

Scenario 192

TWO SHARIFs – WHO PREVAILED

COAS AS SOLDIER-STATESMAN:

When Prime Minister Sharif was elected in May 2013, many believed it was a time when civilians could assert themselves and that military leadership, then criticized for inaction against terrorists, would be pushed into the background. In a sign of his intention to run foreign and defence policies, the PM kept both those portfolios for himself.

Concentrating on the above premises, the PM started peace talks with insurgents in North Waziristan. He also made overtures to India in an effort to ease strained ties and he moved forward with treason charges against Gen Musharraf. However, by mid-2014 the political ground started shifting and the PM, considering him as master of diplomacy, tried to push the military hard on issues it saw as its domain.

Gen Raheel Sharif had won widespread approval for moving authoritatively where previous Pakistani leaders, military and civilian, had hesitated to operate and wasted the real time.

In mid 2014, Gen Raheel opened a new front in the fight against extremists with an offensive in North Waziristan, a region along the Afghan border that was a haven for Pakistani Taliban, Afghan insurgents and al Qaeda; a move long advocated by the US and initially opposed by Nawaz Sharif just to keep dear Rana Sanaulah and Maulana Fazlur Rehman.

Army-led Rangers and police forces had also led a bloody fight against *jihadists* and criminal gangs in the mega-polis Karachi. The campaign won Gen Sharif applause and recognition, despite its reliance on what human-rights groups said were extrajudicial executions.

Gen Raheel Sharif also made a high profile abroad. He met the British PM Cameron at his official Downing Street residence during earlier days of 2015. In 2014 in the US he had met Secretary of State John Kerry and other senior officials and was awarded the **US Legion of Merit** for his contributions to "*peace and security.*"

When Afghan President Ashraf Ghani made his first visit to Pakistan after being elected in 2014, he drove straight from the airport to see Gen Raheel Sharif at GHQ in Rawalpindi - before going to nearby Islamabad to meet the civilian leadership.

At times; officials in Washington, Kabul and New Delhi, however, accused the ISI & MI of continuing what they say was ***Pakistan's policy of giving haven to the Afghan Taliban and other militant groups, and using them as proxy warriors in Afghanistan and India***, but Gen Raheel seldom bothered; the propaganda was known to all.

Once the US warned Gen Raheel Sharif that it would ***withhold \$300 million in military aid*** if Pakistan didn't ***do more*** to curb the Haqqani network; an insurgent group allied with the Taliban allegedly responsible for deadly attacks in Kabul – but the General simply smiled at the American statesmen's wrong assessment.

[The US since long alleged that the Haqqanis are an arm of Pakistan's military intelligence agency. A Haqqani was named as the new deputy chief of the Taliban at a meeting held in Pakistan in early 2015.]

The Pakistan army always maintained that there is no difference amongst factions; the terrorists are terrorists to what origin they belong. Gen Raheel Sharif had reiterated in London that: ***"We are against use of proxies and won't allow it on our soil."***

President Obama was keen that Pakistan should use its influence on the Afghan Taliban to advance peace talks between the militants and the Afghan government. They considered Gen Raheel Sharif was the force behind a breakthrough in the Afghan peace process in early 2015, when a group of senior Taliban were brought to meet Afghan government representatives just outside Islamabad.

After an attack on Karachi's airport, Gen Raheel Sharif, who had promoted counter-insurgency doctrine when he was the army's training head—focusing the army's targets toward terrorists rather than its traditional enemy, India — earlier had also launched military operations against militants in North Waziristan in June 2014.

A little background: On 14th August 2014; PTI's Imran Khan and his supporters launched a sit-in protest against alleged vote-rigging in the 2013's election that propelled PM Nawaz Sharif to confine to his office. The demonstrations paralyzed the capital city of Islamabad, calling for the

military to intervene and unseat Nawaz Sharif. Some members of Nawaz Sharif's cabinet accused military intelligence of fomenting the protests, something the military and Imran Khan always denied. In fact there was no truth in PML[N]'s doctrine of allegations.

Contrarily, the army chief backed and in return, as a gesture of goodwill, to tell the vibrant media that Pak-Army and PML[N] were on ONE PAGE, PM Nawaz Sharif relinquished some of his powers, letting the military take charge of defence and foreign policy. Once more referring to the '**Wall Street Journal**' dated **27th August 2014**:

"—The Pakistani military is close to an agreement with the [civil] government in which the prime minister would relinquish control of security affairs and strategic foreign policy amid anti-government protests that have paralyzed the capital."

