



MONITOR

Civil-Military Relations in Pakistan

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Meeting of the National Security Committee over Indian LoC Aggression

Despite a variety of national security challenges facing the country, it is nearly after a gap of 6 months that a meeting was held of the National Security Committee (NSC) on October 10, 2014.

According to the press release issued by the Prime Minister's Office, the meeting was held under the Chairmanship of Prime Minister Nawaz Sharif while in attendance were the “Ministers for Interior and Information, Advisor to the Prime Minister on National Security and Foreign Affairs, Chiefs of Army, Naval and Air Staff, DG ISI Lt. Gen. Zaheer-ul-Islam and other senior civil and military officials.”¹ The Federal Ministers for Defence and Finance and Chairman Joint Chiefs of the Staff Committee (CJCS), however, were conspicuous by their absence. The Committee, which met to discuss the “situation arising from unprovoked firing by the Indian Security Forces across the Line of Control and the Working Boundary,” expressed its “disappointment” that the sincerity demonstrated by Pakistan has not been reciprocated” especially as the Government of Pakistan continued to pursue “a policy of peaceful relations with all its neighbors.... initiation of peace dialogue of the 1990s, and more recently, participation of the Prime Minister in Prime Minister Modi's oath-taking ceremony..”

The formation of the National Security Committee by the PML-N Government in August 2013 has been hailed as a welcome step towards institutionalization of a “principle decision-making body on all National Security issues” and as an “apex forum that provides opportunity to all State institutions to provide inputs so that key National Security-related decisions are taken through collective thinking..”² However, a culture of infrequent meetings – the NSC has only held 4 meetings in almost 15 months with the latest one held after a gap of 6 months, is not only a hindrance in optimum utilization of this crucial institution, it stands in the way of the much-needed system of institutionalization of decision-making in national security affairs.

While frequent meetings are held between the Prime Minister and the Army Chief - 2 meetings on average per month since June 2013³ - and often the entire membership of the NSC, it is odd as to why these are not held under the formal rubric of the NSC. A similar pattern, for instance, emerged after the latest meeting of the NSC, which was followed by a high-level Civil-Military huddle called by the Prime Minister on October 16,

2014⁴ which was attended by the COAS, outgoing DG ISI Lt. Gen. Zaheerul Islam, DG ISI-designate Lt. Gen. Rizwan Akhtar, the Defence and Interior Ministers, and the Foreign Secretary Mr. Aizaz Ahmed Chaudhry.⁵

PILDAT, which has been advocating institutionalization of collective policy making on national security issues since 2004, believes that a pressing agenda on national security demands much more frequent meetings of the NSC. PILDAT has proposed that the rules of business of the NSC should be amended to stipulate frequent periodicity of its meetings, much like the practice in other democracies that have installed similar institutions on national security.

PILDAT also believes that the highest institution charged with issues of National Security has to be made an effective channel of communication and both civil and the military should use this forum to address issues of civil-military relations that are often perceived to mar the relationship on two sides.

Prime Minister Declares Government's Resolve to Jointly rebuild North Waziristan with the Army on Visit to the Region

In a welcome development, Prime Minister Nawaz Sharif visited the war-torn North Waziristan Agency on October 9, 2014 for the first time since his election. During it, he also travelled to the Agency's headquarters, Miranshah to boost the morale of the security forces fighting against terrorists.⁶

PILDAT hopes that this would set a much-needed precedent for the civilian leadership to interact more frequently with the soldiers committed in battles for the country, especially at special occasions such as the Defence Day, Eid, etc. Leaders of developed nations around the world follow this laudable tradition of joining their troops at the battlefronts on festivities such as Christmas, etc. For instance, the American President Barack Obama made a surprise visit to Afghanistan between Thanksgiving and Christmas in December 2010 to personally thank the US troops for their services and to boost their morale in the fight against terrorists.⁷

On the occasion, Prime Minister Nawaz Sharif said that the Government would soon launch a phase of rehabilitation in areas of North Waziristan Agency affected by Operation Zarb-e-Azb in collaboration with the Army. PILDAT believes that the civilian leadership must learn from the aftermath of the Swat Operation in 2009 (also known as *Operation Rah-e-Rast*) where

