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Analyzing the Role of Muttahida Majlis-E-Amal (MMA) in Legislation for Democracy during Musharraf Era

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Abstract

This study provides an in-depth investigation of Muttahida Majlis-e-Amal (MMA) and its function in legislative procedures during the Musharraf administration, from 2002 to 2007. During this period, MMA, a coalition of six Islamist groups, became a prominent political entity, influencing the development of Pakistan's democratic stance resisting the President Pervez Musharraf. This research examines the impact of the legislative policies and initiatives of MMA on the democratic environment, namely within the framework of Musharraf's semi-authoritarian ruling system. It also analyses the interaction between MMA and Musharraf's government, emphasizing episodes of both cooperation and conflict. It examines how the opposition of MMA on Musharraf's legislative moves, which encompass their endeavors to advance Islamic ideals inside the legal system, their impact on significant reforms, and their challenges in reconciling ideological objectives with practical governance. This research examines the issues by utilizing qualitative methodology through collection of data from secondary sources. Through careful analysis of certain legislative measures and policy discussions, the study evaluates the efficacy of MMA in promoting its objectives and its influence on the wider democratic process. This

analysis determined the achievements and constraints of the coalition in maneuvering through the political environment, providing valuable perspectives on the dynamics between Islamist political movements and authoritarian state institutions. The study elucidated the intricate connection between Islamist parties and democratic institutions in Pakistan. By offering unique insights into the problems and opportunities faced by political movements in semi-democratic contexts, it enhanced the understanding of how political alliances can impact legislative processes and democratic government.

Keywords: Muttahida Majlis-e-Amal (MMA), Legislation, Democratic Development, Political Factionalism, Pervez Musharraf

Introduction

On October 12, 1999, Pervez Musharraf assumed power through a military coup when the army leadership declined to accept the decision made by the democratically elected Prime Minister Nawaz Sharif to remove the former Chief of Army Staff (COAS) and appoint General Zia-ud-din Butt as a new COAS. The decision made by the prime minister was a result of the disagreements that arose between him and the COAS on the Kargil war, which General Musharraf allegedly initiated without the consent or awareness of Sharif (New York Times, 1999).

Following the suspension of Pakistan's Constitution and Parliament on October 14, Musharraf implemented a state of emergency in the country. In a televised address to the country, Musharraf declared the decision to remove the civilian administration, which includes the prime minister, his cabinet, provincial chief ministers, and governors. Nevertheless, it was declared that President Rafiq Tarar would retain his position. Musharraf declared himself as the Chief Executive and issued a Provisional Constitutional Order (PCO) which prohibited all courts and tribunals from issuing any "judgment, writ, order" or similar measures against any action carried out by "the chief executive or any authority designated" by him, including the declaration of emergency.

In November 1999, the Supreme Court of Pakistan received many petitions under Article-184(3) of the Constitution of 1973 that contested the validity of the coup d'état on October 12, 1999, and the subsequent declaration of Emergency on October 14, 1999 (Naveed and Iqra, 2017). A panel

of 12 judges, led by Chief Justice Irshad Hassan Khan, heard all the petitions on May 12, 2000. The Court upheld the military takeover based on the Doctrine of State Necessity (Alam, 2020). Prior to transferring authority to elected representatives of the people, the court granted General Pervez Musharraf a three-year period to finalize its agenda. Furthermore, the Court granted General Pervez Musharraf the authority to modify the constitution without compromising the essential aspects of parliamentary democracy, the autonomy of the judiciary, and the Islamic provisions of the constitution (Khan, 2013). In response to the ruling of the Supreme Court of Pakistan, General Pervez Musharraf declared in July 2002 that the general elections will take place in October 2002.

After three years, he ordered to restore the National Assembly of Pakistan by declaring elections in 2002 after securing himself as President through a referendum in 2001 (El-Khawwas, 2009). In order to participate in the 2002 election, the leadership of six prominent Islamist parties jointly established an alliance called Muttahida Majlis-e-Amal (MMA). The objective of this paper was to examine the general function of MMA during the Musharraf government (1999-2008).