During his tour, speaking to a small group at the Royal United Services Institute, a defence think tank in London, Gen Raheel Sharif said:

*"Pakistan's lack of good governance had **created a vacuum** and required him to play a wide-ranging role as a soldier-statesman."*

A senior aide to the PM Nawaz Sharif present at that occasion said **"governing Pakistan is a joint venture between the elected civilian leadership and the military brass."**

A Western diplomat described it as an **"unequal coalition"** that favoured the armed forces – but both were comfortable.

PML[N] MINISTER MALIGNED ISI:

On 14th August 2015, Prime Minister Nawaz Sharif sought an explanation from senior cabinet member and minister for climate change, Senator Mushahidullah Khan, over an interview he gave to BBC Urdu, in which he alleged that former Inter Services Intelligence [ISI] Chief Lt Gen Zaheerul Islam Abbasi wanted to overthrow Pakistan's civil and military leadership during last year's 126 days long sit-in by the *Pakistan Tehreek e Insaf* [PTI] and the *Pakistan Awami Tehreek* [PAT].

In his interview, Mushahidullah alleged that during PM Sharif's meeting with army Chief Gen Raheel Sharif on 28th July 2014, an audio tape was played

in which Lt Gen Zaheerul Islam could be heard giving orders to ransack the PM House and spread chaos.

[PML[N] Senator Mushahidullah's bluff could be judged from the fact that PTI's sit-in had taken start on 14th August 2014 – how can an ISI Chief could order, and to whom, to ransack the PM House on 28th July 2014.]

The tape, claimed Senator Khan, was obtained by officials of the civilian intelligence agency – Intelligence Bureau [IB]. On hearing the audio tape, Gen Raheel summoned the ISI Chief to the meeting and played the tape in front of him. When Zaheerul Islam confirmed that the voice was his own, the army chief asked him to leave.

Taking notice of the Senator Khan's statements, the PM House immediately issued a news release, asking Mushahidullah Khan to explain his remarks. The release also said that **PM Sharif had never heard such an audio tape, nor was he aware of its existence.**

The Federal Information Minister Pervez Rashid also confirmed the media that he had been with the prime minister during the *dharna* days last year, thus could state with assurance that **"no such incident had taken place,"** referring to claims of the audio tape being played in Nawaz's meeting with Gen Raheel.

The Fed Info Minister categorically added that **'irresponsible and contrary to the facts - no tape was listened to or played.'** According to him **'Mushahidullah's claims were far from the truth and labelled them as made up.'**

Inter Services Public Relations [ISPR]'s DG Maj Gen Asim Bajwa tweeted on the same night that:

'The story about any tape recording as being discussed in media is totally baseless, unfounded and farthest from the truth. And that such rumour is irresponsible and unprofessional.'

During the later talks to the Pakistani media, Senator Mushahidullah, himself downplayed his claims, saying that he had never heard the audio recording himself and was told about it by other sources. His interview with the BBC was almost a week old and he admitted that there was no peculiar motive behind releasing it on Independence Day. He told that he had given the same explanation to the premier over a telephone call.

On 17th August 2015, Senator Mushahid met PM Nawaz Sharif at the PM House and, while submitting the resignation from the ministerial slot,

explained the basis of his claims regarding allegations on the ISI's former Chief. He categorically admitted that his allegations were based on 'hear-say' and informal discussions with other fellow members of PML[N] especially referring to Khawaja Asif, the then Defence Minister. **The PM immediately accepted his resignation and warned NOT to speak on party affairs at any forum.**

The matter was no so simple. In fact the strategy to hit Gen Raheel Sharif through ISI front had been on PM Nawaz Sharif's cards since long. Every Pakistani had full understanding that the Pak-Army had resolved to eradicate terrorism and corruption from Pakistan. The army had tackled the PPP's Lyari gangs, nearly eliminated the main groups, and then laid an iron hand on **MQM's bhatta mafia**, killer gangs, land grabbers and extortionists of Karachi through local police and Rangers.

ANOTHER COUP ON CARDS – FACTS:

As per **ForeignPolicy.com** dated **20th November 2014**; one Neha Ansari, who was on the **Express Tribune's** editorial staff at that time, had allegedly received instructions from the military establishment to support the 'dissenting' leaders and their sit-ins. But there was no independent source to confirm whether Naha Ansari had actually received such instructions from the army – and if so then why to discuss the same with the FP after six months; why not immediately after and why was it not shared with local media – the things were blurred.

