

The era of Pervez Musharraf, also known as the Musharraf regime, spanned from October 12, 1999, to August 18, 2008, during which he served as the President of Pakistan. This period witnessed significant political, economic, and social changes, as well as numerous events that shaped Pakistan's trajectory. Here's a detailed short note on the Musharraf era, highlighting both positive and negative aspects:

1. Coup d'état and assumption of power:
 - Date: October 12, 1999.
 - General Pervez Musharraf, the Chief of Army Staff, overthrew the government of Prime Minister Nawaz Sharif in a bloodless coup.
 - Musharraf declared a state of emergency and assumed the role of Chief Executive.
2. Constitutional amendments and consolidation of power:
 - In April 2000, Musharraf promulgated the 17th Amendment, which altered the Constitution, allowing him to hold the office of President while remaining the Chief of Army Staff.
 - He consolidated power by dismissing and replacing various civilian officials and appointing a National Security Council.

The article 58-2B was reintroduced that increased the power of the President to dismiss the provincial governments.

3. National Referendum 2002

Some political parties opposed it which included: PPP, PML(N), ANP, and MQM.

Some parties supported the referendum: PTI, and PAT

Despite of opposition Musharraf won the referendum.

4. Kargil conflict with India:

- Date: May to July 1999 (prior to Musharraf's assumption of power).
- The Kargil conflict took place in the disputed region of Kashmir, with Pakistan supporting infiltrating troops.
- The conflict ended in a military stalemate, leading to international condemnation and strained relations with India.

5. Agra Summit

As a result of the Kargil clash the relations between India and Pakistan was strained. Indian Prime minister Atal Bihari invited Pervez Musharraf for a dialogue.

Pervez Musharraf started dialogue with Atal Bihari on 14th August 2001.

They discussed the cooperation on trade, visa restriction, exchange of technology.

Pervaiz Musharraf demanded that no peace and no agreement could be reached in between the two countries if the Kashmir issue has not been taken into account.

The talks failed on this point.

6.Economic reforms and liberalization:

- Musharraf pursued economic reforms, including deregulation, privatization, and attracting foreign investment.
- These measures led to significant economic growth, with the GDP averaging around 7% during his tenure.
- Poverty and unemployment rates declined, and the IT and telecom sectors experienced notable advancements.

7.War on terror

On 9th September 2001, The World trade center and Pentagon were attacked through the hijacked plane. USA held Osama Bin Laden responsible for the attacks and demanded the Taliban regime in Afghanistan to hand him over to them.

Taliban government had rejected the allegation of USA

On 7th October, USA along with Britain invaded Afghanistan.

President Bush called Musharraf to ask that whether he is with him or on the side of the Taliban regime. Musharraf sided with USA.

The USA and Pakistan agreed that Pakistan would share the intelligence, provide the bases in Pakistan to launch attacks in Afghanistan, and provide logistical support. The religious parties opposed the decision of the Musharraf regime for taking the side of USA. Demonstrations were held at Peshawar and Quetta.

8.State of emergency and suspension of judiciary:

- Date: November 3, 2007.
- Musharraf declared a state of emergency, suspended the constitution, and dismissed several Supreme Court judges, including Chief Justice Iftikhar Muhammad Chaudhry.
- This move triggered widespread protests from lawyers, political parties, and civil society organizations.

9.Removal of Chief Justice Iftikhar Muhammad Chaudhry:

- Date: March 9, 2007.
- President Musharraf attempted to remove Chief Justice Iftikhar Muhammad Chaudhry from his position.
- The move was met with widespread public protests, with supporters of the Chief Justice demanding his restoration.
- The legal and political standoff escalated, leading to a significant challenge to Musharraf's authority and judicial independence in Pakistan.

The removal of Chief Justice Iftikhar Muhammad Chaudhry triggered a major political crisis in Pakistan, galvanizing the judiciary, lawyers, and civil society. It became a pivotal moment in the struggle for the rule of law and judicial independence in the country. The movement demanding the restoration of the Chief Justice gained significant public support and set the stage for subsequent political developments during the Musharraf era.

10. Charter of Democracy

Benazir and Nawaz Sharif were in exile. They met in London and signed charter of Democracy. The charter was aimed to promote democracy and eliminate the influence of the army in the politics of Pakistan.

Benazir arrived in Pakistan on 18th October 2007, she was attacked on the day she arrived. The suicide attack at her rally killed almost 150 people. Musharaf declared emergency in Pakistan due to increase suicide bombings on the government and military institutions. The constitution was suspended.

The terrorist activity was increasing due to which Musharaf launched operation against Lal Masjid and its supporters in Swat.

Nawaz Sharif also returned from exile on 25th November 2007 with the mediation of Saudi king.

Musharaf abdicated from the post of Chief of army staff and General Ashfaq Pervaiz Kiyani became the new army chief.

11. General Elections

The general elections were scheduled to be held on January 2008, but due to the assassination of Benazir Bhutto it was delayed. The opposition started to demand the restoration of the judiciary and Musharaf to step down.

The PPP won major seats in three provinces of Baluchistan, Sindh, and Punjab. In NWFP ANP won majority.

12.The long March of Lawyers

On 17th May 2008, The Lawyers gathered in Lahore to discuss the restoration of the chief justice of Pakistan. Formation of the coalition government

Nawaz Sharif joined the coalition of Zardari and ANP to form a coalition government

Nawaz Sharif and Zardari signed Murree declaration in which it was decided to restore the deposed judges.

The coalition also went ahead to compel Musharaf to step down.

All of the four provincial assemblies passed the no confidence motion against Musharaf.

Musharaf agreed to resign and on 18th August 2008 Musharaf resigned from the post of President.

They decided to start a long march from Lahore to Islamabad.

The members of civil society and the political parties also joined them

The political parties which came to join hands with lawyers included PML-N, JI, PTI

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13. Political transition and resignation:

- In 2007 and 2008, Musharraf faced mounting opposition and calls for his resignation.
- In the 2008 general elections, his party suffered a defeat, and a coalition government led by the Pakistan People's Party (PPP) and Pakistan Muslim League-Nawaz (PML-N) was formed.
- Facing impeachment charges, Musharraf resigned on August 18, 2008, and went into self-imposed exile.

It's important to note that the Musharraf era had both positive and negative consequences. While some credit him with economic growth and modernization, his tenure was also marked by curbs on media freedom, political repression, and allegations of human rights abuses. The events and policies during this era continue to shape Pakistan's political landscape to this day.