1. For exact text of the Press Release, please see Prime Minister's Office Press Release on October 10, 2014 titled PM Chairs NSC Meeting; as accessed on November 18, 2014 at: http://www.pmo.gov.pk/press_release_details.php?pr_id=631
2. As per official communiqué received from the National Security Division, Government of Pakistan. For more details, please see PILDAT's Citizens Report on the performance of the National Security Committee, June 01, 2013 – May 31, 2014; can be accessed at: http://www.pildat.org/Publications/publication/CMR/PerformanceoftheNationalSecurityCommittee_June012013ToMay312014.pdf
3. For details, please see PILDAT Monitors on Civil-Military Relations since January 2012; can be accessed at <http://www.pildat.org/Publications/publication/Publications.asp>
4. For details, please see Civil military leadership reviews security situation, Daily Times, October 17, 2014, as accessed on November 18, 2014 at: <http://www.dailytimes.com.pk/islamabad/17-Oct-2014/civil-military-leadership-reviews-security-situation>
5. For exact text of the Press Release, please see Prime Minister's Office Press Release on October 16, 2014 titled A national security meeting was held under the chairmanship of the Prime Minister; as accessed on November 18, 2014 at: http://www.pmo.gov.pk/press_release_details.php?pr_id=6386. For details, please see Govt., army to jointly rebuild NWA: PM, The Nation, October 10, 2014, as accessed on November 18, 2014 at: <http://nation.com.pk/national/10-Oct-2014/govt-army-to-jointly-rebuild-nwa-pm>
7. For details, please see Obama makes surprise visit to troops in Afghanistan, Fox News, December 03, 2010, as accessed on November 18, 2014 at: <http://www.foxnews.com/politics/2010/12/03/obama-makes-surprise-visit-troops-afghanistan>

civilian administration failed to take control and provide effective civil services in the area after it was cleared by the Army following the Operation. Almost all the rehabilitation work in Swat was carried out by the Armed Forces that included training the local police, rebuilding schools and even setting up local medical camps. So much so, with 50,000 soldiers in Swat in 2010, the military presence in the area was larger post-Operation than during it.⁸

Although Gen. Raheel Sharif has announced that the Army will be recruiting soldiers from FATA and admitting the local children into the Army-run schools and training institutes, the civilian Government must realize that it is their job to rehabilitate the region's socio-economic landscape. Prime Minister Nawaz Sharif, should ensure that the rehabilitation of the war-torn North Waziristan Agency, with its almost 69,021 displaced families⁹ be led by the civilian administration along the lines of the Comprehensive Response Plan (CRP) outlined in the National Internal Security Policy of Pakistan, 2014-2018.

Joint Intelligence Directorate Shelved due to 'Financial Crunch'

The Federal Minister for Interior, Chaudhry Nisar Ali Khan, on October 28, 2014 stated that the main reason for the Joint Intelligence Directorate not becoming a reality till yet was the 'financial crunch' the Federal Government was facing. The Interior Minister announced the formation of the Joint Intelligence Directorate on October 29, 2013, along with the revival of NACTA, while addressing the participants of the 99th National Management Course. The Joint Intelligence Directorate is to further improve intelligence coordination between the security agencies. According to the Interior Minister, a temporary mechanism was in place for intelligence sharing amongst the Civil-Military agencies, operative at the district level.¹⁰

PILDAT is of the opinion that in the backlash of Operation Zarb-e-Azb, which is being felt across the country in the form of increasing terrorist attacks, the importance of the Joint Intelligence Directorate has increased manifold. Such an organization is already in place in the neighboring country of India in the form of the Defence Intelligence Agency. It is the nodal intelligence coordination agency, working under the Ministry of Defence, with a staff of approximately 16,500 people. The Interior Minister should perhaps be asked that given the fact that all the existing intelligence agencies of Pakistan are functional, why is so much money required to make the Joint Intelligence Directorate functional? Effective intelligence

coordination, in fact, in view of the growing complexity of terrorist organizations across Pakistan, is the need of the hour.

