



External factors in democratic transition in Pakistan in 2008: an analysis of the US supporting role

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Abstract:

The political history of Pakistan has seen ephemeral intervals of democratic rule while protracted periods of military rule. A landmark development happened when a peaceful democratic transition from authoritarian rule was held in 2008. The internal factors for this transition were an independent judiciary, vibrant media, civil society, and political consensus between major political parties. This article investigates the role of US as an external factor in supporting democratic transition in Pakistan in 2008. The US supported Musharraf regime as part of its war on terror strategy but also urged him publicly to restore democracy. The Bush administration encouraged negotiation between Benazir Bhutto and Musharraf and supported a political reconciliation between them, which shaped the politics of Pakistan in a new direction. When Musharraf adopted authoritarian means, the US pressured Musharraf to democratise by different means to reinforce its interest in counterterrorism. Under heavy pressure from the US, Musharraf resigned as army chief and lifted the state of emergency. Later, he resigned from the presidency to escape the humiliation of impeachment, and democracy was restored in Pakistan. Data is collected from secondary sources like newspapers, journal articles, books, and websites. This study will interest the students, scholars, and policymakers of South Asian politics.

Article History

Received:
28-Jun-2024

Revised:
11-Aug-2024

Re-revised:
19-Sep-2024

Accepted:
20-Sep-2024

Published:
30-Sep-2024

Keywords: Military rule, Democracy, Democratic transition, War on terror, Emergency rule, Lawyers movement, Political consensus, Independence of judiciary, NRO.

How to Cite:

Ali, S. (2024). External factors in democratic transition in Pakistan in 2008: an analysis of the US supporting role. *Liberal Arts and Social Sciences International Journal (LASSIJ)*, 8(2), 129-147. <https://doi.org/10.47264/idea.lassij/8.2.7>

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1. Introduction

Developing countries encounter democratization challenges even after being established as functioning democracies, which is rarely acknowledged and discussed in the political science community (Baqai, 2012). Pakistan has also encountered many challenges since its establishment. For a long time, the military has had direct authority over the region in Pakistan. General Ayub Khan, the head of the military forces, officially joined the power corridor in 1954 and again in 1958 after martial law was imposed. The military takeover process saw revisions in 1969, 1977, and 1999 (Khan et al., 2020). The Army got involved in political matters due to weak civilian institutions and inept, inexperienced, and corrupt political leadership (Alam et al., 2020).

Between 1988 and 1999, Pakistan's democratic transition initially stumbled and eventually came to a standstill as elected administrations' legitimacy was eroded by mismanagement, corruption, and personal grudges. The political elites could not unite in parliament to reinforce democratic norms and institutions. Instead, to seize or hold onto power, elected governments and their political rivals teamed up with military commanders. The military had the chance and the excuse to sabotage the democratic transition (International Crisis Group, 2002). Regretfully, Parvez Musharraf, the then-chief of army staff, orchestrated a coup against the administration of Nawaz Sharif in 1999, and the civilian rule did not continue long enough (Lal, 2010).

President Parvaiz Musharraf justified his "second coup" by arguing that it was required to protect Pakistan from a political deadlock that he primarily attributed to the Supreme Court of Pakistan and Islamist extremism (Kronstadt, 2008). Lawyers, civil society, and political parties launched a successful pro-democracy movement to promote judicial independence and electoral democracy (Shafqat, 2018). General Musharraf was under pressure from Washington and other global powers to restore Pakistan's political situation to what it was before November 3, 2007, to resign as army chief, and to hold free and fair elections in January 2008 (Kronstadt, 2008).

2. Literature review

Abundant literature on democracy, civil-military relations, political developments, and foreign relations in Pakistan is available. The researchers on democratic transition focused on political developments after the transition. Some scholars viewed the lawyers' movement, civil society, political parties, and human rights movements as leading to the downfall of Musharraf and the restoration of democracy in Pakistan. Few writers discussed the changing dynamics of Pakistan-US relations after 9/11 and the US response during the political crisis in Pakistan during Musharraf regime. However, they did not provide complete information regarding the said topic. This article analyses the role of the US in facilitating the democratic transition in Pakistan in 2008.

