



BETWEEN DEMOCRACY AND SECURITY: THE MILITARY'S ROLE IN PAK-US RELATIONS (2008-2013)

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Abstract

This study examines the role of Pakistan's military in shaping Pakistan–United States relations during the period 2008–2013, a phase characterized by democratic governance in Pakistan alongside significant security and foreign policy challenges. Despite the transition to civilian rule after the 2008 general elections, the military remained a dominant actor in managing key aspects of bilateral relations, particularly those related to counterterrorism, the War on Terror, intelligence cooperation, Afghanistan, and national security. Major events—including the Kerry–Lugar–Berman Act, the Raymond Davis incident, the Abbottabad operation, the Salala attack, and the reopening of NATO supply routes—highlighted the military's influence over strategic decision-making. Using qualitative analysis based on primary and secondary sources, this study argues that while civilian institutions formally conducted diplomacy, the military exercised substantial influence over Pakistan's security-oriented foreign policy toward the United States. The findings demonstrate that civil–military dynamics significantly shaped the direction, continuity, and constraints of Pakistan–US relations during 2008–2013.

Keywords: *Democracy, Foreign Policy, Military, Pak-US Relations, War on Terror.*

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1. Introduction

Pakistan–United States (Pak–US) relations have remained one of the most significant and complex bilateral relationships in South Asian politics. Since Pakistan's independence in 1947, the relationship has been characterized by alternating phases of strategic cooperation and mutual distrust, largely driven by changing regional and global security dynamics. During the Cold War, Pakistan emerged as a key American ally through its participation in security alliances such as the Southeast Asia Treaty Organization (SEATO) and the Central Treaty Organization (CENTO). Following the Soviet invasion of Afghanistan in 1979, cooperation between the two countries intensified as Pakistan served as the principal frontline state supporting the United States in the Afghan jihad. Although bilateral relations cooled after the end of the Cold War, the terrorist attacks of September 11, 2001, once again transformed Pakistan into a pivotal strategic partner in the United States-led Global War on Terror (Kux, 2001).

The period from 2008 to 2013 represents a particularly significant phase in Pak–US relations. It marked Pakistan's transition from military-led rule under General Pervez Musharraf to a democratically elected government headed by the Pakistan Peoples Party (PPP). Despite this constitutional transfer of power, Pakistan's military continued to exercise substantial influence over national security and foreign policy, particularly in matters concerning relations with the United States, Afghanistan, counterterrorism, and intelligence cooperation. This period demonstrated that while civilian institutions formally represented Pakistan in diplomatic engagements, the military remained the principal actor in shaping strategic decisions involving national security.

Several critical events during this period tested bilateral relations and revealed the military's central role in Pakistan's foreign policy decision-making. The passage of the Kerry–Lugar–Berman Act (2009), intended to strengthen civilian institutions through enhanced American assistance, generated strong reservations within Pakistan's military establishment regarding perceived external interference in domestic affairs. The Raymond Davis incident (2011), involving the killing of two Pakistani citizens by a CIA contractor, further complicated intelligence cooperation and exposed growing mistrust between the two countries. The unilateral United States operation that killed Osama bin Laden in Abbottabad in May 2011 represented one of the lowest points in bilateral relations, raising serious questions regarding Pakistan's sovereignty, intelligence capabilities, and the nature of military cooperation with the United States. Later that year, the Salala incident, in which NATO airstrikes killed twenty-four Pakistani soldiers, prompted Pakistan's military leadership to suspend NATO supply routes, demonstrating its decisive authority over strategic and security policy. The eventual reopening of these supply lines in 2012 further reflected the military's central role in negotiating and managing Pakistan's strategic relationship with Washington (Haqqani, *Magnificent Delusions: Pakistan, the United States, and an Epic History of Misunderstanding*, 2013).

The military's influence over Pak–US relations during this period can be understood within the broader context of Pakistan's civil–military relations. Since independence, Pakistan's armed forces have gradually evolved beyond their traditional defense responsibilities to become one of the country's most influential political institutions. Scholars argue that weaknesses in civilian governance, persistent security threats, regional conflicts, and institutional imbalances have enabled the military to maintain substantial authority over foreign and security policy (Cohen, 2004). Consequently, even under elected governments, decisions involving India, Afghanistan, nuclear policy, counterterrorism, and relations with the United States have largely remained within the military's strategic domain.

Theoretically, this study is informed by Samuel E. Finer's theory of military intervention, particularly his concepts of *disposition* and *opportunity*. Finer argues that military involvement in politics depends not only on the military's willingness and institutional capacity to intervene (disposition) but also on the existence of favorable political conditions that create opportunities for such influence (Finer, 2002). Although the military did not directly seize political power during 2008–2013, its institutional authority, organizational cohesion, and control over national security affairs enabled it to exercise significant indirect influence over Pakistan's foreign policy toward the United States. The framework is therefore particularly useful for explaining why civilian governments often lacked effective control over strategic foreign policy decisions despite operating within a democratic constitutional order.

This research examines the military's role in shaping Pak–US relations between 2008 and 2013 by analyzing major political, diplomatic, and security developments during the period. It seeks to evaluate the extent of military influence over bilateral decision-making, assess the interaction between civilian and military institutions in foreign policy formulation, and explain how security imperatives shaped Pakistan's engagement with the United States. Through qualitative analysis of official documents, academic literature, policy reports, and contemporary events, the study contributes to the broader understanding of Pakistan's civil–military relations and their implications for foreign policy behavior. It argues that although Pakistan experienced democratic governance during 2008–2013, the military remained the dominant strategic actor in managing the country's most sensitive relationship with the United States, illustrating the enduring centrality of the military in Pakistan's foreign policy architecture.

2. Pak-US Relations

Keeping strategic connections with the United States while simultaneously defending the nation's sovereignty and national interests were the key goals of Pakistan's foreign policy towards the United States under the Zardari administration. The government made an effort to strike a balance between relations with the US and other nations

including China, Iran, and Russia. (Fair, Fighting to the End: The Pakistan Army's Way of War , 2014).

Pakistan and the US continued to work closely together to combat terrorism while the Zardari administration was in office. Through the use of Pakistani airspace and land channels for the delivery of supplies and equipment, Pakistan assisted the United States logistically during its operations in Afghanistan. The military operation the government initiated to combat militants in the Swat Valley was applauded by the US.

In addition, Pakistan's government helped the US administration in its efforts to stabilize Afghanistan and advance peace and stability in the area. The United States mediated multiple rounds of negotiations between the Taliban and the Afghan government, which were held in Pakistan. The Pakistani government also backed the American government's initiatives to advance democracy and human rights in the area. (Rizwan, 2012).