Formation of MMA

In order to secure the winning in the 2002 election, the leadership of six prominent Islamist parties jointly established an alliance called Muttahida Majlis-e-Amal (MMA). JI, Jamiat Ulama-e-Islam-Fazul (JUI-F), Jamiat Ulama-e-Islam-Sami-ul-Haq (JUI-S), Jamiat Ulama-e-Pakistan (JUP), Jamiat Ahle Hadith (JAH), and Islami Tehrik Pakistan (ITP) formed an alliance with Shah Ahmad Noorani of JUP as its President (Lubna, 2019). Jamaat-e-Islami (JI) was working under Qazi Hussain Ahmad, JUI-F was led by Maulana Fazlur Rehman, JUI-S by Maulana Sami ul Haq, JUP by Shah Ahmad Noorani, JAH by Sajid Mir, and Tehreek-e-Jafria Pakistan now Islami Tehrik Pakistan (ITP) under Sajid Naqvi.

The coalition embodied the dominant perspectives of political Islam, namely the Ulema establishment. Their leaders consisted of religious experts who had received education in madrassas. Nevertheless, JI has successfully built its supporting base among the educated elite from higher education institutions. These six parties were representative of many sects and sub-sects, including Deobandi, Barelvi, Wahabi, and Shia schools of theology. Historically, JUI has

held a position of dominance in the Pashtun regions of NWFP and Balochistan. JUP held a dominant position in Punjab and also had substantial support in metropolitan regions of Sindh. JI has garnered significant support in the major cities of Pakistan, primarily appealing to urban, educated, professional, and business socioeconomic groups (Waseem and Mariam, 2009). These disparate elements within MMA were essential in bringing together Islamist parties, as the alliance did not contest the political dominance of any party in its own domains.

Manifesto of MMA

The MMA vociferously advocated for the enforcement of Sharia rules throughout the nation. The manifesto emphasized the need of ensuring justice, freedom of the judiciary, freedom of the press, and protection of the rights of minorities. It pledged to tackle concerns related to women's rights, farmers' rights, workers' rights, chances for young people, and included the commitment to provide free education to all citizens of the state. MMA portrayed this partnership as really democratic. According to Liaquat Baluch, the MMA has a longstanding tradition of democracy, which was seen in the periodic elections held inside the Jamat-i-Islami. The MMA also vociferated chants advocating for the division of institutional authorities and adherence to the rule of law, although they were not prepared to endorse the democratic principles of the Western world. The MMA did not endorse the widely accepted concept of popular sovereignty in contrast to the concept of divine sovereignty. Therefore, the MMA Parliament lacked the authority to enact any legislation that contradicted Sharia law (Waseem and Mariam, 2009).

The MMA published a comprehensive fifteen-point election manifesto and outlined the alliance's political, social, economic, and religious agenda. The electoral manifesto of the MMA was partitioned into four sections. The first segment involved the process of incorporating Islamic principles into legislation and safeguarding the fundamental rights of minority groups. The second component pertained to the principles of good governance, the establishment of improved communication channels between the government and the people, the accountability of ministers to the public, and the pursuit of provincial autonomy. The third segment of the election manifesto emphasized Pakistan's economic progress, advocating for rigorous fiscal prudence and cuts in non-developmental spending, promotion of the private sector, expansion of the tax base, and the elimination of feudal systems through the confiscation of illicit riches and its allocation

among the impoverished. The fourth segment of the platform focused on the social objectives of the coalition (Khan, Bakhtiar and Attia, 2021). The fifth segment emphasized the autonomous foreign policy and the provision of moral, political, and diplomatic assistance to all oppressed nations, particularly focusing on the Kashmir, Palestine, Afghanistan, and Chechens issues (Khan and Fakhr, 2023).