Shafqat (2018) examined the lawyers' movement initiated with the judiciary's politicization under Musharraf regime. She thoroughly examined the movement from the chief justice's dismissal to the restoration of Iftikhar Chaudhary and divided the movement into five phases. She concluded that civil society has a significant role in the lawyer's movement to overthrow the authoritarian regime and restore democracy. Faqir (2014) has discussed the judicial crisis in the Musharraf era. He maintained that in the history of Pakistan, the judiciary was politicized under military rule. General Musharraf did the same; when the judiciary showed independence and challenged Musharraf's policies, he suspended the Chief Justice and later imposed an emergency. A countrywide movement by lawyers, political parties, civil society, and media restored chief justice and strengthened the judiciary. Frumen identified the factors, i.e., military coup, amenable judiciary, weak political parties, and Western support for military rule, that forestalled the consolidation of democracy in Pakistan. The study highlighted the pro-democracy movements in 2007 and 2008 for the restoration of democracy. The researcher has also assessed politics after Musharraf and recommended reinforcing democracy.

Lodhi (2012) has discussed the third democratic transition in 2008. The study identified factors of democratic consolidation and challenges to democratic consolidation. The study concluded that democratic consolidation could not be established without good governance and wide-ranging reforms. Abbas (2022) explored the independent role of the judiciary during the Musharraf regime. The lawyers' movements, joined by civil society, political parties, and human rights organizations, restored the judiciary and strengthened democracy. Sangi (2022) discussed the role of electronic media in lawyers' movement. The study found that electronic media supported the lawyers' movement against the Musharraf regime and restored democracy. Baqai (2012) has applied Dankwart Rostow's model of democratic transition to the politics of Pakistan. The study highlighted independent judiciary, civil society, and media as the new trends in politics of Pakistan that emerged after the democratic transition in Pakistan in 2008. In the end, the study suggested that for the consolidation of democracy, the military and political parties should adopt democratic norms.

Fruman (2008) has discussed the political crisis in Pakistan, which emerged after the emergency rule in 2007. He analysed the implications of the political turmoil on the democratization and security of Pakistan and Pak-US relations. However, it provides sufficient information on pre-and post-emergency Pakistan-US relations. Tamana (2010) discussed US-Pakistan cooperation after 9/11 and its implication for the security of Pakistan. While discussing US-Pakistan cooperation at the domestic level, the study also highlighted the role of the US in Pakistan's democratic transition from a security perspective. However, it did not discuss the negotiations between Bhutto and Musharraf in 2007.

Rais (2014) analysed the problems of democratic transition in Pakistan. The study discussed the military regime of Musharraf. It analysed the factors why opposition parties failed to dislodge Musharraf. It highlighted the subordination of political elites to the military, the inability of political elites to engage in fledging civil society, and the structure of political

parties by which the opposition failed to displace Musharraf. Cheema & Hashmi (2021) reviewed the challenges of democratization in Pakistan. The study discusses Michael Sodaro's democratization process, which did not exist in Pakistan. The study suggests adopting Sodaro's democratization system for democratization in Pakistan. ICG report (2002) discussed the flawed democratic transition in Pakistan in 2002. It was the plan of more military rule where the president had the power to dismiss the parliament and appoint military chiefs. The constitutional and political reforms were also designed to uphold its rule.

International Crisis Group report (2013) discussed the role of parliament in democratic transition in Pakistan. It addressed the performance of the 13th National Assembly (2008-2013). It analyzed curbs on parliamentary and identified ways to overcome them. The democratic transition in 2013 reflected public support for democracy. However, the report questioned the performance of the 14th National Assembly and whether it would enact overdue legislative reforms and sustain democratic governance. Baqai (2012) discussed the smooth transition of power in 2013 from one elected government to another and viewed it as a milestone in the history of Pakistan. Despite acute security challenges, the turnout was high. The study identified strengthening democratic institutions (judiciary and media), realigned civil-military relations, and Pakistan's relations with India and the US during the PPP rule as significant shifts in Pakistan's politics.