In addition, Pakistan's government helped the US administration in its efforts to stabilize Afghanistan and advance peace and stability in the area. The United States mediated multiple rounds of negotiations between the Taliban and the Afghan government, which were held in Pakistan. The Pakistani government also backed the American government's initiatives to advance democracy and human rights in the area.

On the other side Pakistan, criticized American drone attacks on its territory because it saw them as an infringement on its sovereignty. The Pakistani government also voiced objections to the United States' use of Pakistan as a hub for the delivery of supplies and equipment to Afghanistan, which was viewed as a breach of national sovereignty. (Lodhi, 2011).

2.1. Kerry-Lugar Bill and Civil-Military Relations

Since Pakistan's inception as a nation, the United States and Pakistan have had a close relationship. Pakistan joined SEATO and CENTO in the 1950s, and the US helped it modernize its military in an effort to allay its fears about Indian security. The US also contributed crucial resources for economic growth. During the rule of Ayub Khan, the US received a base facility at Badaber, close to Peshawar, in exchange. Through military aid, which included everything from training to equipment, the US established direct ties with the military. While the military held authority, prestige, and influence at the period, the civilian governments were seen as being unstable and fragmented. Pakistan's foreign, defence, and security policies continue to be significantly influenced by the military authorities. Up until 2008, three military dictators who took power after the 1950s backed US foreign policy. One of the most ardent partners of the US in the War on Terror was General Pervez Musharraf, who took office as President of Pakistan in 1999. Following the 9/11 attacks, the US began a global anti-terrorism campaign, and Pakistan, a major player in the region, became a crucial ally. Pakistan was given more military and financial

backing from the US after the US classified Pakistan as a "non-NATO ally" in 2002. (Amir, 2009).

Pakistan endured great hardships as because of the War on Terror. In the war against terrorism, it became the frontline state and dealt with a number of security issues, such as the Taliban movement and social religious extremism. Frequent terrorist strikes, especially in Baluchistan and the tribal regions, caused the nation to become unstable and instilled dread in its citizens.

General Musharraf left behind a Pakistan that was politically unsound and economically precarious when he was forced to step down in 2008. Terrorism posed severe threats to the nation, and maintaining law and order was difficult. These difficulties and the War on Terror, in which American forces and their allies are engaged in combat in Afghanistan, were handed down to the new political leadership, which succeeded Musharraf (Subramaniam, 2009).

Throughout the Zardari presidency, the US established dual connections with Pakistan: one with the powerful security establishment and the other with the civilian government. In reality, the US's foreign policy was the result of two major political forces. The Pakistani state's civilian sector was as essential, even if the military was more crucial in the War on Terror. In the fight against terrorism, Pakistan's military and spy agency, ISI, worked along with the US. In addition to being institutional, relationships were also personal. Admiral Mullen and General Kayani, the head of the Pakistani army, got along well and had a similar idea of how to defeat terrorism.

In order to assert his control in military affairs—and because he needed US assistance for this—the Obama administration worked to improve relations with, the civilian government, under Zardari which was the first civilian President in ten years. Interests are the foundation of connections in politics. Since the military leadership was unwilling to comply with whatever Washington demanded of them, the Obama administration established relationships with the civilian government in order to accomplish their specific goals, which could not be accomplished by the military leadership.

In 2009, the US provided the civilian government with conditional economic assistance as part of the Kerry-Lugar Bill (KLB), which was designed to support the Zardari administration. The KLB was designed to give Pakistan enormous funds over the course of five years, but it was attached with requirements that Pakistan take particular actions to combat terrorism, nuclear proliferation, and violations of human rights. Some political and military officials in Pakistan opposed the bill because they believed it violated their country's sovereignty (Najam, 2020).

According to Husain Haqqani's book "Magnificent Delusions: Pakistan, the United States, and an Epic History of Misunderstanding," the US established a strategic alliance with Pakistan's military and intelligence establishment during the Zardari administration,

which strained relations between the military and the civilian government. The US increased the military's hold on power and reduced its accountability to civil authorities by giving it aid, equipment, and training to fight terrorism. On the other side, when the civilian government sought to exert its control over the military and put democratic changes into place, it was seen as being weak and ineffective (Haqqani H. , *Magnificent Delusions: Pakistan, the United States, and an Epic History of Misunderstanding*, 2013).

Pakistan conducted many military operations against extremist organizations within its borders as well as crucial logistical support for the US-led coalition forces in Afghanistan. The US and Pakistan's relationship, however, occasionally remained tense as Pakistan accused the US of violating its sovereignty and the US of giving terrorists safe havens in Pakistan.

The Kerry-Lugar Bill (KLB), which provided the civilian government with conditional economic help, alarmed Pakistan's military rulers. They saw the aid package as a threat to their institution, especially the problematic Section 302, "Monitoring Report," and clauses 11, 12, 13, and 15. President Zardari's allegiance to the nation was questioned by the military, which also deployed political parties and the media against the civilian administration. Because the KLB had specific provisions about Pakistan's non-state actors and listed specific locations at India's request, such as Muridke, where India suspected the preparation of the Mumbai attacks, they concluded that the KLB benefited Indian objectives. These provisions were introduced to the draught by Indian lobbyists in the United States to further the interests of their nation. (Nadim, 2019).

The military leadership suggested to the government that the KLB be discussed in the Parliament, which is a body that is representative of the people, in order to allay their worries. They were aware that political parties had already voiced opposition to the legislation and that a parliamentary discussion would only support that stance. The military's opposition to KLB revealed both their dominance over Pakistan's foreign and internal policy and their concern for national security. (Amin, 2021).

According to Athar Abbas:

The army provided its permission to the Kerry-Lugar-Berman draught after making sure it didn't contain any provisions that may affect Pakistan's military or national interests. This was done before sending it to the American Congress. The draught, however, was later changed without consulting the security establishment. The national interests and security may have been at stake, yet the Zardari administration nonetheless pursued this action. In response, the military asked the Zardari administration to ask Pakistan's Parliament to approve the updated draught.

In the midst of the Kerry-Lugar-Berman bill dispute, Pakistan had a national crisis. Shahbaz Sharif, the chief minister of Punjab, and Nisar, the leader of the opposition, met with the COAS in an effort to have the law approved in Parliament. Sharif was regarded as a capable and pragmatic leader who could show military support for his party.

Pakistan experienced a crisis in the midst of the debate over the Kerry-Lugar-Berman bill. Nisar, the head of the opposition, and Shahbaz Sharif, the chief minister of Punjab, met with the COAS to discuss getting the law adopted in Parliament. As a capable and practical leader who could demonstrate military support for his party, Sharif was well-liked (Akhtar n. , 2017).