However, as the crisis began to unfold, a conspiracy theory popped up to claim that the "**London Plan**", sought to destabilize Nawaz Sharif's government was solely authored by 'two successive ISI Chiefs' — Gen Pasha and Gen Zaheer — BUT had nothing to do with the army as an institution or its Chief.

*[In a live TV talk on **12th July 2015**, PML[N]'s Defence Minister Kh Asif finally named former DG ISI Gen Zaheerul Islam for his alleged role in destabilising the Nawaz Sharif government during 2014's PAT-PTI sit-ins.*

Although Gen Pasha was mentioned earlier to have been behind the 2014's sit-ins, Gen Zaheer was named for the first time to have conspired against the elected government. However, despite crossing their limits in violation of law and Constitution, none of these retired Generals were questioned either by the civilian government or the military leadership.

Kh Asif said that Gen Zaheer had a grudge against the government for its stance on Geo TV issue after the April 2014 attack on Hamid Mir. To settle his personal grudge, Gen Zaheer hurt the national interest. Kh Asif also alleged that Gen Pasha, during his tenure and after, had been meeting politicians in order to influence them to join the PTI.

In a Karachi restaurant, he said, Gen Pasha had urged the corporate executives in 2012 to finance PTI's political activities – though it was PPP's government then.

The minister said that some media persons were also used to destabilise the PML[N] government and make the 2014 sit-ins successful in order to get the elected prime minister resigned but it did not happen.]

According to further details [Daily 'the News' dated 13th July 2015 is referred], the incumbent head of the ISI, Gen Zaheer, had a 'personal grudge' against Nawaz Sharif and wanted to pit the two Sharifs — Nawaz and Raheel — against each other. Once embroiled in the crisis, the speculation has it; Gen Zaheer expected that Nawaz Shairf would accuse the COAS of orchestrating the sit-ins and try to fire him without a second thought. Upon learning the government decision, the COAS would then stage a counter-coup to send the government packing. And that would settle the score of the ISI chief.

However, the alleged plan did not go as expected. The COAS Gen Raheel was hesitant rather unwilling for such military activities and wanted democracy to reign. Hence, he came forward to reconcile the ruling PML[N] and the protesting political parties through '**politics, not force**'. Ultimately, the sit-ins came to an end and the government of Nawaz Sharif survived the said political tornado.

With the slogan of '**civil & military on one page**', the "military... extracted a promise of freedom for Gen Musharraf" — later he left Pakistan because of treason charges against him on various counts; alleged to have imposed emergencies twice in his tenure — first in October 1999 and later in November 2007.

The whole West remained disturbed that why Pakistan military has never given up its power over crucial national security and foreign policy matters, including the control of the atomic arsenal. The intelligentsia, however, knew that the political elite of Pakistan would sell their nuclear assets in a day had Pak-Army quit the field.

Later, Gen Pasha independently sought an inquiry to clear his name from involvement in the 'London Plan' conspiracy [Daily '**the News**' dated **3rd August 2015** is referred], but no such inquiry was initiated against him; neither by the civilian government nor by the GHQ. This despite the fact that Hashmi was not alone in claiming Pasha instigated the sit-ins; Privatization Commission Chairman Mohammad Zubair and Defense Minister Kh Asif also alleged Gen Pasha's role.

[On 3rd August 2015; all Pakistani media papers and channels displayed interesting breaking news – that former ISI chief Gen Ahmad Shuja Pasha sought an inquiry into the veracity of allegations involving him in the London Plan or the anti-government 2014 sit-ins. It was to determine whether or not he had any role in the making of Imran Khan's PTI or Dr Qadri's PAT or their role in August 2014's sit-ins in Islamabad.

Gen Pasha believed that he was being wrongly maligned by certain politicians and the media; thus he offered himself for accountability and was prepared to defend his role even as DG ISI. The General wanted to confront all his accusers, mostly associated with the ruling PML[N] and some in the media.

*Mr M Zubair, the brother of PTI's Asad Umar, told media that **'...when [I] was not in politics, Gen Pasha met some people of the corporate world including him and asked them to join the PTI. [I] was also one of the participants of that meeting...'***

Astonishingly, after the Defence Minister Kh Asif named Gen (retd) Zaheer and Gen (retd) Pasha being the two actors behind August 2014's sit-ins, demands were being made by different political leaders to get the issue probed and fix the responsibility.