Ahmad & Rafiq (2017) critically discussed the democratic transition in 2013. The study analysed the emergent trends, constraints, and prospects in politics. The study highlights various issues related to democratic transition from new political trends, militancy, judicial activism, economy, civil-military convergence and terrific power contests in the region. Gregory (2016) examined the democratic transition in Pakistan in 2013 and its implications on its security. The study deals with three themes: democratic transition in Pakistan; dealing with politico-economic, religious, and security issues regarding contested border and space; coping with the Durand line, Pashtun issue and Kashmir dispute; regionalism; dealing with Pakistan's relations with India and the US and its nuclear policy dynamics after the democratic transition in Pakistan.

3. Research methodology

Every research project must have a clear, methodological, and systematic strategy for the best results. Inductive in nature, qualitative research typically involves the exploration of meaning and insights within a particular scenario. Qualitative research gathers and analyses non-numerical data to derive meaning, enabling us to better comprehend social life by examining specific populations or places (Mohajan, 2018). While adopting qualitative research, this study analysed the role of the U.S. in the democratic transition in Pakistan. This research utilized document analysis as a data collection method, which entailed methodologically assessing, examining, and interpreting printed and electronic documents. Document analysis aims to reveal meaning, understand and develop empirical knowledge, and draw conclusions from the

papers (Oranga & Matere, 2023). Data is collected from different sources ranging from newspaper articles, journals, books, websites, published theses, and reports.

This study applied the case study method, a comprehensive and in-depth analysis of how one particular event, person, or circumstance developed over time in a real-world setting (Oranga & Matere, 2023). The research investigated the role of the U.S. generally since the formation of Pakistan. It mainly assessed the role of the U.S. after 9/11 when the U.S. supported the Musharraf regime. It analysed the factors that changed the U.S. stance towards Pakistan, and the U.S. pressurized Musharraf to restore democracy.

4. Theoretical approaches to democratic transition

Democratic transition is the process of democratization in which a state switches from an authoritarian form of government to a more liberal and democratic one. Autocratic leaders are replaced by a free, fair, and transparent electoral process called democratization. Its phases consist of the dissolution of the authoritarian regime, the launching of the democratic government, and then the consolidation of the democratic system (Huntington, 1991). The study on democratic transitions emerged due to scholars' attempts to make sense of the various instances of democratization that resulted in significant political upheaval worldwide starting in 1974 (Munck, 2015). Different theoretical perspectives on transition theory have yielded a variety of analytical frameworks for contrasting regime transitions between regions. They have also identified variables or factors to account for the outcomes of particular transformations in different countries under different conditions (Guo, 1999).

Lipset, Almond, Moore, and others dominated much political science research on Southern Europe and Latin America in the 1960s and 1970s. They believed that certain factors, i.e., class conflict, political culture, and economic development, promote the transition to democracy. These scholars focused on micro-level factors or socio-economic prerequisites of democracy (Imai, 2010). In contrast to the economic and social explanations of the 1960s, strategic choice and political explanation by the political actors gained more attention in 1980. At the core of these new ideas was the notion that division inside the regime, or more precisely among the rulers, lowers the cost of disagreement and provides a space for negotiation between opposition forces and reforming sections of the ruling elite. Furthermore, these ideas negate the widely held belief that specific economic and cultural prerequisites are necessary for democratization (O'Donnell & Schmitter, 1986). Linz and Stephan (1996) defined complete democratic transition and consolidation in behavioural, attitudinal, and constitutional dimensions. Another view is that the elite drives democratization to restrict a threat of revolution from below (Acemoglu & Robinson, 2006).