In the past, parliamentarians in Pakistan supported the military authorities in altering the constitution since their connection with them was only motivated by mutual interests. This time, however, the opposition political and military parties united to overthrow the Zardari government in the better interests of Pakistan's stability, democratization, and security. A political party did not call for the military to remove the civilian government, which is noteworthy.

Due to the media's endorsement of the military's position on the KLB, the country developed anti-government and pro-military sentiments. This crisis brought to light Pakistan's complicated and precarious civil-military relations. (Ashraf, 2009).

Because of the huge pressure from both military and political groups, the Pakistani government introduced the Kerry-Lugar-Berman Bill (KLB) to Parliament. Chaudhry Nisar, the leader of the opposition, claimed that the measure did not help Pakistan and only supported American interests. A political group by the name of Jamaat-e-Islami (JI) organized a vote on whether Pakistan should accept US aid under the KLB for the first time in the nation's history. A total of 45 million ballots were printed for the referendum, and the KLB was rejected by the majority of voters.

This referendum was viewed as a significant demonstration of opposition to President Zardari's administration and in favor of the military leadership. The JI has a history of backing military governments in Pakistan, notably those that imposed martial law under General Zia and ousted Bhutto's administration in 1977.

Differences appeared among the military, political parties and the government in Pakistan was brought on by the Kerry-Lugar-Berman Bill (KLB). Although internal pressure forced the Pakistan People's Party (PPP) to declare that Pakistan would not take help unless the US addressed Pakistan's concerns, the PPP saw the KLB as a victory for the democratic government.

Despite this pressure, the administration maintained that the KLB was a democratic policy that aided in the growth of the private sector. Although the KLB offered assistance exclusively to the democratic government, US Secretary of State Hillary Clinton noted that Pakistan had made the decision to accept help and that the US had already supplied major military assistance to Pakistan (Haidar, 2018). The spokesman of the government of that time, Farhatullah Babar is of the view:

Because the help was sent directly to the civilian government to promote the nation's democratic endeavors, the military in Pakistan was hesitant to accept it. The primary worry of the military was that President Zardari would be able to elevate military

commanders under the Kerry-Lugar-Berman Bill's (KLB) provisions, politicizing the military institution. The issue was that the money was being used for military reasons by the government rather than the armed forces. The military leadership was concerned about this because they thought it may jeopardize the institution's independence and impartiality. (Lieven, Pakistan: A Hard Country, 2011).

General Rashid Qureshi offered his opinion on the Kerry-Lugar-Berman Bill's (KLB) potential repercussions while the Pakistani military defended their worries about the legislation. According to him, the army and police would function identically if political leaders were given the authority to transfer soldiers.

General Qureshi expressed concern over the government's capacity to control other tainted organizations in the nation and how this would affect the military's independence from political sway and corruption. The only institution with discipline and a practice of merit was the military, and General Qureshi believed that if the KLB were permitted to operate as approved by the American Congress, personal influence and political allegiance would take precedence over merit and professional competence. Along with mobilizing opposing political parties to express their concerns, the military also started a media offensive against the KLB. (Ahmad N. , Military and the Foreign Policy of Pakistan, 2012)

Not only did the Pakistani government and military disagree over the Kerry-Lugar-Berman Bill (KLB), but the Pakistani military also disagreed with the US administration. By dispatching Foreign Minister Shah Mehmood Qureshi to the Obama Administration to express the Army's concerns, the Zardari government tried to make up with the military.

After Section 302 was deleted, President Obama signed the Bill. A certificate explaining that the US did not aim to jeopardize Pakistan's security was also attached by the US. The US and Pakistan had a military-to-military connection, and the KLB-related tensions between them were unlike anything that had occurred since 9/11.

Between Pakistan's security establishment and the Obama Administration, the KLB led to significant disagreements. Following 9/11, cooperation between the army and intelligence services (ISI-CIA) grew, but the KLB put the two nations' bilateral relations in jeopardy. The Pakistani military saw the Bill as an attempt to undercut its privileged position in the balance of power in the nation.

As soon as the Obama Administration became aware of the confidence gap the KLB had caused, senior American envoys met with military chiefs to discuss their complaints. A win for the military, media, and opposition political parties who had all contributed significantly was the removal of the KLB's criteria. The world recognizes the army as a significant participant in security policies thanks to the new media's support of the military in areas where civilian capability is limited.

2.2. The Raymond Davis Case

The incarceration of Raymond Davis, a CIA contractor, after the Pakistani government refused to assist the US, was mostly due to the army and ISI, two formidable

organizations in that country. Due to the strain this episode caused between the US and Pakistan; the US was forced to turn to the ISI for assistance.

At that time, numerous CIA agents applied for visas, but the ISI rejected their requests. One of them, Raymond Davis, was denied clearance by the ISI. Several CIA agents were granted visas by the then-ambassador Husain Haqqani, which was not approved by the ISI. Haqqani abused his position of authority, and Rehman Malik, the interior minister, President Zardari, and Prime Minister Gillani were all aware of it. (Amin, 2021). They finally jeopardized the security of the nation by giving Haqqani carte blanche to award visas to anyone.

Particularly when it came to Pakistan's relations with the US, Haqqani had a big impact on the president and prime minister's policies. When it granted 2800 CIA agents visas overnight under the Zardari administration, Pakistan's embassy in the US created an unusual precedent. Zardari gave Haqqani exceptional authority to issue visas to Americans without requiring them to receive security clearance from the ISI or IB.

As a result, there was a lot of tension over the visa issue between the government and the ISI. Selected journalists were invited to a briefing by the ISI in order to reveal the PPP administration's visa policies, which allowed the CIA to grow its spy network across the nation. The goal of this conference was to increase public pressure against government policy. (Siddiqi, 2011).

Both Pakistan's political and military leadership were put to the test by the Raymond Davis affair. Davis, a CIA contractor who had murdered two Pakistanis in Lahore in January 2011, was later detained by the Punjab Police. Political tension increased as a result of the incident, which drew criticism for the Zardari administration from both the general public and the opposition parties. The nation's anti-American feeling was greatly influenced by the media.

Many Pakistanis were horrified that the government had granted CIA agents visas and freedom, believing that this allowed them to roam freely and even kill Pakistani residents without repercussions. This opinion was expressed by a resident of Lahore, who claimed that the government had failed to protect its own population and that it was unique in Pakistan's history for a foreigner to invade the nation and murder its citizens. The US-Pakistan relationship is becoming more tense as a result of this case, which only served to fuel anti-American sentiment in Pakistan. (Yusuf H. , 2011).

Pakistan's general populace was bitterly hostile to both the American government and the Zardari one during the Davis affair. Since the Punjab government was in charge of the case, Davis was detained in Lahore for his involvement in a double murder investigation. Davis was said to have diplomatic immunity by the US Embassy, but the average Pakistani did not comprehend this idea and thought Davis should be held accountable for his acts under Pakistani law (Hassan, 2011).