*Initially, it was Altaf Hussain and Javed Hashmi who had demanded such probe but later Punjab Chief Minister Shahbaz Sharif said a commission, comprising leaders of parliamentary parties should be constituted to probe into the issue. **BUT PM Nawaz Sharif never made a commission or enquiry committee to do that Herculean job.***

Of late, PTI leader Imran Khan, whose party PTI was alleged to have played into the hands of some disgruntled elements of the establishment to destabilise the PML[N] government, also sought an inquiry into the matter. However, Nawaz Sharif avoided any

controversy that could cause mistrust between the civil and military authorities whatsoever.]

Some of the aides of Nawaz Sharif had advised the PM to proceed against Gen Zaheerul-Islam, but he exercised maximum restraint and remained patient. In fact, the PM was of the view that his action against Gen Zaheer might increase uncertainty to the advantage of those who wanted to dent the democratic and constitutional rule.

Upon coming to power in May 2013 elections, Nawaz Sharif had constituted a special bench to try Gen Musharraf under treason charges. As one of the *WSJ* report indicated, analysts believed the trial of Gen Musharraf was one of the irritants that put Nawaz Sharif on a collision course with the military, but the later managed to get secured the freedom of their ex-colleague as a quid-pro-quo to allow Nawaz Sharif stay in power.

Referring to the '**Washington Post**' dated **6th October 2015**;

*'Since months, the US has been quietly exploring some diplomatic options that could reduce violence in Afghanistan — and **perhaps even curb the danger of a nuclear Pakistan next door**'.*

The White House had turned their guns to Pakistan; exploring new limits and controls on its nuclear weapons and capabilities. The US had already secretly opened a path towards the civil nuclear deal that was launched with India in 2005.

*[President Bush and Indian Prime Minister Manmohan Singh had agreed on the civil nuclear deal **on 18th July 2005** lifting thirty years US moratorium on nuclear trade with India - the US Congress on **1st October 2008** had given final approval to that agreement.]*

Since two decades the US had viewed Pakistan's nuclear program as one of the world's most dangerous security problem. Once again Pakistan was asked to re-consider its "**brackets**" that was why PM Nawaz Sharif was called in Washington on 22nd October 2015. PM Nawaz was to be compelled to agree to restrict its nuclear program according to its actual defence needs against India's nuclear threat but he didn't agree to the US plans openly and the matter remained in doldrums.

PM Nawaz Sharif was also asked to agree with other US terms – and once again the Pakistani populace was made fool through media discussions lead by some stooge anchors that '**PML[N] has got Civil Nuclear Deal with**

the US - at par with India – a great success of PM Nawaz Sharif
but there was nothing concrete as pledge.

The US Pentagon and White House knew that 86% Pakistanis hate them in an arena of Moscow's retreat from Afghanistan in 1980s, Civil Nuclear Deal of 2005 with India, Obama's one sided deals with Kabul's Karzai and May 2011's humiliating attacks on Pakistani soils etc.

Had the PM Nawaz Sharif agreed with any deal on Pakistan's nuclear program, he could have faced another mid-term kick on the back in the shape of a possible ***Military Coup***.

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Yet Another Attempt:

The '**New York Times**' dated **16th July 2016** told the world that in the wake of **Turkey's failed coup**, Pakistan's general populace saw at places the hung posters of COAS Gen Raheel Sharif, urging him to take over the government through another military coup. However, one thing was settled that there was no direct evidence of Pak-Army's involvement and its intelligence agencies in that move.

Earlier, Gen Raheel Sharif had conscientiously helped reconcile the PML[N] government and the PTI & PAT after August 2014's long march and sit-in protests. After an agreement was reached between the parties, Senator Mushahidullah Khan's **interview with BBC** had appeared – the details of which are given earlier but the COAS didn't figure anywhere in it.

The Pak-Army has always been believed to be a professional and organized institution in Pakistan but some media stalwarts posed them as the '*power-hungry establishment ready to exploit circumstances to its advantage*'. The slogans like '**Democracy is under threat from the establishment, not from the military**', were abundantly available on social media pages during the political regimes.

The nation could recall that during 2014's sit-ins, the rumours were strong that the establishment was behind them, but who foiled that conspiracy? When the protesters rushed to storm the parliament building and the PM House, it was the military which blocked the way of the protesters. Surely, the military had sided with the democracy.

[By dictionary meaning 'The Establishment' generally denotes a dominant group or elite that holds power or authority in a nation or organization. The Establishment may be a close social group which selects its own members or specific elite, either in government or in specific institutions.

In Pakistani perspective, the establishment and the military are the one and the same thing; the decisions are always taken in Corp Commanders meetings.]