Contemporary work on democratic transition focuses on the impact of international factors. In the early to mid-1990s, more attention was given to identifying, conceptualizing, and evaluating the role of external factors in democratic development (Munck, 2015). The new

literature on democratic transition focuses on the role of international diffusion, the global economy, and external political influence on democracy. Some of the most well-developed ideas link political-economic explanations to international variables. For instance, globalization is seen as promoting democratization and, therefore, lessening the danger of democracy to the ruling elite (Boix, 2003). Huntington, among other factors, pointed out the role of American policy towards promoting human rights and democracy by using various tools, including economic, political, diplomatic, and military ones (1991: 85). Others believed that non-democratic regimes are influenced by relations with the west to adopt democratic reforms or transition to democracy (Levitsky & Way, 2005). The recent literature on democratic transition fosters the role of external factors in democratic transition, the role of international organizations, globalization, and relations with Western and American policies towards promoting democracy. This article draws a theoretical framework from these contemporary theories on democratic transition, especially the U.S. policies towards supporting democracy in Pakistan, by applying political and diplomatic means.

4.1. Immediate background of democratic transition in Pakistan

Following 11 years of democracy, Pakistan returned to military control on October 12, 1999, when COAS General Pervez Musharraf unseated Prime Minister (PM) Nawaz Sharif in a bloodless coup. Musharraf took over the government after PM Sharif replaced Musharraf with DG ISI, Lt General Khwaja Ziauddin Ahmed. Subsequently, General Musharraf declared himself the chief executive, suspended the constitution, and imposed an emergency (Chengappa, 1999). He had disagreements with PM Sharif on several policy matters, especially Kashmir. *"I wish to inform you that the armed forces have moved in as a last resort; to prevent further destabilization"* (Khan, 1999).

After removing Tarar in June 2001, Musharraf essentially assumed the role of civil president while maintaining his position as Army Chief. In 2001, he designed the municipal government structure (Javaid, 2017). The local bodies were allegedly used as a tool in the 2002 referendum and the 2002 general elections to aid in the victory of a party publicly favoured by the government (Alam et al., 2020).

The Legal Framework Order (LFO) in August 2002 increased the president's power to dissolve the National Assembly and dismiss the government, appoint service chiefs, provincial governors, and the Election Commission, and impose a term limit for the office of Prime Minister (Javaid, 2017). General Musharraf's proposed constitutional and political changes have been opposed by nearly all significant political parties, civil organizations, and the media in Pakistan as an undemocratic way to keep the military in power (International Crisis Group, 2002).

Pakistan was transformed from a parliamentary democracy to a dictatorship under Musharraf, where only one person had the power to make decisions. The parliament was reduced to a

rubber stamp, the president had the authority to dissolve elected legislatures, and the cabinet was essentially redundant (Fruman, 2011). He appointed hand-picked crony Prime Ministers with a feeble parliament and ruled the country from the military headquarters in Rawalpindi (Tamana, 2010).

Pakistan was subject to democracy sanctions when Musharraf assumed power in 1999 (Carnegie Endowment, 2001). The bloodless coup of Musharraf gained international recognition after the 9/11 events when Pakistan joined the US-led war on terror. The global push for the restoration of democracy soon faded away; instead, his standing has been strengthened by the new-found worldwide legitimacy (Shah, 2002). However, due to his support for the war on terror, terrorism emerged throughout Pakistan. (Khan, 2023). The terrorist attacks were increased after the Lal Masjid operation in July 2007. By December 2007, the supporters of Al-Qa'ida in FATA came together to form Tehrik-e-Taliban Pakistan (Niaz, 2018). A new wave of militant violence was seen not just in FATA and NWFP but also in other areas of the country (Lunn, 2007).

Musharraf faced another severe challenge in March 2007 when he removed Chief Justice Iftikhar M. Chaudhary out of the fear that the Chief Justice might object to his re-election as his presidential term would expire in October 2007. The dismissal of Chaudhary outraged lawyers and others, which poured them into the streets (Sengupta, 2007). To justify this action, he forwarded this issue to the Supreme Judicial Council, and in Pakistan's constitutional history, the court rendered the first decision against a military ruler (Javaid, 2017). The first phase of this conflict ended in July 2007, and Chaudhary was allowed to return to his position. When Chief Justice Chaudhary was reinstated, one of his first actions was to let Nawaz Sharif return to Pakistan in August 2007. Musharraf finalized a deal with Benazir Bhutto as part of a political reconciliation and enacted the National Reconciliation Ordinance (NRO) on October 5, which allowed Benazir to come to Pakistan to contest elections. More than eight thousand complaints filed under the NRO against politicians and their bureaucratic comrades were dropped. Among them were more than 180 cases brought against Asif Ali Zardari. On 6 October 2007, the provincial and national assembly chose Musharraf to serve as president for 5 years (Niaz, 2018).

