption of power by one political party and the other accepting its defeat and sitting in the opposition. In the 1990s, party politics and political culture revolved around destabilizing the incumbent government by the party in opposition by developing close ties with the military establishment. This destabilization entailed the dismissal of the government through presidential power as bestowed by way of Article 58 (2) (b). In following such a political practice, political parties themselves disavowed democracy and parliamentary politics by concentrating on short-term gains (bringing themselves into power by playing their part in dismissing the incumbent government) rather than long-term costs (entrenching the military in the political processes of the country). Opposition parties in the 2000s and their general orientation, especially since 2008, have been more tolerant and against the politics of destabilization of elected governments in collusion with the military establishment. The remarkable near consensus demonstrated by all political parties when

Tahir-ul-Qadri marched on the capital with his supporters, demanding change, was exemplary. As rumour mills churned and grinded to great effect to put forth the possibility of the removal of the PPP government, all political parties preferred to keep faith in elections determining the fate of the PPP government rather than mobilization of the people through long marches. This attests to a major change in the orientation of political parties which was not evident in the 1990s and may be considered as largely positive for the consolidation of democracy and democratic processes.

To summarize then, the general elections of 2013 provide for a changed political culture and reasons for optimism which may be stated as follows:

- The support of the army for politicians and electoral processes so that a peaceful change of government takes place as decided by the people rather than the president (through the now defunct Article 58 (2) (b)) or the army through a military coup.
- An assertive judiciary and Election Commission which has gone to new lengths to ensure that the candidates have the necessary minimum qualification(s) to contest elections.
- An assertive print and electronic media which has made repeated calls for the continuation and consolidation of democracy through its support for elections.
- The mobilization of new political parties and forces, including Imran Khan's Tehreek-e-Insaf, which attests to the broadening of Pakistan's political party base and the injection of a new political force to challenge traditional political parties, the PPP and PML (N).
- Moderate Baloch nationalists who boycotted the polls in 2008 have now decided to take part in the elections, most importantly Sardar Akhtar Mengal and his Balochistan National Party (Mengal) group. This bodes well for the democratic processes in Balochistan as it brings disgruntled Baloch nationalists into the political mainstream. The present elections, in this sense, provide a major impetus to move things forward in Balochistan in contrast to developments under General Musharraf where Balochistan was coerced into subservience through a policy of military repression and outright use of force, high negatives for social cohesion and stability in Pakistan.

Conclusion

The challenge for the consolidation of democracy goes deeper than the mere holding of elections. Elections are a *sine qua non* for stability but electoral democracy has to be complemented in more ways than one with liberal democracy. This ensures that people do not merely have the right to choose their leaders but also are upholders of rights and freedoms as guaranteed to them by the state. Furthermore, democracy in Pakistan has to contend with the dynamics of a stable, workable relationship between the civilian and military sectors of the Pakistani state. This is most essential to the sustenance and survivability of democracy in Pakistan and it is this element that one needs to work out for democratic consolidation here. In this regard, one could allude to the changed role of the military in Latin American countries and Turkey where the military prefers leaving governance to the civilians, even if they disagree with them.³⁶

It would be too early to place optimism on the current elections and then deduce that democracy is being consolidated in Pakistan. The answer to the question, is democracy being consolidated in Pakistan by way of the present elections, would still be very qualified, also reluctant, yes. The elections present a good opportunity to the coming incumbent to do better in terms of performance and delivery than the previous government. If they were to do so, people's faith in democracy would be restored. If not, this would continue to fester discontent at the level of the masses with army intervention and subversion of democracy becoming a real possibility in the future. Since there is no essential period of functioning democracy (with positive results) that people can think of, the only relevant perceived era of affluence and prosperity is ascribed to military rule. This contrasts with what should happen in a parliamentary, presidential or semi-presidential democracy. Here the onus of good governance is not placed at the helm of the military elite, rather people often hark back to an earlier era where an alternative politician or political party ruled which is then seen as better than the existing one.

The consolidation of democracy in Pakistan is increasingly tied with the development of such a state of affairs, both at the ideational level and more concretely in the realm of policy making and practice. The present elections and their aftermath provide a historical opportunity for the development of such a trend in Pakistan's chequered political system

³⁶ David Pion-Berlin, 'Turkish civil-military relations: A Latin American comparison,' *Turkish Studies*, Vol. 12, No. 2, June 2011, p. 294.

since independence. Whether or not this transpires depends on the magnanimity of ruling elites (both political and military) to devise ways and means of working in collusion with each other in order to ensure the political, social and economic stability of a polity which is now dubbed as a 'failing' or 'failed' state.