Once in mid 2016, banners appeared on light poles alongside busy roads in 11 of Pakistan's big cities; [**The Express Tribune** dated **12th July 2016** is referred]. The banners asked Gen Raheel Sharif to take over control of the country rather than retiring.

The military categorically denied any involvement in posters game urging the COAS to take over and a criminal case was instantly registered against the chief of one political party that hung the posters. **On 20th July 2016**, the chief of "**Move on Pakistan**" named Mian Kamran, was arrested from a guest house located near Aabpara Islamabad.

The Inter-Services Intelligence [ISI] was speculated to have run the show but the Inter-Services Public Relations [ISPR], media wing of the military, said that it had nothing to do with the banners and the group that placed them in different cities of the country.

The two "**Azadi March**" and "**Inqilab March**", meant as 'Freedom & Revolution' respectively, launched by the PTI and PAT in August 2014, were not meaningless. Imran Khan and Dr Qadri both categorically denied receiving any support from the military or ISI, but even then it was widely believed that ISI was behind them – as was subsequently charged by Senator Mushahidullah of the PML[N].

*[In fact, the said allegations were coined and propagated by PTI's former head, Javed Hashmi, who on a popular private TV show confidently claimed [**Daily Dawn** dated **6th April 2015** is referred] that the sit-in of August 2014 was the idea of Gen Shuja Pasha, the former DG ISI.]*

Coming back to our starting point:

15th July 2016's failed military coup in Turkey brought cheers for some in Pakistan. The PML[N] believed that the failure of the Turkish coup

was a deterrent leaving no possibility of ousting the civilian regime in Pakistan, at least for the next few years. Additionally, proponents of democracy believed the vibrant judiciary, which avowed closure of the '**Doctrine of Necessity**', and the active media would resist a coup attempt. However, in those days there were **still three factors** that could drive another coup in Pakistan.

Widespread Popularity of Gen Raheel Sharif: he enjoyed overwhelming support in the country on two levels. Among the political elite, Gen Raheel Sharif won acclaim when he issued a statement in January 2016 exhibiting **reluctance to seek an extension** of his term. Nearly every political section applauded the decision, considering it part of a healthy trend in nurturing democratic norms. Among the general public, Gen Raheel Sharif was seen as a determined soldier [unlike his predecessor Gen Kayani]. Gen Raheel had successfully restored peace in the country as a whole and in Karachi particularly.

Gen Raheel Sharif's popularity could also be gauged from social media pages; presenting tribute to the General and the army became a new craze in both the lower and upper classes. For instance, Pakistan's cricket team won a test match against England at Lords in July 2016 and the victory celebrations included a salute to the army, since the players received physical training at a military camp before departing on their overseas tour; [**Firstpost.com** dated **18th July 2016** is referred].

PTI's Claims of military backing: Imran Khan's gestures were being accepted by the general populace. Once in July 2016 Mr Khan said that people would welcome the army and distribute sweets if a coup took place in Pakistan. Khan went on saying that the biggest threat to the democracy is none other than Nawaz Sharif and his corrupt cronies; daily '**the News**' dated **17th July 2016** is referred.

A wide spread notions prevailed in Pakistan that PTI emerged on the political scene suddenly after 2011, allegedly with the patronage of former DG ISI Gen Shuja Pasha. Three years later, the party staged a 126-day long sit-in in Islamabad allegedly supported and funded by the same agency which was not at all true as discussed earlier.

The PTI brought development, corruption free administration and many positive structural changes in Khyber PK province, which was termed as productive experience. The intelligentsia had started analysing the situations vis a vis other provinces especially with Karachi where the PPP government, in its eight years rule, could not remove the garbage from the city, could not supply drinking water, could not control sewerage and even

simple maintenance of its roads and streets. Thus there was serious anxiety among the people to bring PTI in power but aided with nationalist technocrats from all around.

PML[N]'s Faulty Planning & misguided priorities: Sharif's PML[N] government had a single majority to run the country and complete the legitimate constitutional term, yet a few blunders were there to facilitate shocking fall of his government. The 2014's Model Town Lahore incident, which took the lives of 14 people, remained a mystery and a stain on Shahbaz Sharif government. PAT had successfully convinced the general populace that the killings were deliberately carried out at the behest of the prime minister and chief minister.

The said serious case had never been investigated on merits. Critics argued a real finding regarding the atrocity could dethrone the PM and CM; the subsequent political vacuum might be filled by the military.