General Pervez Musharraf proclaimed "emergency rule" on November 3, 2007. He suspended the Constitution in exercising his power, claiming that extreme actions were required to counter the threat of terrorism (Open Society Foundation, 2007). Musharraf issued a Provisional Constitutional Order (PCO), which required judges to take a new oath. Most judges under this PCO lost their employment because they either refused to take the new oath or were not invited to do so. In this way, Musharraf ousted the Chief Justice and several other judges (Javaid & Latif, 2017). Protests in the declaration of emergency have been prevalent, particularly among the legal community, which formed to oppose the continuation of military control. Thousands of lawyers, judges, human rights advocates, and students had been taken into custody (Open Society Foundations, 2007). The movements against Musharraf forced him to hold an election

in 2008. The 2008 election saw the return of the Pakistan People's Party (PPP) and Pakistan Muslim League-Nawaz, the country's two major parties. That same year, the newly elected government and parliament compelled Musharraf to step down as head of state and commander of the Army (Paracha, 2014).

4.2. Role of the US in Pakistan since independence

Congress has historically indicated an interest in supporting democratic government and related rights in foreign nations as a method of reflecting American ideals and increasing U.S. security and economic interests, though the emphasis assigned to this goal has fluctuated. Events around the world, conflicting agendas, and political shifts within the US government all affect how much attention and funding is given to initiatives to promote democracy. These factors also determine whether these initiatives are concentrated on advancing human rights and the rule of law, bolstering civil society, or supporting other features of democracy promotion (Lawson & Epstein, 2019).

Since the early years of independence, Pakistan has been a recipient of US aid. However, this flow of aid was high during military rule in Pakistan and low during civilian rule. During 1947-1958, as part of its alliance with the US in SEATO and CENTO, Pakistan availed modest economic aid while receiving little military assistance. During the Ayub regime, Pakistan received ample economic and military aid. In the civilian rule of Zulfikar Ali Bhutto, Pakistan received modest economic aid with no military aid. In April 1979, the US placed sanctions on Pakistan because of its covert nuclear technology development, cutting off the majority of its military and economic support. Pakistan's strategic importance was altered with the Soviet invasion of Afghanistan. To halt the Soviet forces within Afghanistan, the US sought Pakistan's assistance. All sanctions were removed against Pakistan in December 1979, just a few months after they were put in place, and replaced with significant aid till the end of the Cold War. Once again sanctions were imposed when Pakistan conducted nuclear tests in May 1998. (Institute of Policy Studies, Islamabad, 2009).

Following the 1999 coup, Pakistan was subject to sanctions from the US, and its membership in the British Commonwealth was suspended. Both nations and other foreign donors put much pressure on Musharraf to reinstate democracy to qualify for foreign aid. Pakistan's international standing was significantly altered by the events of 11 September, as the US lifted nuclear and democracy sanctions (Mackenzie, 2005). After joining the war on terror, all sanctions were lifted and economic and military aid was increased (Institute of Policy Studies, Islamabad, 2009).

4.3. The role of the US in Pakistan's democratic transition in 2007-2008

This section discusses the significant role of the US in the democratic transition in Pakistan. Pakistan experienced its fourth democratic transition in 2008. The primary attributes of this

transition were an independent judiciary, an active civil society, consensus among political parties, and vibrant media. (Ahmad & Rafiq, 2016). However, we cannot ignore the role of the US in supporting democratic transition. The US supported the Musharraf regime until Musharraf had political legitimacy and the US felt that his military regime could combat terrorism better. The US started its support for democracy in Pakistan when they realized that Musharraf's position had declined and preferred to support democratic leadership in Pakistan to fulfil its counter-terrorism program (Tamana, 2010).