Position of MMA in Elections 2002

In the 2002 general elections, Mutahidda Majlis-i-Amal achieved a phenomenal triumph. It presented a total of 183 candidates for 272 seats in the National Assembly, of which 45 were successfully elected. The MMA won twenty-nine seats out of 35 in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa and obtained 46.6% of the total votes cast in the province at the polls. Upon calculating the number of women and minority seats, the overall strength of the MMA increased to 59 in the 342-member National Assembly (Akhtar, 2019).

It was anticipated that the MMA will dominate the elections in Southern Pakhtunkhwa, which was a stronghold of JUI-F, as well as in Dir Upper, Dir Lower, Chitral, and Bunir. Nevertheless, the remarkable aspect was the exceptional performance of the coalition in the Malakand Division and Peshawar valley, encompassing the districts of Mardan, Charsadda, and Swabi. Historically, these geographical regions were bastions of the secular political parties, ANP and PPP. Furthermore, the MMA demonstrated strong performance in the Hazara region, where PML-N had hitherto maintained dominance (Wilder, 2004).

While the MMA secured four seats in Punjab from urban areas, its performance in rural regions, which were seen more susceptible to the influence of the Shariah slogan, was not as strong. The MMA achieved a remarkable breakthrough in the contemporary political landscape of Sindh. The election results in Karachi revealed a remarkable shift, as they secured 5 out of 20 seats, therefore challenging the prevailing supremacy of MQM. It maintained its position as a highly competitive candidate in the remaining 15 voting districts.

The anti-US posture of the MMA had a significant impact in attracting voters in other parts of the country, but its effectiveness in Karachi was comparatively lower. Their campaign focused on matters such as education, health, and other pertinent civic problems. Through this approach,

the MMA successfully infiltrated electoral districts that were previously regarded as strongholds of MQM. Significantly, it obtained all seats from regions predominantly inhabited by the Pakhtun ethnic group. Within Balochistan, the MMA secured 6 out of 14 seats, all of which were held by Jamiat ulama-i-Islam-F. The MMA secured 48 out of the 99 general council seats in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa. Following the calculation of independent MPAs, the number of seats allocated for women and minorities increased to 68. Within the Provincial Assembly of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, the MMA has established itself as the most prominent electoral coalition. Furthermore, the MMA formed the second largest coalition in the Provincial Assembly of Balochistan, securing 13 seats. Incorporating the designated seats for women and minorities, the overall membership of MMA in Balochistan increased to 18. Each of these victorious candidates was affiliated with Jamiat ulama-i-Islam-F. The coalition secured the majority of the seats in Pakhtun regions. Furthermore, the elimination of ethnic groups such as Baluchistan National Party (BNP) and Jamhoori Wattan Party (JWP) was a remarkable development (khan, 2011).

At the Punjab Provincial Assembly, the MMA secured eleven seats, with seven of them being held by Jamaat-i-Islami. In the Sindh Provincial Assembly, the MMA got 10 seats. Following these elections, JUI (F) and Jamaat-i-Islami emerged as the prevailing political groups inside the MMA network. While all other parties secured only three members in the National Assembly, these two parties secured 50 seats. The JUI-S secured two seats in the National Assembly, while the JUP acquired only one seat. The Jamiat Ahl-i-Hadith did not secure any seats (khan, 2011).

The 2002 election marked a significant milestone in the expansion of religious political parties in the country, particularly in the provinces of KP and Baluchistan. Furthermore, apart from the cohesion among religious parties, the MMA did not anticipate such a positive reaction from the voters (khan, 2011). General Pervez Musharraf, in his inability to absorb the increasing backing of the MMA, assured high-ranking US officials that the Islamist alliance would not exceed five percent of the popular vote. The MMA movement was seen as an undesirable phenomenon by Western countries, particularly the United States, due to the influence of the Taliban in Afghanistan. Simultaneously, the U.S. administration persisted in exerting pressure on Pakistan for failing to confine the Taliban and their allied troops inside the country, despite their previous engagement in helping the Taliban (Haqqani, 2004).