In addition, the Panama Papers scandal appeared as monster in April 2016. Opposition parties were expecting a possible ouster of Nawaz Sharif. Moreover, PML[N] made little progress on elections promises like ending power outages, curbing inflation, and exercising better governance. Consequently public support for the government was gradually slipping out of their hands.

In Pakistan, opportunists from all political parties have always hailed military takeovers and enjoyed the fruits even more than their so called democratic bosses. Unfortunately, the stage remained ready because there was no democracy at all; it always has been a family business weather Zardaris & Bhutto or Sharifs come up in the name of democracy.

Thus ***Raheel Sharif and the army's fame, Imran Khan's green light, and the PML[N]'s bad-governance*** were sufficient to foster another round of military take over because the people wanted development, industrial growth, un-interrupted power supply, clean water, better schools and hospitals – which the two political governments could not afford during their respective terms.

HATS OFF TO GEN RAHEEL SHRIF:

SAULAT MIRZA Lived 16 years after DEATH Sentence: Shahid Hamid, MD KESC, was murdered in 1997 along with his driver and guard.

An anti-terror court convicted Saulat Mirza for the murder and handed him the death sentence in 1999. His final appeal to the Supreme Court stands dismissed. The law required him to be hanged within days of the president turning down his mercy petition. But he wasn't. Sixteen years since his conviction Mirza remained alive and well in prison.

Why so - because some political figures wanted the execution stayed. PM Nawaz Sharif wanted to pull the matter but the Pak-Army escorted Saulat Mirza up to the gallows **on 12th May 2015**.

Shiraz Paracha in his essay on media pages dated **6th December 2016** held that many non-democratic states in this world went highly developed; lack of Western form of democracy had not deterred development in those states. From Singapore to China and from Central Asian states to Russia, one could see their scientific approach, high level of education, extremely developed infrastructure and strong economies.

Pakistan failed to develop a system or governance pattern that could be taken as viable – far from the concept of a model. If democracy didn't work here, the authoritarian military rulers also failed to transform Pakistan into economically, socially and culturally developed state.

In Pakistan, the problem went gradually serious because the Pak-Army always preferred to act as nanny or big brother for the state and its 200 million people. The military developed their thesis on the premise that Pakistan would always remain under perpetual threat physically and ideologically – thus never tried the other available options. Precisely because of this the Pak-Army has mostly been portrayed as the army of Islam and Pakistan as its fortress.

Gen Ziaul Haq [*ruled Pakistan from July 1977 to August 1988*] changed the motto of the Pakistan Army to **"Iman, Taqwa and Jihad-fi-Sabilillah"**. It meant that besides being a professional army, the Pakistan Army was also a missionary force with a mission to defend Islam. From this stand point, all '*enemies of Islam*' were Pakistan's enemies so fighting for Islam remained his priority.

Instead of creating awareness, successive civil and military dictators encouraged confusing historical narratives and played sectarian card for divide and rule purposes. The State used Islam as political tool and Gen Zia patronized a particular sect later brought acute disaster for the country. Among all the 15 former Pakistani army chiefs, Gen Raheel Sharif was the most vocal and blunt in his opposition to India.

Since the day Gen Raheel Sharif held the Army Chief's stick in ending 2013, he and his army were feeling uneasy with the government's decision to pursue negotiations with the Pakistani Taliban, particularly at a moment when the militants were killing Pakistani troops.

In January 2014, when twenty soldiers were killed in the frontier town of Bannu, Gen Raheel Sharif responded with immense force. For a moment, it looked as if Pakistan was about to mount a sweeping offensive against the Taliban - but the PML[N] government urged army to cool down once more. The Taliban were quick to exploit the new space yielded to them. Their chosen interlocutors spent rather wasted a fortnight diverting attention away from the question of terrorism and discussed whether Pakistan had a **"truly Islamic form of government"**.

Meanwhile, the bombings continued: in Peshawar, cinemas and pro-government tribal elders were attacked. In Karachi, eleven policemen were killed. Three different media organizations were either attacked by bombs or threatened with blow - ***and on one Sunday night, the Taliban beheaded twenty-three soldiers in their custody.***

This last act of utter humiliation frayed the military's patience. Just after three days, fighter jets bombed targets in North Waziristan, a tribal area along the Afghan border notorious for its concentration of militants, while gunship helicopters strafed their allies in the nearby Khyber agency. The new fighting, which signalled the end of talks with the Taliban, and perhaps a wider military offensive, diminished the odds of Gen Musharraf's trial continuing - PML[N] didn't approve the army's stance.