At the start, the US ignored the erosion of democracy in Pakistan while dealing with the Musharraf regime. Musharraf isolated the prominent leaders of PPP and PML-N; Benazir Bhutto was in exile abroad, and Nawaz Sharif was jailed and exiled for many years. During the Bush administration (2002-2004), the US supported the military regime in Pakistan but also wanted to urge him to restore democracy in Pakistan, at least publicly. For instance, before the October 2002 elections in Pakistan in a meeting with Musharraf, Bush urged him to adhere to democracy in Pakistan (Tamana, 2010).

The Bush Administration has also seen democracy promotion as a crucial component of its foreign policy agenda and a tool for fighting terrorism. The goals of promoting democracy remained relevant in the US presidential elections and during the 110th second session of Congress (Epstein, et al, 2007). In January 2005, at his second inaugural speech, President Bush made it clear that:

“It is the policy of the United States to seek and support the growth of democratic movements and institutions in every nation and every culture, with the goal of ending tyranny around the world.” (McFaul et al., 2007).

US President Bush, during a 2006 visit to Pakistan with President Musharraf, emphasized the need for an open election in Pakistan.

“We support democracy in Pakistan. The elections scheduled for 2007 are a great opportunity for Pakistan. The President understands these elections need to be open and honest. America will continue to work with Pakistan to lay the foundations of democracy. And I appreciate your commitment” (White House, 2006).

Benazir persisted in her effort to remove Musharraf from office and bring back democracy to Pakistan even when she was outside the country till 2007. She successfully unites several political parties to join the Alliance for Restoration of Democracy (ARD), a coalition meant to oppose Musharraf. In 2006, she and her erstwhile political opponent signed the Charter of Democracy. Various other political parties were also included in this pact to mount pressure on Musharraf. In the meantime, the US had been pressurizing Musharraf to engage in talks with the PPP and restore the political environment as the country was turned into a terrorist hub

(Hussain, 2018). Bhutto resides in London but frequently travels to the US capital; she made multiple visits to Washington in 2007. This was the year when the administration of Bush, in a covert effort, was working with Pakistani military and civilian governments to fight against the Taliban (Iqbal, 2018).

The 110th US Senate hearing, held on July 25, 2007, discussed many issues regarding democracy and extremism in Pakistan, the dismissal of the chief justice, and the expiration of the president's term (Senate Hearing, 2007). Many factors led to US support of democracy in Pakistan; first, the declining popularity and political isolation of Musharraf within Pakistan due to his support of the war on terror and his authoritarian policies, i.e., the dismissal of the judiciary in March 2007 and the imposition of an emergency in November 2007, second, Benazir Bhutto's continuous campaign for democracy in Pakistan, and third, the frustration of the US against Musharraf's failure to counter-terrorism (Tamana, 2010).

4.4. Abu Dhabi meeting July 2007

Benazir Bhutto, in her book *Reconciliation: Islam, Democracy, and the West*, commented that General Musharraf called her in August 2006 and asked her support for the women's rights bill by suggesting that moderate forces should work together, which showed common understanding among them was evolving from there. In the whole dialogue process, Benazir Bhutto was in London and Washington, and some PPP leaders were briefed about the process. With the mediation of the US, after holding numerous talks with the envoys of General Musharraf, Benazir met Musharraf in January 2007 to discuss the future of Pakistan. Benazir discussed all critical political and contentious issues with Musharraf, and his response was positive (Bhutto, 2014).

The suspension of Chief Justice Chaudhary in March 2007 by Musharraf led to widespread nationwide demonstrations and claims that the Pakistani leader was attempting to influence the Supreme Court's decision about whether he was eligible to run for a second five-year term under the country's constitution. Musharraf was elected as president in the 2002 election; his tenure was set to end in November 2007, and he was vying to seize both the post of president and army chief. To strengthen his hold on power in the face of the mounting challenges to his rule, Musharraf contacted the opposition leader and former prime minister Benazir Bhutto (Naqvi et al., 2007).