Due to pressure from their supporters, the Zardari administration and pro-American legislators were unable to help Davis very much. President Obama and Congressmen pressed Zardari to free Davis, in contrast to the US, where the rule of law is widely revered. Tensions between the US and Pakistan were brought on by this circumstance, which emphasised the disparities between the two nations' political and judicial systems.

The army, the ISI, and the US government were now involved in the Raymond Davis case, making it a complicated matter. The US government stepped up its pressure on Pakistan at the same time, even delaying planned discussions between the two nations and hinting that Pakistan would face penalties. Given that Pakistan was getting aid from the US and that its military was battling extremists in the FATA region, this was a major cause for concern for Pakistan. General Pasha, Director General of the ISI, was tasked with finding a swift and amicable solution to the problem in order to stop the situation from getting worse. The problem was successfully resolved by General Pasha by paying the victims' relatives in accordance with Islamic law, which helped to rebuild the ISI and CIA's relationship and normalize their engagement. (Husain, 2017).

According to Athar Abbas;

Davis's release was complicated by the situation and was subject to pressure from Pakistani and US public opinion. Due to this pressure, the government was unable to handle the problem, and the ISI was essential in coming up with a solution that would not further harm Pakistan's relations with the US. The most sensible way to free Davis was to come to an agreement with the families of the victims since there was a risk that he might be murdered in jail as a result of the outrage that the public had towards him. Davis would not have been able to escape the double murder allegations brought against him without the help of the ISI and the army. The US and Pakistan were able to come to an agreement in this way that wouldn't put additional strain on their already delicate relationship (Akhtar n. , 2017).

2.3. The Abbottabad Incident

To neutralize the threat posed by Al Qaeda and its affiliates, the US and its allies waged a global war on terrorism. Under Musharraf's military leadership, Pakistan enlisted in the conflict and vowed to protect its own national interests while preventing terrorists from using its territory. Osama Bin Laden, the head of Al Qaeda, was however assassinated by US forces in Abbottabad, a small town close to the Pakistan Military Academy, shocking the world on May 2, 2011. The ISI and the army, who had been working with the US and the CIA in their anti-terrorism efforts, were also made to seem bad by this occurrence, in addition to Pakistan. (Hersh, 2016). The operation on Abbottabad destroyed trust and left the Pakistani army and ISI on the defensive. The US had carried out a secret operation on Pakistani soil without telling the Pakistani government or requesting their participation, despite sharing information with the CIA and offering logistical support to

NATO forces. It was difficult for Pakistani agencies to continue working with their American colleagues in the war against terrorism after this episode damaged relations between Pakistan and the US. (Jan, 2017).

The relationship between the civilian and military leadership of Pakistan has been significantly impacted by outside forces. A good example of this is the 1999 Kargil conflict. The war was started without the consent of the civilian government by General Musharraf, who was then the Chief of Army Staff. When the government opted to leave under pressure from the US, this caused a divide between the military and civilian authority.

The military and civilian government's relationship became even more strained as a result of the military's perception that the civilian administration failed them in the Kargil war. General Musharraf, who was feeling bad, attributed the nation's and the army's low morale at the moment to the Prime Minister. This episode emphasizes the gap between civilian and military leadership and how outside circumstances might affect their relationship. (Mazari, 2003).

The Abbottabad episode was another incident that had a considerable effect on the harmony between civilian and military leadership. Although the ISI and the army failed in this, the civilian administration gave the military political support. The incident sparked a sense of pride in the country that drew the military and civilian leadership together. The civilian administration of Pakistan "fully backed the military and ISI during the time of distress as it was a matter of national security," according to former Pakistani Prime Minister Yousaf Raza Gillani. This suggests that the administration believed that the military's and ISI's actions were required to safeguard the nation's interests.

Furthermore, it appears from the remark that the government supported the army when the US assaulted Pakistan's sovereignty. This suggests that the government of Pakistan may have been forced to back the military in response to US actions that endangered Pakistan's national security. (Willasey-Wilsey, 2022). The declaration also emphasizes the part played by the political establishment in aiding the military in this time of need. It implies that the army was not left to confront criticism from the international community on its own by the government. This suggests that, in spite of worldwide condemnation, the administration accepted responsibility for justifying the actions committed by the military and ISI.

The US had great success with the Abbottabad operation, which marked a significant advancement in the fight against terrorism. It enabled President Obama to solidify his position as a successful leader on a global scale. But because the operation was carried out without the Pakistani government's approval, the already precarious ties between the two nations were strained, harming Pakistan's reputation internationally.

The US neglected to acknowledge Pakistan's assistance to its forces and failed to take into account how the operation may affect Pakistan's democratically elected

government. As a result, Pakistan's reputation and image were compromised. On the other hand, the operation's success helped the US acquire more respect around the world. Due to competing interests, the history of relations between Pakistan and the US has been marked by a lack of trust. Between the two nations, which have historically been political and security allies, this mistrust has caused barriers. (LAHOUD, 2022).

The US administration did not have faith in Pakistan's democratically elected leadership or its military elites in the instance of Osama bin Laden's assassination. Obama believed that by requesting Pakistan's approval for the raid, bin Laden would be able to flee. Despite sharing information with the CIA, the US did not attack on its own to kill bin Laden, according to the ISI. This conduct shattered the confidence between the two nations and gave Pakistan a sense of betrayal. The Pakistani military acknowledged that an internal flaw had caused the operation, but they also emphasized to the US that this success would not have been feasible without the assistance of the ISI. The response from the military was one of intense rage and frustration against the American forces. Due to the negative impact this episode had on the two nations' forces' ability to work together; Pakistan cut back on the number of US trainers. It is thought that a member of the ISI acting on his behalf gave the US military certain intelligence that enabled them to locate Osama Bin Laden (Haqqani H. , What Pakistan Knew About the Bin Laden Raid, 2015).

National interests are given priority over interpersonal friendships and connections in international politics. This is clear from the fact that General Kayani and Admiral Mullen, Chairman of the US Joint Chiefs of Staff, did not discuss the likelihood of an American attack in Pakistan despite having a personal relationship. This suggests that, in terms of their interests, the US did not contemplate discussing a matter this vital with the Pakistani elite.

After operation "Neptune Spear," which ended in the death of Osama Bin Laden, Admiral Mullen called General Kayani politely at 5:00 am. However, this did not imply that Mullen had any influence over Obama's policies; rather, it was an act of kindness. Obama's administration was unaware of the anger the incident would generate in Pakistan, where there were conflicting views on the US military alliance. Mullen and Kayani are now further apart as a result of this procedure.