Premier-COAS interaction

During the month of October 2014, although the Chief of Army Staff Gen. Raheel Sharif did not exclusively call upon Prime Minister Muhammad Nawaz Sharif, both of them met thrice. Firstly, when the Prime Minister visited the North Waziristan Agency on October 9, 2013. Gen. Raheel Sharif also accompanied him on the tour. During his visit, the Prime Minister was apprised of the success that had been achieved so far in Operation Zarb-e-Azb on which he expressed his satisfaction over the progress made and commended the military personnel on their sacrifices during the Operation. On the occasion, Governor Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, the Federal Minister for States and Frontier Regions and the Interior Minister also accompanied the Premier. The Defence Minister however, was not present.¹¹

The COAS and Prime Minister also met during the meeting of the National Security Committee held on October 10, 2014 in Islamabad to discuss the situation along the LoC and the Working Boundary. As has already been mentioned, the meeting was attended by the Ministers for Interior and Information, Advisor to the Prime Minister on National Security and Foreign Affairs, Chiefs of Army, Naval and Air Staff, and DG ISI Lt. Gen. Zaheer-ul-Islam. The Ministers for Defence and Finance along with the Chairman Joint Chiefs of the Staff Committee (CJCSC) could not attend the meeting.

Their last meeting for the month of October was held on October 16, 2014 when the Prime Minister called a high-level Civil-Military huddle in Islamabad to discuss the LoC violations by India, the security situation across the country, and the military operation in North Waziristan. In attendance were also the outgoing DG ISI Lt. Gen. Zaheerul Islam, DG ISI-designate Lt. Gen. Rizwan Akhtar, the Defence and Interior Ministers, and the Foreign Secretary Mr. Aizaz Ahmed Chaudhry.¹²

Ex-Servicemen Association Call for Fresh Election

The Pakistan Ex-Servicemen Association (PESA), who call themselves 'former military strategists', in a statement released on September 29, 2014 demanded that the PML-N led Government should go for a fresh election to ascertain its popularity amongst the people. According to the statement of the Association, as a result of the popular sentiments of the people that were visible in the anti-Government rallies and sit-ins, it was the 'moral duty' of the Government to go for a fresh election and

8. For details, please see Enduring army role in Swat spurs questions about Pakistan's civilian Government, Washington Post, April 2, 2014, as accessed on November 18, 2014 at: http://www.washingtonpost.com/wp-dyn/content/article/2010/04/01/AR2010040103365_pf.html

9. For details, please see Uniform relief package for displaced people being considered, Dawn, November 07, 2014, as accessed on November 18, 2014 at: <http://www.dawn.com/news/1142886/uniform-relief-package-for-displaced-people-being-considered>

10. For details, please see Finance main hurdle in forming Joint Intelligence Directorate, The News, October 28, 2014, as accessed on November 18, 2014 at: <http://www.thenews.com.pk/Todays-News-13-33745-Finance-main-hurdle-in-forming-Joint-Intelligence-Directorate>

11. For details, please see With Army Chief, PM makes maiden visit to North Waziristan, Dawn, October 9, 2014, as accessed on November 18, 2014 at: <http://www.dawn.com/news/1136829>

12. For exact text of the Press Release, please see Prime Minister's Office Press Release on October 16, 2014 titled A national security meeting was held under the chairmanship of the Prime Minister; as accessed on November 18, 2014 at: http://pmo.gov.pk/press_release_details.php?pr_id=638

prove its popularity.¹³ Members of PESA also criticized the Government over its alleged inability to give timely warnings to those affected by the recent floods and the resultant sluggish efforts at rehabilitation. PESA is led by Lt. Gen. (Retd.) Ali Kuli Khan and it includes Vice Admiral (Retd.) Ahmed Tasnim, Brig. (Retd.) Mian Mahmud, Brig. (Retd.) Masul-ul-Hassan as its members. Its Patron in Chief is Air Marshal (Retd.) Asghar Khan.¹⁴

The demands made by the members of PESA, however, are not reasonable in the context of Pakistani Constitution and if accepted may set a dangerous precedent. Firstly, because the precedence of a democratically elected Government losing its mandate won just 16 months ago under pressure from a few thousand protestors will be a harmful one for Pakistan's democratic order. PILDAT is of the opinion that although registering protest with the Government is the inalienable right of every citizen, change, however, must be affected through the Constitutional means only. Keeping in view the severe aspersions cast by various political quarters over the legitimacy of General Election 2013, it is of utmost importance that the Commission of Enquiry is constituted by the Supreme Court in the light of Federal Government's letter to the Supreme Court. The Parliamentary Committee on Electoral Reforms should expeditiously complete its report and present it to the Parliament so that necessary constitutional and legal amendments may be introduced and passed