MMA and General Pervez Musharraf Relations in Governance

The relationship between the MMA and the military dictatorship under the leadership of General Musharraf were a fascinating combination of collaboration and controlled tensions. A comprehensive issue-based study would be beneficial in determining if the situation was rooted in cooperation, confrontation, or cooption. In accordance with the customary practice of past military dictators Ayub Khan and Zia ul Haq, Musharraf declared and secured victory on 30 April 2002, resulting in Musharraf being proclaimed President of Pakistan. MMA contested the legitimacy of Referendum in public gatherings and deemed it a mockery of the political process (Dawn, 2002).

In order to counterbalance the political influence of the Pakistan Muslim League (N) and PPP during the 2002 election, Musharraf extended administrative and political assistance to the MMA and PML (Q). He incorporated Islamists into his plan of governance and unveiled a financial package for Madaris (Waseem, 2006). The Military Administration granted MMA many concessions to conduct rallies and processions for political purposes. The candidates hailing from Madaris were granted permission to participate in the election, with the condition that their Madaris diplomas were deemed comparable to the bachelor's degree of the universities. MMA adopted a book as its electoral emblem, effectively portraying it as the Holy Quran, thereby appealing to the religious majority, particularly those residing in Pashtun regions. The reciprocal approach adopted by Islamist parties and the Musharraf government, driven by their own interests, effectively achieved the intended outcomes in the 2002 elections.

Following the 2002 elections, PML-Q emerged as the dominant national party with 118 seats, while PPP secured 80 seats and MMA won 67 constituencies, making them the third largest party. Due to Islamist parties' historically weak position in Pakistan's election history, the electoral results of MMA in the National Assembly and its triumph in NWFP and Baluchistan stunned political experts. MMA emerged as the dominant party in the NWFP Assembly, securing 46 out of the 97 seats. Balochistan also saw the emergence of MMA as the dominant party, securing 14 out of 48 seats. However, in Punjab and Sindh, it was only able to secure 7 and 10 seats, respectively (Wilder, 2001).

The majority of newspapers associated the success of MMA with sentiments against America's intervention in Pakistani matters and its unilateral strategies in Afghanistan (The Nation, 2002). MMA had disseminated the notion that elections were a competition between the exogenous secular factions and Islamists. Simultaneously, certain groups accused MMA of acting as American operatives, collaborating with the military government to enable the deployment of Americans and Jews in Pakistani airfields in defense of the fight on terror.

Following its electoral victory, MMA embarked on a campaign to win the position of Prime Minister of Pakistan for Maulana Fazlur Rehman. Nevertheless, the discussions between MMA and the Musharraf government proved to be fruitless. Under the prevailing national and international circumstances, the military did not regard him as a suitable choice. Consequently, Mir Zafarullah Khan Jamali from the PML-Q party became the new Prime Minister of Pakistan, while Maulana Fazlur Rehman assumed the position of opposition leader.

Establishment of the Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Government

The Muttahidda Majlis-i-Amal became the largest electoral alliance in the province of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, securing 68 seats in the 124-member state assembly. The Assembly convened its first session on November 25, 2002, during which the members of the Assembly formally assumed their positions. Ikram Ullah Shahid of JUI-S and Bakht Jahan of JIP were elected as the Speaker and Deputy Speaker of the Assembly, respectively. On November 29, 2002, Akram Khan Durrani from JUI-F was chosen as the 18th Chief Minister of the Province. At the outset, the provincial cabinet consisted of twelve ministers, which was subsequently increased to eighteen.

MMA's stance on LFO and 17th Amendment

General Musharraf proposed the LFO policy in August 2002 with the aim of implementing amendments to the 1973 Constitution shortly before the 2002 general elections. It was the intention of the LFO to consolidate General Musharraf's authority as both President and Army Chief. The 'doctored' vote on April 30, 2002 granted him the 'legitimacy' as President for a period of five years. Subsequently, the LFO was obligated to establish himself firmly within the organizational framework after October 2002.