Mullen attempted to defend the raid's position on his visit to Pakistan, but General Kayani declined to meet with him. Instead of meeting at GHQ, a meeting was set up with General Khalid Shamim, Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff Committee (CJCSC). This shows that the relationship between Mullen and Kayani had been strained by the operation and that the two leaders had grown apart as a result of their competing agendas. (Schmidle, 2011).

In Pakistan, the military's reputation suffered as a result of the US attack. In Pakistan, public opinion can shift quickly, and the military is frequently viewed as the "guardian," "protector," and "defender" of the state. The military's reputation was damaged

during the lawyers' movement, but General Kayani was able to salvage it by contributing to the peaceful resolution of political unrest.

Sadly, the sad event in Abbottabad ruined the military's reputation, especially the involvement of ISI, which was sharply criticized by the populace, the media, and political parties. Pakistan's populace lambasted both the US and Pakistani administrations for what it saw as a violation of Pakistan's sovereignty in the attack. The president, however, seems to think otherwise. In a piece that appeared in the Washington Post, he praised the US victory and his government's accomplishment without expressing any concern for the strike that was carried out within Pakistan. The assault on Pakistan's independence was perceived by the Pakistani military as a humiliation, and the society was outraged. President Zardari, however, chose a more subtle tack and refrained from reacting angrily. (Rollins, 2011).

In a democracy, leaders usually communicate these situations to the populace to prevent criticism. Leaders in Pakistan's military and political parties, however, frequently work to keep the public unaware of such instances. President Zardari and Prime Minister Gillani did not address the nation to discuss the attack in Abbottabad.

During a news conference, the civilian government did issue a statement, but it was predicated more on conjecture than actual data. The Interior Minister was in charge of both internal and exterior security, although he was unaware of the attack. He stated that "trained terrorists had taken refuge in the building and they were killed at the right time." He learned about the US military's invasion on Pakistan through the media. In general, the government's response to the attack was inadequate, and the tension was only increased by the lack of transparency with which information was shared with the public (S.Deeks, 2011).

The media has grown to play a big role in Pakistani society over time and has a substantial influence on people's social and political behavior. The fact that Pakistan is a direct target of terrorism has made people more aware of and concerned about political and security issues. The print and electronic media were not free and independent in Pakistan in the past. But robust, unrestricted media was offered while previous President Musharraf was in office, and it is still available today.

The media today has a significant impact on society, bringing to light problems with Pakistan's domestic and foreign policy. During the Zardari administration, the media was instrumental in bringing every issue to light. The media's support of the army and ISI during the KLB dispute was acknowledged by the military as well. The military, however, criticized the media's function in discussing security and defence issues following the Abbottabad event and blamed the civilian administration for its inability to exert control over the media.

The public's ire, which had already begun to simmer with the release of the CIA spy, was further stoked by the way the media portrayed the matter with inadequate facts.

As a result, the media now plays a crucial role in shaping public opinion and behavior on political and social issues in Pakistan. (Marwan, 2017).

The Abbottabad raid in 2011 that resulted in Osama bin Laden's death has had a considerable effect on Pakistan's view of the military danger. Prior to this occurrence, the US, Afghanistan, and NATO were not categorized as hostile nations by the Joint Strategic Directive (JSD), which had previously designated India as a prospective foe. Instead, the US was regarded as a friendly nation, and there was little evidence that they posed a threat.

But Pakistan was caught off guard and betrayed by the Abbottabad tragedy. Without Pakistan's knowledge or consent, the US was found to be carrying out intelligence activities there. In truth, Obama had promised to deploy the military force against terrorists in Pakistan during his 2007 presidential campaign, and it was JSD's fault and incompetence that they failed to take him seriously. The military threat assessment of Pakistan has changed as a result of this episode, and they now recognize that even friendly nations can endanger their security. The necessity for Pakistan to reevaluate its ties and exercise greater caution while dealing with other nations has been brought to light. (Hoodbhoy, 2014).

Western democracies have a history of holding their leaders responsible for their actions, especially when there is internal unrest that could have detrimental effects on the nation and society. Governments in these situations typically embrace failure, acknowledge their errors, and, if required, offer their resignation in the event of a significant failure on their side. However, even democratic regimes in Pakistan frequently play the victim rather than own up to their mistakes.

This was especially true after the Abbottabad episode, which damaged the reputation of the Zardari administration's already poor standing. The Prime Minister left for France while the opposition parties urged that the government resign, citing a prearranged trip that could not be postponed as his justification for his actions and leaving the matter unsolved.

Following the Abbottabad operation some lawmakers started attacking the military and raising concerns about the military budget. This presented an issue because the military is a national institution that is essential to maintaining national security. The military's role was further criticized as a result of certain monies being shifted from it to civilian help as a result of the poor relations with the US following the attack. (Pande, 2011).

The Abbottabad tragedy brought the civil and military leadership together for a brief period despite their regular policy differences, personal preferences, and propensity to place blame. In response to the incident, both organizations had to make a powerful statement to the world and the United States. The civilian administration provided the military and the Inter-Services Intelligence (ISI), who needed it at this critical moment, with political support. In Parliament, the military demanded that the civilian administration

reach an understanding on security-related matters. Since the Pakistani people had previously supported the military, they sought to gain their support. After Raza Rabbani, the chairman of the Parliamentary Committee on National Security (PCNS), declined to show up for a meeting at General Headquarters, the military asked for the Parliamentary session.

The Committee was only permitted to have meetings inside the Parliament House, per the rules. The Army and ISI commanders nevertheless stood before Parliament, demonstrating their subordination to the executive branch. The Army received a message that Parliament was in charge and that the Army was under its authority when the Committee declined to attend the meeting at GHQ. This statement reaffirmed the democratic ideals of civilian oversight of the armed forces, which is a crucial element of every democracy. It also emphasized the fact that the Pakistani people could hold the Army and ISI accountable through their representatives in parliament. The Committee made it clear that the military must function within the confines of Pakistan's democratic institutions rather than acting outside of them by asserting its authority in this manner (Nawaz, 2019).

Zardari won a tremendous political and historical triumph when he managed to invite the military leadership into the Parliament House. For the first time in a joint session of the Parliament, the military establishment faced the political parties and responded to their inquiries. The PML-N, Nawaz's party, was especially critical because of its history of being victimized under Musharraf, which had resulted in the party's fragmentation. During this session, the military and legislators directly disagreed with one other. After the US operation in Abbottabad, which had insulted Pakistan's honor, Chaudhry Nisar, the opposition leader at the time, made it quite plain that someone needed to be held accountable.