Gen. Sharif's Visit to the US

Gen. Raheel Sharif, the COAS, arrived in the United States on Sunday, November 16, 2014 on his first visit to the country as the Army Chief. According to media reports, he is visiting the US on the invitation from Chairman of the US Joint Chiefs of Staff Gen Martin Dempsey.¹⁵ Gen. Sharif is to meet with Defence Secretary Chuck Hagel, Gen. Dempsey, and other members of the defence establishment during his visit. He has already met with Gen. Lloyd Austin during his tour of the headquarters of the US Central Command (CENTCOM) in Florida.¹⁶

This visit of Gen. Shareef is of particular *strategic* significance because it will be the first meeting between the top military brass of the two countries since the signing of the bilateral security agreement between the US and Afghanistan, a development which will directly affect Pakistan's current efforts in combating terrorism in the tribal areas. Additionally, keeping in view the effectiveness of Operation Zarb-e-Azb, which has been recognized by the American military command as well, and the

recent thaw in Pak-Afghan and Pak-US relations, it is expected that optimism will surround the Army Chief's visit to the US and might lead to better military-military contacts.

Coup in Burkina Faso: Lessons to be learnt

In a major development for Civil-Military relations around the world, on October 30, 2014, the Army of Burkina Faso launched a coup d'état overthrowing the 27-year old regime of the West African country's President, Mr. Blaise Compaoré. On November 1, 2014, the Army designated as Interim President a close confidante of Compaoré, Colonel Isaac Yacouba Zida. However, according to media reports,¹⁷ the military leadership is coming under exceeding pressure by the civil society organizations and the Opposition parties of Burkina Faso to hand over power to a civilian Government.

The Burkina Faso episode can be extremely instructive for countries with strained Civil-Military relations in the context of what brought about the coup. Firstly, the Compaoré regime had become exceedingly dictatorial with his Presidency stretching over 27 years. What set off the final protests was a move by Compaoré to introduce a Constitutional Amendment so that he could enjoy a fifth term as well. Amidst increasing costs of living, the President and his term stretching almost over three decades was increasingly seen as the main reason for bad governance plaguing the country.

What further alienated the people of Burkina Faso from Compaoré was what was deemed to be his 'neo-colonialist policy'.¹⁸ Under his Presidency, Burkina Faso has worked closely to support French military interventions in Ivory Coast in 2011 and the ongoing war in Mali. According to many analysts, he was increasingly deemed to be a tout of the Western forces by the citizens of the country.

Perhaps the most important lesson to be extracted from the episode is the fact that the Military Establishment, in any country with dominant military leadership at the cost of the civilian one, does not support a discredited regime, lest it should damage its own popularity and sway amongst the citizens as well. Therefore, even though Compaoré came to power through a military coup in 1987, members of the very same institution whose loyalty he once possessed overthrew him. A similar phenomenon can also be witnessed in the overthrow of Hosni Mubarak, facilitated by the army, in the face of massive public protests, even though he belonged to the Egyptian armed forces, and his eventual replacement by another military dictator.

13. For details, please see Ex-Servicemen demand fresh elections, Dawn, September 30, 2014, as accessed on November 18, 2014 at: <http://www.dawn.com/news/1135261/ex-servicemen-demand-fresh-elections>

14. For details, please see the website of Pakistan Ex-Servicemen Association, as accessed on November 18, 2014 at: <http://pesapk.com>

15. For details, please see Army chief to visit US next month for talks on strategic issues, Dawn, October 27, 2014, as accessed on November 18, 2014 at: <http://www.dawn.com/news/1140619/army-chief-to-visit-us-next-month-for-talks-on-strategic-issues>

16. For details, please see Maiden trip to US: Army chief presents Pakistan's perspective on regional security, Express Tribune, November 18, 2014, as accessed on November 18, 2014 at: <http://tribune.com.pk/story/792949/maiden-trip-to-us-army-chief-presents-pakistan's-perspective-on-regional-security/>

17. For details, please see Burkina Faso Opposition protests military take-over, Huffington Post, November 02, 2014, as accessed on November 18, 2014 at: http://www.huffingtonpost.com/2014/11/02/burkina-faso-protest-military_n_6089598.html

18. For details, please see Military launches coup amidst protests in Burkina Faso, Global Research, November 02, 2014, as accessed on November 18, 2014 at: <http://www.globalresearch.ca/military-launches-coup-amid-mass-protests-in-burkina-faso/5411587>