General Musharraf faced significant challenges in the National Assembly from both the opposition parties and the MMA. The resounding cries of 'No LFO' and 'go General Musharraf go' became characteristic of his tenure (Asghar, 2002). The opposition insisted that the LFO must obtain parliamentary approval in order to be included into the constitution. General Musharraf contended that parliamentary permission was unnecessary since the Supreme Court had endorsed his coup and granted him the authority to modify the constitution at will (PILDAT, 2003). The administration was unable to achieve a deal with the opposition (except the MMA), initiated reciprocal negotiations with the MMA from July 2003 until November. Upon the resumption of the discussion in December, the MMA established a deadline of December 18 for the implementation of the constitutional amendments. Simultaneously, they initiated street protests against the government's position on the LFO (PILDAT, 2003). Ultimately, the government and the MMA successfully achieved an agreement on the LFO on December 24, 2003 (Misra, 2006). Based on this agreement, the 17th Amendment was approved by a two-thirds majority in both the National Assembly and the Senate on December 30, 2003. The President then signed the amendment on December 31, 2003 (Dawn, 2005).

The opposition, comprising the Pakistan Peoples' Party Parliamentarians (PPPP), the PML-N, and other peripheral parties like as the Pashtoon-Khwa Milli Awami Party (PkMAP), Awami National Party (ANP), and Jamhoori Wattan Party (JWP), abstained from participating in the vote process. The agreement widened the divide between the MMA and the other opposition groups (PILDAT, 2003). The ARD voiced its deep disappointment with the agreement and strongly condemned the MMA for abandoning the opposition and aligning itself with General Musharraf (Zafar and Azra, 2018).

The 17th Amendment implemented modifications in nine articles as:

1. The President would maintain the authority to dissolve the National Assembly at his own discretion, but he would forward the dissolution decision to the Supreme Court for examination and resolution within 15 days after the dissolution.
2. The National Security Council (NSC) would be established through regular legislation in the Parliament.

3. In consultation with the Prime Minister, the President will designate the Chiefs of the three branches of the armed forces and the Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff Committee.
4. In December 2009, the local government ordinances will be eliminated from the 6th Schedule of the Constitution.
5. The three-year extension in the retirement age of Supreme Court and High Court judges will be revoked.
6. In order to secure a vote of confidence, President General Musharraf would request the presence and vote of the members in each chamber individually.
7. The office of the Presidency will remain separate from the office of Army Chief until December 31, 2004 (Misra, 2006).

Despite the criticisms from the opposition over the 'deal', the MMA justified its decision by stating that it was made in the benefit of democracy and the most optimal agreement considering the circumstances. The MMA deputy parliamentary leader, Maulana Hafiz Hussain Ahmed, stated that the MMA had achieved the most optimal resolution on the matter, and it was impossible for any party to secure a more favorable agreement. He cautioned that if the President failed to fulfil his commitment to remove the uniform, the MMA would initiate a nationwide demonstration against him. The MMA deputy Secretary General, Liaquat Baloch, stated that the enactment of the 17th Amendment would facilitate the PPP and PML-N in repatriating to Pakistan. The two leaders of the MMA contended that the party refused to include the LFO into the constitution without a discussion and rather managed to initiate a debate on it, ultimately passing it with a two-thirds majority (Dawn, 2003).

The MMA was appropriately compensated for enabling the contractual agreement. The appointment of Maulana Fazl-ur-Rehman as the leader of the opposition in the National Assembly on May 25, 2005 generated a contentious situation. The MMA secured the position by garnering the support of 68 lawmakers, while the Speaker rejected the petition of ARD candidate, Makdoom Amin Fahim, who had the backing of 80 lawmakers. The reason for not accepting the plea was that the ARD parties did not constitute a unified political organization,

unlike the MMA (PILDAT, 2003). Additionally, the establishment provided relief to the MMA by refraining from addressing the matter of MMA members without officially acknowledged graduate degrees. The Centre has accorded due consideration to the NWFP and its interests, while mostly disregarding the ongoing process of Islamisation in the region. Moreover, MMA cadres have been exempted from the consequences of the worldwide war against terrorism (GWAT).