Though civilian leaders think the military has turned Pakistan into a "security state," the military maintains that civilian governments don't understand "national interest." Contrary to popular belief, political forces stood up for the interests of the country by passing a resolution opposing drone strikes and vehemently denouncing the unilateral action taken by US forces in Abbottabad. Due to the fact that representatives of the people are responsible for defining and protecting national interests rather than placing this completely in the hands of the military or other non-elected authorities, it is clear how crucial democratic institutions are to the formulation of national interests.

When the democratic government in Pakistan fails to act fast and look into security or political matters rapidly, support for it is often low. When such problems develop, Pakistani citizens seek swift justice and investigations, but political leadership frequently falls short of their expectations. For instance, after Benazir Bhutto's murder in 2007, the government of her own party, headed by her husband Zardari, failed to find those responsible. (Aziz F. , 2011).

The Zardari administration appointed an impartial commission to look into the Abbottabad event. Even after a month of inquiry, the commission only came to the conclusion that all accountable institutions should issue public apologies and that voters would make their political judgments during the elections. Despite this advice, no one ever issued a formal apology, and the situation remained open-ended. The public's confidence in the government's capacity to bring justice and accountability was further damaged by this failure to handle the problem in a meaningful way.

2.4. Incident of Salala Border Post

Since many years ago, particularly during the military administrations of Ayub and Zia, Pakistan and the US have been allies. The collaborations were founded on common goals and advantages for both parties. The collaboration formed under Musharraf, though, was distinct. The two nations' relations have evolved since the 9/11 attacks. Although there was close collaboration to eradicate the terrorist threat, over time there was a decline in mutual trust between the two nations. This hostility was heightened in November 2011 following the attack on two security stations in Salala, Mohmand Agency, by NATO forces, murdering 26 Pakistani personnel.

These subsequent episodes on Pakistani soil altered the nature of the US-Pakistani alliance, partnership, and coordination. However, they did, albeit briefly, improve the relationship between the military and civil authority. The Salala attack was a turning point in Pakistan's and the United States' ties. Due to their intense hurt, the military and government of Pakistan made extreme decisions. The Defence Committee of Cabinet (DCC) ordered that NATO's supply channel be cut off and that US forces stationed at the Air location in Pakistan abandon the location where drone operations were launched within 15 days. Pakistan further requested an official US apology for the Salala incident. This decision was carried out by the civilian government at a significant expense to the US. The United States promptly expressed its condolences, but the government's stance remained the same. (Malik A. R., 2012).

US forces responded with the Salala operation in November 2011 because they thought Pakistan sponsored the Haqqani organisation, which had just two months before attacked the US embassy and NATO office in Kabul. Because of this incident, American soldiers began to feel that the Pakistani army was failing to combat the Taliban, and claims that ISI was complicit with the Haqqani network in Afghanistan were made. Admiral Mullen at the time, who collaborated closely with Kayani, claimed that the Haqqani network was a "true arm of Pakistan's ISI" and that the ISI was to blame for its backing.

The Salala attack brought Pakistan's civic and military leadership together, as did the prior Abbottabad event. The Pakistani people and the military forces would defend Pakistan, according to a unanimous resolution adopted at an All-Parties Conference. Tensions between the two countries rose as a result of Pakistan's denial of the US charges

that it supported the Haqqani network. (Akhtar, Civil-Military Relations During Zardari, 2017).

In an effort to diffuse the situation, the US high command assigned Air Force Brigadier General Stephen Clark to investigate the NATO strike on the Pakistani base. However, the Pakistani army dismissed the findings, claiming that "NATO attacked in self-defense." The NATO strike on Salala was the fault of both Pakistan and the US.

Pakistani citizens and political parties' attitudes shifted in the wake of the Salala incident and anti-American sentiment grew. The nation as a whole supported the military, giving it strength. It was a brave move by General Kayani to direct the Pakistani army to retaliate against NATO forces. The two armies might have ended up facing each other on the western frontiers as a result of this choice. Thus, the Salala attack had a significant impact on Pakistan's and the United States' relationship.

Despite the tensions brought on by the Salala incident, Pakistan and the US both understood the value of their cooperation and worked in talks and diplomacy to overcome their disagreements. Once the US apologized, Pakistan reopened the NATO supply, and diplomatic efforts eventually paid off. After reaching a "pragmatic compromise" in response to the US apologies, both nations realized that their battle against terrorism depended on one another, and they reengaged. In order to remain an ally in the fight against terrorism, Pakistan had made it clear that an apology was required. By using diplomatic means, this settlement was established, and it assisted in repairing some of the damage brought on by the Salala raid. (Rashid, 2014).

2.5. The Memogate Scandal

Both domestic and external forces affected Pakistan's civil-military ties under the Zardari administration. The nature of their relationship was influenced by both trust and mistrust. Mistrust between people and the military was significantly worsened by the Salala and Abbottabad incidents, in particular.

After the Abbottabad tragedy, Pakistan's political climate was unfavorable for the military establishment since they needed political backing to uphold their reputation as the country's guardian. The episode had tarnished the military's prestige, and in order to repair it, they needed the support of the civilian administration. During the Zardari administration, a variety of internal and external circumstances complicated the relationship between the military and civilians. The Memogate controversy was a crucial incident that, like the Kerry Lugar Bill, had a mobilizing impact on the Pakistani people and opposition political groups, who started to express their support for the military. The Memogate affair reinforced the public's misperception of President Zardari and his party, who were thought to have harmed Pakistan's reputation and national interest, and was therefore considered as a potential catalyst for a military takeover.

The Memogate scandal concerns a contentious memo that Husain Haqqani, a former Pakistani ambassador to the US, is said to have penned at the president's request in

order to prevent a military takeover in Pakistan after Osama bin Laden was killed in Abbottabad. In a memo sent to Admiral Mike Mullen, the head of the US Joint Chiefs of Staff, the US offered to intervene to put an end to the military coup in exchange for a shift in foreign policy in favor of the US. (aljazeera, 2012).

The document first came to light in late 2011, setting off a political uproar in Pakistan. It was strongly denounced as a treasonous act and an attempt to undermine the sovereignty of the nation by the military, opposition groups, and several media outlets. Haqqani was compelled to leave the US and resign as ambassador after being charged with being the brains behind the document.

As the military accused the government of being engaged in the purported attempt to undermine its authority, the Memogate affair further strained Pakistan's already difficult civil-military relations. A judicial investigation into the affair and calls for Zardari's resignation were also brought on by the incident. (Jaffrelot C. , 2015).

A judicial panel was established by the Pakistani Supreme Court in 2012 to look into the validity of the document and its alleged involvement in the destabilization of the nation's security apparatus. The commission's findings were ambiguous and failed to prove the veracity of the letter due to a dearth of evidence. But the controversy had a long-lasting effect on Pakistan's political climate and aggravated civil-military ties. (Amin, 2021).