The US and the UK have been instrumental in bringing Ms. Bhutto and the military regime close to each other. Benazir Bhutto and President Gen. Pervez Musharraf again came across in Abu Dhabi, the capital of the UAE, on July 27, 2007, to end eight years of intense hostility and steer Pakistani politics in a new direction. However, the talks ended in an impasse. Many analysts believed this was the most unusual political coalition in decades in the country. Where a military dictator with an anti-corruption agenda had direct talks with a former prime minister. (Musharraf Benazir Discuss, 2007). Though she was against Musharraf, Bhutto promised to

work as prime minister in his administration if he reigned as the chief of the army, which would weaken Musharraf's grip on power (Naqvi et al., 2007).

4.5. National reconciliation ordinance backed by US

Bhutto visited Washington in September 2007, where she met a dozen US lawmakers and many senior US officials, and it was more fruitful than all her past visits (Iqbal, 2018). An October 2007 executive decree known as the National Reconciliation Ordinance (NRO) was designed to bring President Musharraf and Benazir Bhutto, the PPP leader, closer together by offering legal pardons to many PPP leaders. However, the NRO excluded the PPP's political opponents from this amnesty. Recognizing that Musharraf's government lacked legitimacy, Washington was keen to retain him as president and valued his partnership in the fight against terrorism, so it threw its weight behind the NRO. American authorities believed that if Bhutto were to become prime minister, her legitimacy would bolster Musharraf as President (Fair, 2013). The US-backed deal spurred the return of democracy by allowing the return of Benazir and Nawaz Sharif to the country (Dawn, 2012).

4.6. Imposition of emergency in 2007 and democratic transition in 2008

Musharraf justified his emergency rule by citing escalating extremism, lawlessness, and an "interfering judiciary" as the reasons behind his emergency rule (Aljazeera, 2007). Many analysts see Musharraf's "second coup" as a desperate attempt at consolidating power by a military leader who has lost all credibility. An ex-ambassador of the Bush Administration in Pakistan stated:

“Musharraf has committed the political equivalent of a suicide bombing. He blasted his political credibility and legacy, and in the process, killed the transition to civilian democracy. It is a tragedy” (Kronstadt, 2007).

The United States had already applied diplomatic pressure on General Musharraf to abstain from declaring emergency rule. On November 4, 2007, Condoleezza Rice, the Secretary of State, urged President Pervez Musharraf to lift emergency rule in Pakistan, but she also declared that the US would not turn its back on a vital ally in the war against terrorism. Musharraf's promises to remove his army uniform and hold elections by the first week of January were “*essential to getting Pakistan back on a democratic path*” but were only initial steps, Rice said. She also expressed that “*we are also encouraging that the state of emergency has got to be lifted and lifted as soon as possible.*” Under pressure from adversaries and allies in the West, General Musharraf declared that a general election would occur by 9th January 2008. In addition, the military leader declared at a press conference that he would leave the military and serve as a civilian president once the SC reversed its objection to his re-election as president (Eckert, 2007).

The Bush administration emphasized restoring democracy and changing the dual positions of president and military chief. Rice said we want Musharraf “*to make sure that people can compete for free and fair elections for the parliament, to start to establish that there is a moderate centre in Pakistan that will be equally committed to fighting terrorism and fighting extremism*” (Eckert, 2007). She said later that Washington would review the U.S. aid to Pakistan. Later on, the Pentagon proclaimed the delay in future high-level bilateral defence consultations (Kronstadt, 2007).

In a telephonic contact with President Musharraf on 7th November, U.S. President George W. Bush also urged him to restore democracy. Bush urged Musharraf to give up his military post and hold elections during his first direct talk with Musharraf since the imposition of an emergency by Musharraf. “*My message was that we believe strongly in elections and that you ought to have elections soon and you need to take off your uniform. You can't be the president and the head of the military at the same time*” (Cornwell & Bohan, 2007).

The government suppressed the opposition, human rights activists, lawyers, and media. Musharraf suppressed the opposition harshly. As a result, Benazir, who returned to Pakistan after eight years of exile after a government crackdown, vowed to end the power-sharing deal with Musharraf. Musharraf also dismissed the negotiations and called Bhutto “*too confrontational.*” The US called such “*extreme and unreasonable measures*” antonymous to the goal of democratic Pakistan (Kronstad, 2008).

