

Political Instability in Pakistan: Juggling Domestic and Foreign Issues

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ABSTRACT

Political instability is defined as the unstable structure of a government and its inclination to collapse in a short time due to unstable political structures. Under this definition Pakistan is in fact in this uneasy situation. Political stability is an important concept, because it allows for the government to be reliable for its citizens as well as trustworthy when it comes to policies and acts that are implemented. It allows participants in the society to plan and conduct their affairs without disruption. People do not handle change or uncertainty well. Uncertainty can spark panic and cause disturbances to other individuals and groups. Even though there have been multiple studies and articles that explain the forecast the future politics and relations between Pakistan and Afghanistan and its ongoing political instability. However, this article explains the relations with the new de facto government of Afghanistan since it is a relatively new establishment and the methods that have been used by the previous governments may not be applicable in the current relations.

Keywords: Political instability; Cold war; Political structures; Economic stability; Democratic

INTRODUCTION

According to Waltz, "If anarchy is identified with chaos, destruction, and death, then the distinction between anarchy and government does not tell us much" [1]. Anarchy is defined by lack of order and therefore government should be defined as the organized structure of officials that create and stabilize order. Defensive realism theory suggests that "The first concern of states is not to maximize power but to maintain their positions in the system" [2]. In case of Pakistan, the country tries to maintain a certain status quo and create an appearance of political and economic stability. There have been several studies that have touched the subject of Afghanistan-Pakistan relations as well as political instability, such as I, Mohammad. "Instability in Afghanistan: Implications for Pakistan." and Memon, Aslam Pervez, and other various authors in "political instability: A case study of Pakistan." are the most recent and informative scientific articles that describe the problem. The reliance on news articles was important because of new information provided, unlike scientific articles that are informative but dated and cannot be fully used for accurate research analysis.

The goal of the article is to remind about the ongoing issue in South Asia region. That have occurred in August 2021, multiple

news outlets have covered the issue of the Taliban takeover, with diplomatic staff urgently flying away from the capital. Even though the initial danger has passed and several embassies reopened and restarted their respected missions in Kabul, the relevancy and importance of this subject is still important, especially to the neighboring countries. Which unfortunately, in recent times the issues about the Taliban have been overshadowed by coverage of Ukrainian crisis.

LITERATURE REVIEW

According to the democratic foundation, because military assumed governing power in Pakistan in 1958, there hasn't been any democratic, peaceful transition of power for 55 years, until recently in 2013. Up until then the Prime Ministers either resigned or ousted [3]. Pakistan gained its independence in 1947, however, ever since then Pakistan has spent three decades of it under martial law or military take overs. (1958-1971, 1977-1988, 1999-2008). Pakistan's short history as a country has been very turbulent. Fighting among the provinces as well as a deep-rooted conflict that led to a nuclear stand-off with India prevented Pakistan from gaining real stability in the last five decades. It oscillates between military rule and democratically elected

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Received: 03-Feb-2023, Manuscript No. JPSPA-23-21691; **Editor assigned:** 06-Feb-2023, PreQC No. JPSPA-23-21691 (PQ); **Reviewed:** 20-Feb-2023, QC No. JPSPA-23-21691; **Revised:** 03-May-2023, Manuscript No. JPSPA-23-21691 (R); **Published:** 10-May-2023, DOI: 10.35248/2332-0761.23.11.019

Citation: Juanyshbekov A (2023) Political Instability in Pakistan: Juggling Domestic and Foreign Issues. J Pol Sci Pub Aff Res. 11:019.

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governments, between secular policies and financial backing as a "frontline" state during the cold war and the war against terrorism. It is a continuing trend of economic and political instability [4].

Many underdeveloped nations of Asia including Pakistan have been confronted as how to overcome the problems of centralization of authority, national integration, economic development, political participation and social welfare of modernizing societies which have grown simultaneously in the political order of these states. Since Taliban takeover, terrorist attacks in Pakistan have increased by 56 percent. In September Prime Minister Shenbaz Sharif addressed United Nations general assembly by stating that Pakistan has suffered more than 80 thousand casualties and over \$150 billion in economic losses due to the terrorist attacks, and even more losses if you include the summer floods that caused multiple infrastructure damage. "The threat posed by the major terrorist groups operating from Afghanistan, especially Islamic State, ISIL-K as well as Al-Qaeda, ETIM and IMV." One of the underlying problems of the political instability of Pakistan is its dependence on the foreign investments, particularly US and China. Like Afghanistan, the government was depended on security and provisions of stability due to military power. However, when US has withdrawn from Afghanistan, Pakistan no longer possessed the quality to combat terrorism. Moreover, when Taliban took over the country, Pakistan tried to create itself an opportunity to become a proxy between US and the newly founded Islamic Emirate of Afghanistan, but that plan has failed since the US special representative for Afghanistan, Thomas West stated that "US doesn't need any mediators for Taliban talks" [5].

Pakistan Taliban has warned the country main ruling parties of concrete action against their top leadership. In November, the armed group ultimately ended an Afghan-Taliban brokered ceasefire agreement with the government and ordered its fighters to launch more attacks in its statement; the TTP (Tehreek-e-Taliban-e-Pakistan) accused Pakistan in coalition with US. That government "tried to please America by declaring war" [6].