Resisting the US-led War on Iraq

The 2002 election granted MMA a political advantage and recognition as the champion of Pathan nationalism in the NWFP region. At the Centre, MMA gained the fortitude to confront Musharraf and question his policies on various matters. In March 2003, MMA initiated a resistance movement against the US invasion of Iraq, alleging the development of weapons of mass destruction. They orchestrated a nationwide Million March Protest. On 21 March 2003, MMA effectively organized and arranged for a nationwide strike to be observed. The American invasion of Iraq was perceived as a conflict directed against Islam.

In August 2003, MMA convened a gathering of over 200 Ulama and issued a fatwa declaring the deployment of armed forces to Iraq as religiously prohibited. They mandated that Ulama refrain from conducting funeral prayers for the soldiers who lost their lives in the Iraq War (Nasr, 2004). It was the influence exerted by MMA that prevented Musharraf from deploying the Pakistani army to Iraq, despite the ongoing pressure from the US. Furthermore, MMA responded vehemently when Musharraf accused Dr. Abdul-Qadeer Khan, the progenitor of Pakistan's nuclear program, and other scientists of transferring nuclear knowledge to Iran, Libya, and North Korea. MMA initiated strikes, coordinated protests in support of Dr. Abdul-Qadeer Khan, and officially recognized him as a national hero throughout the months of January and February 2004 (Nawa-i- Waqt, 2004).

Local Governments structure (2001) and MMA

In 2001, General Musharraf implemented decentralization of authority and participatory governance at the local, tehsil, and district levels by conducting elections for 'non-party' local political bodies and establishing a network of local politicians and workers for the 2007

elections. Similarly to his predecessor Ayub Khan, General Musharraf also endorsed the concept of local bodies as a means to establish a support base for himself, which would serve as an alternative to direct democracy. Thus, even if the provincial governments maintain a hostile attitude towards the federal directives, the central authority can still exert influence on developments and occurrences in the province through the representatives of local bodies and Nazims (comparable to Mayors). It resembles the establishment of a parallel executive branch inside the province, which might enable the central government to implement its political agenda without the requirement of provincial government backing.

In April 2004, the National Reconstruction Bureau (NRB) emphasized the usefulness of the system, describing it as a move away from the existing state of affairs (Misra, 2006). General Musharraf declared that the local government system should be backed and enhanced, as it would facilitate the distribution of the advantages of macroeconomic development to the local level. Practically, the structure of local administrations has generated a conflict between the central government and the provinces, as seen in the case of the NWFP. A number of inconsistencies need consideration in this context. Firstly, the disputes about the jurisdiction of powers between the district nazims and the province executive. The bureaucrats find themselves ensnared in the process, but ultimately opt to comply with the directives of the provincial administration, which was more inclined towards favoring the lawmaker and other sympathetic individuals of the province. Secondly, conflicts arose between the parliamentarian and the nazims on the allocation of development monies. Thirdly, there were several instances of disagreement between the district council and the nazims over the distribution of funds. And fourth, the political inclinations of the nazims also posed a challenge in provinces like Sindh and NWFP where unfavorable administrations were in control. The protracted political conflict hindered daily operations, as affiliations turned administrative issues into political battles.

The power dynamics between the provincial administration and the nazims in Baluchistan reached such magnitude that the latter resorted to hunger strikes and protest marches as a means to challenge the perceived excessive control of the former. Within the NWFP, 14 nazims of the union council in Peshawar tendered their resignations in May 2004 due to the government's uncooperative stance and disagreements on the distribution of developmental income (Khan and

Rasheed, 2023). The Durrani administration strongly opposed any intervention by the local government in matters of decision-making, bureaucratic transfers and assignments, and allocation of financial resources. Furthermore, it was desired that no credit be attributed to the local government for any development initiative. By leveraging a supportive bureaucracy, it effectively limited the authority of the nazims (Misra, 2006). Among other things, the Chief Minister suggested reforms in the local government system to establish accountability as an institutionalized principle.