Referring to the daily '**DAWN**' dated **9th February 2016**, an organisation titled as '**Move on Pakistan**', but registered as a political party three years earlier by business community working for education, health and peace said that:

"Gen Raheel Sharif's services for restoring peace in Karachi, FATA and Balochistan demand that he should stay as the army chief.

Moreover, he speaks against corruption which is a biggest issue of the country. We believe that extension should be given to him because only he can address Pakistan's issues."

Though the Pakistan army had made it clear that the military policies would continue even after the retirement of Gen Raheel Sharif but, **on 24th February 2016**, the PPP submitted a resolution in the Punjab Assembly

demanding the federal government should give extension to the army chief Gen Raheel. PPP MPA Khurram Wattoo filed the resolution in the assembly secretariat while saying that:

'...the country is facing worst situation and the armed forces are trying their best to root out the menace of terrorism. Under these circumstances, the government should rise above the politics of expediency and back the armed forces in war on terror.'

ALLAH hi janey kon basher hai....[GOD knows who is the (perfect) human being...]

GEN RAHEEL SAVED GEN MUSHARRAF:

Omar Waraich, in an essay dated **20th February 2014** on media held:

"As per Pakistan's constitution, anyone found guilty of suspending the constitution is, by definition, a traitor. The army considered this language inflammatory, and particularly galling when applied to the former chief of an institution that has long seen itself as the ultimate guardian of Pakistan's security."

Former Army Chief was being made target of personal vendetta of the two giants – PM Nawaz Sharif and the CJP Iftikhar M Chaudhry. The details have already been given in the earlier volume of **'The Living History of Pakistan Vol-V'** and with cogent references.

However, the new Army Chief, Gen Raheel Sharif had a longstanding family connection to Gen Musharraf. His brother, the war hero Major Shabbir Sharif, was a close friend of Gen Musharraf. To honour that bond Gen Sharif ordered the Army to take Gen Musharraf under its protection. Thus the prosecution of Gen Musharraf got derailed after the military stood by its former leader.

Referring to the **'Wall Street Journal'** dated **8th April 2014:**

"—The head of Pakistan's army lashed out this week over the treason trial of former army chief Gen Musharraf, marking the first time the military's previously behind-the-scenes frustration over the ex-leader's treatment has boiled to the surface since the current [PMLN] government came to power in June 2013."

Another perception carries weight that *'soldiers cannot be expected to die for the country while their former chief is on trial for treason'*. But as the offensive against the Taliban started, the Army was pulled in two different directions. It was fighting on one front and facing a media trial of their former chief on the other - that made the situation tenser. Many observers felt that Pakistan was then facing many other problems too — terrorism, a crushing energy crisis, a torpid economy etc etc.

PM Nawaz Sharif's government didn't want to prolong Gen Musharraf's ordeal; they quickly wanted a conviction for the record: something to even the score – but that [un]fortunate moment never appeared; yes, Nawaz Sharif himself faced the most humiliating punishment of the world history in July 2017 through Panama Leaks trial instead.

Gen Musharraf's greatest misfortune was that Nawaz Sharif, the man he ousted when he seized power in a military coup in October 1999, had returned to government. In 2013, Nawaz Sharif was elected Prime Minister for an unprecedented third time, still bearing the scars of his ignominious exit fourteen years before. Soon after taking office, in June 2013, Sharif appeared in Parliament to announce that the government would try Gen Musharraf for "high treason"— defined as any attempt to subvert or suspend the constitution.

In fact, **Nawaz Sharif was motivated solely by revenge** and that, given the circumstances Gen Musharraf didn't get a fair trial. But Gen Musharraf's detractors were not only in the parliament: the judiciary was similarly ill-disposed toward the former military ruler. In 2007, Gen Musharraf had triggered his own downfall by sacking the sitting Chief Justice Iftikhar M Chaudhry.

Gen Musharraf appeared to have few regrets. In the final week of 2013, days before he was due to appear in court, the pensioned dictator invited sympathetic interviewers to question him on television. In one interview, Gen Musharraf said, slipping into his favoured bullet-point style:

"Everything I did was for the country - Pakistan. I was at the helm of affairs. The state of the country is one way, the constitution is the other. What should I have done? Should I have run?"

In the interview, Gen Musharraf displayed few signs of the initial illness that prevented him from appearing in court a month later. His only visible symptom was an inflamed sense of self-importance.