This issue not only angered the military but also sparked debates over Zardari's allegiance to Pakistan, causing splits within the civil government. A coup was likely as a result of Memogate, but the issue was resolved when the civil and military leadership agreed to establish a judicial panel to look into it. Memogate, in spite of this resolution, worsened Pakistan's already precarious civil-military relations.

The Memogate incident significantly affected security in Pakistan and political discourse. The media, mainstream political parties, and civic society all condemned the incident. As a result, the military's reputation significantly improved, while public support for the civilian administration decreased.

President Zardari and his ally, Ambassador Haqqani, were implicated in the controversy and accused of trying to sabotage the military establishment and enlisting foreign assistance to harm their nation. Zardari's pledge to safeguard Pakistan and the constitution was broken by this action. (TheDawn, 2011).

A Financial Times story written by US businessman Mansoor Ijaz, who is of Pakistani descent, was instrumental in bringing the incident to light. Civil-military relations changed as a result of this event, strengthening the military's position. The democratic administration did not have a good post-Abbottabad situation, and there was a chance that the military may overthrow the Zardari government to shift the blame.

It's vital to remember that the Pakistani military has never permitted the civilians to look into or conduct any investigations into it or its agencies. If the civilian administration raised concerns about the military's professionalism, the military's

privileged status would be jeopardized, harming its reputation as Pakistan's "guardian". As a result, civilians would be forced to have less faith in the military. (Lieven, Pakistan: A Hard Country, 2012).

Following the Memogate controversy, Zardari's defensive stance to defend his regime led to a face-to-face conflict with the Armed Forces. Zardari himself did not work against the army or ISI; rather, his colleague Haqqani did. Being a Washingtonian, Zardari thought Haqqani would protect his position in power. He portrayed to the US the possibility that if civilians were driven from positions of authority, "Pakistan would become a sanctuary for Al Qaeda." The Memo affair occurred at an unfavorable time since the military and the government was already coping with the fallout from the Salala assaults.

A military coup may have been started more easily by the Memo Affair than by KLB. It laid out six principles for how Pakistani national security will operate. Zardari was terrified, but the army had no plans to take over as the nation dealt with both internal and external difficulties. The army was also aggressively battling militancy. After the Abbottabad strike, the security establishment seems to indicate that the army would intervene if Zardari and Gillani attempted to remove Pasha or Kayani.

The political system is significantly impacted by outside forces and interventions, which can change how the various institutions balance power. The political climate in Pakistan was significantly impacted by Memogate in particular. It enhanced military might while weakening the Zardari regime. The material Husain Haqqani delivered to the US military command required to be examined by the military before any action was taken. The President and Prime Minister were disregarded in this affair, nevertheless, by Kayani and Pasha. Directly approaching the key source, the DG ISI travelled to London to meet Mansoor Ijaz. The legitimacy of the memo and Haqqani participation were confirmed by Admiral Mullen, making the Zardari government vulnerable. (Shah, Constraining consolidation: military politics and democracy in Pakistan (2007– 2013), 2014).

The Parliamentary Committee on National Security (PCNS) was established by the government to conduct a democratic investigation into the memo scandal. However, the military declined to show up in front of the committee, and the PCNS broke down. After the PML-N filed a request for an inquiry with the Supreme Court, Memogate was designated as a "national security threat" by the ISI. In response, Prime Minister Gillani warned the army that the government would not tolerate a "state within a state." The military's demand for Haqqani resignation furthered the Zardari regime's decline in support as it lost credibility. In the end, the government acceded to the army chief's demand to get rid of Haqqani in order to preserve the nation's security and power.

Mansoor Ijaz declined to travel to Pakistan and instead made his speech via satellite link, while Husain Haqqani came in from the US to defend his position against the military's charges. Zardari and Gillani sided with Haqqani, while Generals Pasha and

Kayani took a different position and provided the Supreme Court with a response that established the veracity of the Memogate plot against Pakistan's Army and security. Zardari believed the conspiracy was being orchestrated by the ISI, a former power broker, whilst Gillani thought it was being carried out by some anti-state elements. Haqqani departed Pakistan and did not return despite the investigation and directives from the Supreme Court, using the justification that he was a US citizen and hence not subject to Pakistani laws. (Devasher, 2018).

In order to survive a scandal, the government was in a precarious situation and need assistance from other organizations. The army did not trust the government, despite the government's backing for the army and ISI following the events in Abbottabad and Salala. By failing to inform the government of his meeting with Mansoor Ijaz and ignoring the Prime Minister, the DG ISI broke the law. When the Prime Minister criticized the army and ISI for their response to the Court, civil-military ties significantly deteriorated. When it was announced that the army and ISI leaders would be fired by the government, the situation became more tense. A Supreme Court petition was then filed to prevent this from happening. A pro-democracy resolution prohibiting any political backing for a military coup was enacted by the administration using Parliament to demonstrate its power to the military and political parties.

The resolution in favor of democracy was a signal to the armed forces from the democratic administration that all political groups supported the government. The Supreme Court had warned the government to send a letter to the Swiss court requesting that the cases against Zardari be reopened, or the Prime Minister will lose his or her position. Top commanders met with COAS Kayani and decided to back this warning. This gathering reaffirmed the gap between the military and civic authorities. Tensions were reduced after the Prime Minister retracted his claim that the COAS and DG ISI's response was illegal and unconstitutional. The NRO problem compounded the political situation because the judiciary and executive both asserted themselves in their respective realms. The Memogate Judicial Commission report accused Haqqani and tarnished the reputation of Zardari's administration. The government tried to regulate the ISI through law, but the bill did not receive enough Senate support. The military typically prevailed in disputes with Zardari's administration, and the government complied with its recommendations to avoid losing control. (Nawaz, 2019).

2.6. Foreign Relations and Military's Veto

Each state develops its foreign policy with a clear connection to its security and national interests. Intelligence agencies are essential in developing national security. Foreign policy cannot be made without their input. The ISI and the military both play important roles in this process in Pakistan. Without the military's input or backing, civil administrations cannot decide on issues pertaining to national security. In any state, the

military is must for the Foreign Office to operate effectively. Even the American State Department depends on its intelligence network's assistance to function properly.

Throughout its history, Pakistan's foreign policy has through various stages of growth, notably during the Cold War, the post-Cold War era, the period following the 9/11 attacks, and the War on Terror. The interactions between Pakistan and other nations have been impacted by these world events. Throughout all of these phases, the military dominated the security paradigm, which affected Pakistan's foreign policy. Former Pakistani Foreign Secretary Riaz Khokhar asserts that foreign policy is opportunistic and shifts depending on the context. In Pakistan, decisions regarding foreign policy are not primarily made by the foreign minister or foreign office. Lower-level offices, in contrast, write position papers and hold discussions with other parties. The Foreign Office then creates a summary and sends it to the Head, who consults with all parties, including the military and government departments, to get their opinions on certain topics. In matters pertaining to India, Kashmir, China, the United States, Afghanistan, and Iran, Pakistan's foreign policy is primarily shaped by the military's General Headquarters (GHQ) (Jones, Pakistan: Eye of the Storm. Yale University Press., 2010).