Edward Price, state department spokesperson said that Afghan Taliban must uphold the commitment they made to not allow the use of Afghan soil as the launch pad for international attacks. Implying on the agreement that was signed between US and Taliban in February 29, 2020 in Doha, Qatar that included the responsibilities that will befall on the Taliban after the US withdrawal [7].

"NSC took some major decisions yesterday after hours-long deliberations. Two of them stand out: State of Pakistan will adopt zero tolerance policy for terrorists challenging its writ. Peace is non-negotiable. Two, economic roadmap will revive economy and provide relief to the people" PM Sharif said. That statement tells that the relations between Afghanistan and Pakistan are tenser than ever. If in 2021 Pakistan launched a diplomatic effort urging the international community to engage with the Taliban, help ease Afghanistan's humanitarian crisis and prevent it from descending into chaos again. Then in late

2022 and the beginning of 2023, the relations became more hostile, direct and aggressively provoking towards each other. That kind of relations will be destructive to both sides. Afghanistan is a landlocked country, with minimal to no support from international actors, objectively if Taliban-led Afghanistan government wants to remain in power and be recognized as the legitimate government, then the proper course of action is to research if the claims of Pakistan officials about unprecedented attacks from Afghanistan is true, and try to re-establish friendly relations.

DISCUSSION

Regarding the political instability of Pakistan. In April 2022, Imran Khan became the first Prime Minister who was ousted by "a no confidence vote". Superficially the opposition blamed governance and economic failures under Khan leadership. Main reason was that Khan had lost the support of the military which helped him to come to power. The turning point was when there was a refusal of transfer of the director of ISI (Inter Service Intelligence). Since his ouster, Imran Khan has been carrying out mass rallies across the country demanding early elections. This kind of situation and childish behavior reminds the Trump's attempt to overturn the 2020 elections in the US. Even going as far as no giving up until the Supreme Court ruling. The new government under the leadership of Shenbaz Sharif is facing huge challenges not only from Khan, but from Nawaz Sharif, three-time Prime Minister and a corrupt official.

PMLN (Pakistan Muslim League Nawar) could be "strengthen if Nawaz Sharif will return to Pakistan," however the case could be argued that with his return if no legal action will take place, then the probability of a new wave of corruption is most likely. The second factor which has historically determined which party politicians align with, is the which the military leans toward. The foundation of this system in Pakistan remains the same since the creation of Pakistan. What matters for political success is whether you have the support of Pakistan army.

The reality of situation is that the promises of economic and political stability at the present stage is an unachievable goal especially considering the recent flood that impacted multiple provinces in the country. This domestic crisis that has befallen on Pakistan cannot be fixed overnight, it has been an issue for the Pakistani since its independence, there have multiple subjects and discussions by multiple scholars and journalists that present their ideas on solving the instability problem. Majority of those ideas center around rebuilding democracy. To achieve this goal Pakistan needs to:

Divert power and responsibilities: At the present stage, the diplomacy of Pakistan is centered on the power of the military forces and the department of defense that needs to be changed. Realistically, the military won't be swayed to give power so easily since it has dismissed the legislative branch and parliament a total of four times since Pakistan's creation, and maintains wider commercial, foreign, and political interests in the country, however if parliament and the PM will mutually to rearrange some of its power for future stability on the pretext of being more democratic for the outside world. Then the military power

could be equally distributed between respectable civilian sectors, as well as educate the representatives what the responsibilities and the goals of each sector are. It would show and provide proof that Pakistan is in fact a democratic country. Although, this is a long step by step process and a long-term plan.

Rebuild the relations with Afghanistan: In term of tense relations between Afghanistan, the traditional way of deescalating the conflict is negotiation, with mediator that both sides consent to. However, neither side succumbs to the opportunity for peaceful resolution, and instead uses provocation to escalate the conflict even further. To rebuild these relations, both sides need to be reminded that they both need cooperate because they cannot become isolated countries and become autonomous from the outside world. Historically, and economically they won't survive on their own. For international community, Afghanistan is seen as the terrorist state, however if an independent vendor would trade with Pakistan, that would be reasonable, and the people from both sides would be able to purchase goods for their benefit. Similarly, how Russia rebranded their own franchise after McDonalds' and multiple other brands departure.

Battle terrorism: Terrorism is a serious world issue with multiple branches and attacks around the world, even more so for Pakistan. During United States' occupation of Afghanistan, Pakistan served as the buffer zone, and until its withdrawal in 2021, there was a period of "stable instability" that didn't annihilate or suppress the terrorism in the region, but at the same time, didn't make the country a terrorist state either. Currently in Pakistan, terrorism is also a domestic issue with groups like TTP that strongly align themselves with Afghan Taliban ideologies. Moreover, this problem needs to be dealt with carefully, but at the same time radically. Without foreign military support the options to battle terrorism are limited. The best course of action for Pakistan is to rely on their own military power,

because asking for foreign military assistance could spark another conflict and make the situation worse. The military needs to strategically and simultaneously attack their bases and neutralize the enemy. Otherwise, the longer this problem will be postponed, the longer and harder it will take to resolve this problem for the forceable future.

CONCLUSION

Pakistan's instability is a cause of multiple issues inside and outside of the country that need a certain attention in their own right. However, if this cause will be dealt with in a serious manner that is intended, then the majority of other issues will follow suit. Then and only the, Pakistan can start to become a developing country and start to create opportunities for multiple foreign investments and facilitate a proper democracy.

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