After being confined under house arrest for the second time in five days, Benazir Bhutto, the opposition leader, demanded the resignation of President Musharraf and vowed to never serve under him in a future administration. John Negroponte, Deputy Secretary of State, who traveled to Pakistan due to the worsening political unrest, reaffirmed Washington's demand to abolish the emergency.

In reaction to Bhutto's statements, the Bush administration gave a measured response. “*We remain concerned... but we are hopeful that moderate elements would join together,*” Dana Perino, White House spokeswoman, said. Pakistan should resume its path to democracy, and “*the political parties in Pakistan should all be working together toward that goal,*” she said. Due to the military leader's limitations on free speech and public gatherings, fair elections would be difficult, she stated (Qureshi, 2007).

Under intense domestic protest and pressure from the US, Musharraf resigned as head of the army on November 28, 2007, and on December 15, he removed the state of emergency, enabling Pakistan to resume its democratic transition. Musharraf, as a civilian president, fulfilled a major demand of the world community by retiring from the military (Sharma, 2008). But a day before he lifted the emergency, he made amendments to the constitution to secure his position. As the media curbs were going on and the judiciary was stacked, the analysts were questioning any meaningful change by the lifting of the emergency. (Kronstandt, 2008).

Bhutto's death was a national tragedy for Pakistan, and it damaged the efforts of the U.S. to restore democracy (Kronstandt, 2008).

The general elections were scheduled for January 8, 2008, but were rescheduled after violence erupted due to the assassination of Benazir on December 27, 2007. Musharraf had lost the election in February 2008 with difficulty, as he had grown increasingly isolated politically. The ruling coalition had drafted accusations for Musharraf's impeachment, centred on claims that he had engaged in "gross misconduct". It frequently broke the constitution after a protracted military dictatorship, Musharraf resigned on August 18, 2008, to avoid the humiliation of being impeached, which allowed Pakistan to move towards a complete parliamentary democracy (Asghar, 2008).

President Bush remained silent regarding Musharraf's resignation. Secretary of State Condoleezza Rice emphasized supporting a democratic government in Pakistan and respecting the election result. She stressed continuity with Pakistan's new leadership, stating that the US will continue to pressure Pakistan's government to combat terrorism inside its borders (Perlez, 2008).

5. Conclusion

Pakistan has long endured under military rule, which adopted different means to prolong its rule. Even under civilian rule, the military played a significant role. Musharraf also followed the path of his predecessors and endured a long authoritarian rule in the name of restoring democracy and the economy. Pakistan was under nuclear and democracy sanctions when Musharraf staged a coup in 1999. After the events of 9/11, sanctions were removed, and the U.S. provided financial assistance to Pakistan in terms of its war on terror strategy. Initially, the U.S. supported Musharraf's military regime, which adopted undemocratic practices in dealing with its adversaries when opposition parties were barred from politics in 2002. The international legitimacy of the Musharraf regime increased his power at the domestic level. To seize more control and avoid a threat from the judiciary, Musharraf suspended the chief justice in March 2007, which saw nationwide protests. When Musharraf faced internal challenges, he contacted Benazir in July 2007, and finally, they made a deal with NRO in October 2007. This deal was supported by the U.S., which gave a new direction to the politics of Pakistan. The U.S. wanted to retain Musharraf as president and Benazir Bhutto as an upcoming prime minister. After Musharraf imposed an emergency in 2007, negotiations between Bhutto and Musharraf stalled. The U.S. exerted pressure on Musharraf by different means to lift the emergency and restore democracy. After heavy domestic and U.S. pressure, he resigned as army chief, lifted the emergency, and then resigned from the presidency in August 2008 to avoid impeachment charges.

Declaration of conflict of interest

The author(s) declared no potential conflicts of interest(s) with respect to the research, authorship, and/or publication of this article. There is no conflict of interests, whether financial or non-financial. The researcher(s) do not have any personal bias or affiliation in the matter under study.

Funding

The author(s) received no financial support for the research, authorship and/or publication of this article.

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Publisher's Note

IDEA PUBLISHERS (IDEA Publishers Group) stands neutral with regard to the jurisdictional claims in the published maps and the institutional affiliations.

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