The dynamics between Akram Khan Durrani and Governor Khalilur Rehman, who took office on March 13, 2004, succeeding Iftikhar Hussain Shah, have also been tumultuous (Dawn, 2005). On March 28, 2005, Akram Khan Durrani invalidated a ruling made by the district government and granted permission for the MMA's planned 'million man march' on the Grand Trunk Road in Peshawar. The request made by the MMA to conduct the march in Peshawar was denied by the city district council. The Governor further issued directives prohibiting the staging of the planned march on the roadways of Peshawar. In light of the unavailability of alternative venues, the provincial government made the decision to permit the event to take place in Peshawar.

The matter became a matter of prestige for the MMA, and in order to demonstrate its influence in the province, it deployed madaris from other regions of the NWFP to guarantee the highest level of student involvement. A projected two million individuals were anticipated to take part in the march, but surprise, the actual number of participants significantly underestimated the initial predictions.

Official estimates indicate that the march had a participation of only 15,000 individuals. In his address to the gathering, Maulana Fazl-ur Rehman asserted that General Musharraf was attempting to suppress the Islamists under the direction of the United States. He proclaimed that under no circumstances would any general be admitted as the next president. He advocated for the expulsion of US military installations in Pakistan and denounced General Musharraf for his attempts to undermine the stability of the MMA government (Khan and Rasheed, 2023). Unlike the accusations made by Fazl-ur Rehman, the MMA demonstrated self-control by maintaining the composure of the demonstrators and reassuring the Governor of their commitment to upholding peace and civil order. Additionally, the Chief Minister provided the Governor with

assurance that the provincial ministers would not be participating in the march, a gesture that was well received by the Governor.

The MMA maintains a divided stance on the function of local governments. The JI endorses the system, in contrast to the JUI-F. The JI contested the elections for local bodies and has leadership of the local government in Sindh, posing challenges to the MQM-PML-Q provincial administration. The MQM has strongly recommended that the Centre bar the JI, claiming that it intends to establish Karachi as the headquarters for Al Qaeda and Islamic terrorists. Undoubtedly, the MQM finds it more difficult to accept the dominant influence of the JI in the Karachi municipal administration (Abbas, 2004).

Qazi Hussain Ahmad alleged that the administration was engaged in pursuing foreign objectives focused on degrading national heroes who have dedicated their life to safeguarding the nation. It commemorated Black Day on January 1, 2005. The military action in South Waziristan and the activities of the Federal Board of Investigation, apart from seeking a resolution to the Kashmir issue through means other than UN resolutions, marked a significant change in policy (Dawn, 2005).

The declaration made by Qazi Hussain Ahmad of JI asserts that Musharraf was an American agent. He restated that the objective of Islamist groups was to construct an Islamic democratic state in the country, following the model of a virtuous caliphate. He alleged that Musharraf consistently circumvented Parliament on all significant matters (Daily Times, 2003).

MMA's Opposition on Assuming Military Post by General Musharraf

One formidable challenge faced by General Musharraf was to retain his position as Army Chief beyond the December 31, 2004 deadline. Prior to December 2003, the Constitution prohibited an Army Chief from serving as both the Army Chief and the President at the same time. According to Hasan Askari Rizvi, the aforementioned article [63(1)d] expressly states that the president was prohibited from holding any other lucrative position in the service of Pakistan. Nevertheless, it grants the parliament the authority to exclude any government operation from the classification by regular law (Behuria, 2009). The Cabinet declared on September 15, 2004 that Musharraf was expected to continue serving as the army head after December 31, 2004, and there were no constitutional limitations on his continuous presence in the military (Dawn, 2004). According to

Information Minister Sheikh Rashid Ahmed, the 17th Amendment included provisions that allowed General Musharraf to concurrently occupy both positions.