On significant foreign policy issues, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs (MOFA) has typically taken the military's perspective into consideration. Benazir Bhutto constantly asked the military to participate in crucial foreign policy decisions, despite her frustration with the military's opinions on international issues. However, for the sake of the nation, civilian leaders must cooperate with other state institutions. The only civilian prime minister who managed foreign policy and infrequently sought advice from GHQ was Zulfikar Ali Bhutto. When a civilian government is unable to handle foreign relations or when the military establishment does not trust the democratic leadership, as was the case with Benazir Bhutto and President Asif Zardari, the military steps in. When Zardari came into office, he made an effort to act with actual authority and alter the nation's foreign policy. He attempted to shift the nuclear policy from first use to no first use, but he was unable to hold onto his beliefs in the face of pressure. Although the military preferred that the Kashmir dispute be resolved first, the Zardari administration also wanted Pakistan improve trade ties with India. The civilian governments have not had the authority to negotiate with India on significant subjects, and they must consult the military before reaching any deals. Due to the fact that India and Pakistan have fought four wars over the Kashmir dispute and that India is supporting insurgency in Pakistan, military engagement is essential in forging political and economic ties with India). Regardless of who is in power, the Kashmir dispute has remained a factor in Indo-Pak ties. In 2011, the Zardari administration attempted to grant India most-favorable-nation (MFN) status, however it was unsuccessful. According to Shahbaz Sharif, security institutions were responsible for fostering the mistrust between India and Pakistan. (Iqbal, 2018).

Pakistan experienced militancy, terrorism, and insurgency in FATA under Zardari's rule as a result of its collaboration with the US in the fight against terrorism. The military's 'national security'-based policy had justification in the form of these difficulties. Developing trade links with India and improving Afghanistan's political relations were both significantly hampered by India's meddling in Baluchistan. The military establishment disagreed with Zardari's government despite its efforts to normalize relations with India in the absence of considerable progress in resolving the Kashmir problem. The military wanted to discuss the Kashmir issue and other protracted disagreements because they felt that it was "security-centric, not economic." The civilian administration was forced to take note of the military's opinion on relations with India because it was actively involved in the Baluchistan insurgency. It took the Zardari administration some time to comprehend the military's perspective on India. Finally, Zardari agreed with the military's view of India. The US objected to General Kayani's India-focused agenda. Intense tensions developed between Pakistan and India at the Working Boundary and the Line of Control (LOC). The imbalance in Pakistan's civil-military ties is partly attributable to India and Pakistan's preference for power struggles over peaceful resolution of disputes.

Pakistan maintained its anti-terrorism strategy throughout Zardari's rule, continuing Musharraf's initiative. To discuss internal and foreign concerns with the US administration, the civilian government started a Strategic Dialogue, and the military also took part in the talks. From 2000 to 2012, the US paid Pakistan \$25 billion in reimbursement for its efforts in combating terrorism. Both the military and the US played a crucial part in Afghanistan as part of a long-standing collaboration against terrorism. Security and political ties were damaged by the Salala incident, but after a few months, both states realized the value of working together in the fight against terrorism. The army and ISI continued to limit India's influence in Afghanistan and prevented the Zardari administration from adopting any firm stances. Nevertheless, despite US opposition, Zardari secured a gas pipeline deal with Iran and strengthened Pakistan's ties with Russia and Afghanistan. The military did not object to these policies, and for the first time, there was no policy conflict between the military and the civilian administration. Only GHQ, however, has the authority to approve or disapprove state policy, and India, Kashmir, and Afghanistan policies continue to be the Army's major purview. (Shah A. , *Civilian and Military Relations in Pakistan: Troubled Waters and Troubling Developments*, 2012).

3. Conclusion

This study examined the military's role in shaping Pakistan–United States relations during the democratic period of 2008–2013. The findings demonstrate that although Pakistan witnessed the restoration of civilian rule after the 2008 general elections, the military continued to exercise substantial influence over foreign and security policy, particularly in matters relating to the United States. The coexistence of democratic

institutions with a powerful military establishment created a dual decision-making structure in which civilian governments managed diplomatic engagement, while the military retained considerable authority over strategic and security issues.

The analysis of major developments—including the Kerry–Lugar–Berman Act, the Raymond Davis incident, the Abbottabad operation, the Salala attack, and the reopening of NATO supply routes—illustrates that Pakistan's responses to critical bilateral challenges were shaped primarily by security considerations. These events reinforced the military's position as the principal institution responsible for safeguarding national security and managing Pakistan's strategic relationship with the United States. Consequently, civilian leaders often faced institutional constraints in independently formulating and implementing foreign policy toward Washington.

Using Samuel E. Finer's theory of military intervention as an analytical framework, the study argues that the military's influence during this period was exercised not through direct political rule but through its institutional dominance in national security affairs. Finer's concepts of *disposition* and *opportunity* effectively explain how the military maintained its influence despite the existence of an elected government. The persistent security environment, the ongoing War on Terror, instability in Afghanistan, and concerns regarding sovereignty provided opportunities for the military to remain the dominant actor in foreign policy decision-making.

The study further finds that Pak–US relations between 2008 and 2013 were characterized by a combination of strategic cooperation and mutual distrust. While both countries remained partners in counterterrorism and regional security, repeated diplomatic and military crises exposed significant differences in strategic priorities and weakened bilateral confidence. Pakistan's military sought to balance cooperation with the United States against domestic political pressures, institutional interests, and national security concerns, thereby shaping both the direction and limits of bilateral engagement.

In conclusion, the study argues that the nature of Pakistan–US relations during 2008–2013 cannot be fully understood without acknowledging the military's central role in foreign policy formulation. The transition to democratic governance did not fundamentally alter the institutional balance of power in security-related decision-making. Instead, the military continued to influence strategic policies while civilian governments operated within the constraints imposed by Pakistan's civil–military structure. This period therefore demonstrates that foreign policy toward the United States remained closely linked to the military's strategic calculations, highlighting the enduring significance of civil–military relations in understanding Pakistan's external behavior.

The findings contribute to the broader literature on Pakistan's foreign policy and civil–military relations by demonstrating that institutional power, rather than constitutional authority alone, determines the formulation of strategic foreign policy. Future research may extend this analysis by comparing military influence across different

democratic governments or by examining how changing regional dynamics and great-power competition have affected Pakistan's foreign policy after 2013.

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