Article 243 of the constitution grants the federal government the authority to command and control the armed forces, including the ability to nominate the chief of army staff, which was vested in the president (Dawn, 2004). The coterie led by Musharraf astutely and strategically emphasized a specific clause (Article 243) in the constitution instead of the other (LFO) when advocating for his appointment to twin offices. Simply said, the aspects that were considered harmful to General Musharraf's position were placed in the LFO in order to negotiate an agreement, but were subsequently removed in compliance with certain constitutional rules. The announcement was made subsequent to the separatist faction of the PPPP, known as the PPP-Patriot, expressing their readiness to permit Musharraf to retain his position as the Army Chief in order to guarantee political stability (Dawn, 2004). The Punjab Assembly adopted a resolution on September 13, 2004, endorsing General Musharraf's decisions on the uniform matter.

However, on September 15, 2004, the NWFP Assembly adopted a motion opposing General Musharraf's appointment as Army Chief beyond December 2004. The resolution received 55 votes in favor and 14 votes against (Dawn, 2004). MMA, having been politically misled, adopted a resolute stance against General Musharraf. The resolution resulted in a like outcome in the Balochistan Assembly. The MMA voiced its concerns with the resolution and, owing to insufficient agreement, the treasury rescinded the resolution on September 20, 2004, in order to prevent any potential humiliation in the event of its loss.

On September 22, 2004, the resolution was adopted in Sindh, where the MQM was in alliance with the PML-Q (Rehman, 2004). In the face of criticism, the National Assembly and Senate passed the 'President to Hold Another Office Bill 2004' on October 14, 2004, therefore granting General Musharraf the authority to retain his position as Army Chief beyond December 2004 (Behuria, 2009).

The opposition deemed the action to be unethical and in violation of the constitution (Dawn, 2004). The failure to fulfil General Musharraf's 'promise' significantly undermined the credibility of the MMA, which was unable to articulate its deep disappointment at the treachery. Based on

the commitment and the broadcast speech delivered to the public in December 2003, Hafiz Hussain Ahmed, the deputy of the MMA in the National Assembly, stated that Musharraf was obligated to resign from his position as army head (Dawn, 2004). Subsequently, the lack of confidence between the MMA and General Musharraf has escalated.

Conclusion

The MMA, formed as a coalition of religious parties, emerged as a potent force following the general elections of 2002, promising to champion Islamic values, social justice, and anti-imperialist sentiments. MMA under the Musharraf regime uncovers its intricate and diverse function in Pakistan's legislative architecture. The 2002 elections witnessed a notable transformation in Pakistani politics, establishing the MMA as a powerful participant in both the National Assembly and the provincial administration of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa. The coalition's diplomatic engagement with General Pervez Musharraf was marked by a combination of collaboration and disagreement. Although the MMA played a crucial role in forming the Khyber Pakhtunkhwa government by using their political influence to shape regional administration, their critical stance against Musharraf's constitutional changes, namely the Legal Framework Order (LFO) and the 17th Amendment, highlighted fundamental differences in democratic ideals and governance. The MMA's opposition to Musharraf's military appointment and its assertive opposition to the US-led war on Iraq demonstrated a wider ideological viewpoint aimed at contesting both local and foreign policies seen as in conflict with their principles. Furthermore, the MMA's involvement with the local government system implemented in 2001 underscored their efforts to direct and shape local governance in accordance with their objectives, while also contending with the constraints imposed by Musharraf's centralized power. Their legislative endeavors and political strategies highlight a deliberate navigation of the tension between promoting their Islamist agenda and participating in practical government within a limited political context. It demonstrated the intricate relationship between ideological goals and the practicalities of political concessions. Their endeavors to influence democratic governance, oppose authoritarian intrusions, and negotiate the intricacies of governance demonstrate a sophisticated approach to political engagement in a difficult environment. The historical significance of the MMA during this era offers important understanding of the involvement of

Islamist parties in democratic procedures and the influence of coalition politics on legislative results in semi-authoritarian ruling systems.

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