Gen Musharraf was propelled by the belief that he was still his country's saviour: there was no other explanation for his decision to return to Pakistan on 23rd March 2013 from his comfortable exile in London, despite the best advice of his allies in both government and the Army.

The Pak-Army had long urged Gen Musharraf not to return. The former Army chief, Gen Kayani believed that his predecessor's plunge back into politics would invite legal troubles and damage the Army's image - he was correct: the Pakistan's Army was later seen trying to fend off a crisis it never wanted in the first place.

Gen Musharraf had earlier been ordered by a three-judge special court seized to record his statement on 31st March 2016. The General, in a fresh application, stated that his medical condition had greatly worsened. The said application had called to reconsider his 4th May 2014's medical report, prepared by a private medical board consisting of top neurologists and orthopaedic surgeons from Karachi, which stated that Gen Musharraf had fractured his vertebra.

The report had also indicated that the treatment for this kind of a fracture was not available in Pakistan, and surgery had to be performed in Dubai, North America or Europe.

Over the past two years, Gen Musharraf's condition had been deteriorating, but things took a serious turn on 11th February 2016 when he had to be rushed to PNS Shifa Hospital in Karachi. Subsequently, on 18th February 2016, Gen Musharraf complained of severe pain in the lower back and numbness in the left leg. Dr Imtiaz Hashmi, an orthopaedic spinal surgeon who had been treating Gen Musharraf since 2011, was rushed to the applicant's house and advised him complete bed rest.

Gen Musharraf was brought to PNS Shifa again on 24th February 2016, where he fell while on his way to the bathroom. In view of different tests conducted on that day, the application maintained, doctors had advised Gen Musharraf's emergency surgery performed to correct the fracture in the vertebra and avoid any serious complications.

On 14th March 2016; a five-member bench headed by Chief Justice of Pakistan Anwar Zaheer Jamali, while hearing a pending federal government appeal against a 2014 Sindh High Court order removing Gen Musharraf's name from the ECL, upheld the ruling.

The government's appeal was rushed through by the government on 14th June 2014 on the apprehension that once Gen Musharraf left the country, he would not return to stand trial under Article 6 of the Constitution.

[On 23rd June 2014; *the Supreme Court of Pakistan suspended the Sindh High Court [SHC]'s judgment until it decided the pending appeal, and also formulated a set of questions to determine whether Gen Musharraf could be allowed to leave Pakistan.*

The apex court of CJP Iftikhar M Chaudhry had, in an earlier verdict on 8th April 2013, ordered the government to place Gen Musharraf's name on the ECL and ensure that he did not leave Pakistan until the court order was varied or modified. Visibly, CJP Chaudhry was balancing his own scores of humiliation suffered at the hands of Gen Musharraf in March 2007.]

The five-member bench gave the order after hearing the arguments of Attorney General Salman Aslam Butt, the petitioner representing the federal government, and Barrister Farogh Nasim, Gen Musharraf's counsel. The apex court's order said:

"For reasons recorded separately, the [federal government's] appeal has been dismissed.

However, the order will not preclude the federal government and special court's proceedings against him under Article 6 from passing any appropriate legal order for regulating his custody or movement."

On 19th December 2016; former president Gen Musharraf claimed that ex-army chief Gen Raheel Sharif influenced the PML[N] government and helped him out, ***'behind the scene our judiciary works under pressure'***, it was guessed.

When asked to explain by the host how Gen Raheel Sharif helped him; Musharraf responded saying by ***"influencing the courts"***. He elaborated:

"The Pakistani courts work under pressure behind the scenes and then give decisions. The army chief had a role to play in releasing the pressure behind the scenes."

When asked how exactly Gen Raheel Sharif had to relieve pressure from; Gen Musharraf said:

"Not from the judges but from the government....Once he [Gen Sharif] got the government to relieve the pressure that they were exerting, the courts gave their judgement and allowed me to go abroad for treatment."

Gen Musharraf had left the country for Dubai in March 2016 hours after the interior ministry issued a notification to remove his name from the Exit Control List [ECL]. The government notification followed the Supreme Court's order to lift the ban on his foreign travel.

Apart from murder cases of Benazir Bhutto, Nawab Akbar Bugti and Ghazi Abdul Rasheed, the retired General was facing treason charges for imposing emergency rule in November 2007, arresting judges and limiting their powers. His name was kept on the ECL for more than 20 months. Interior Minister Nisar Ali Khan had said then in March 2016 that Gen Musharraf had committed to face all cases against him in court and had **"promised to return in four to six weeks"**.

GEN RAHEEL'S VISIT TO AMERICA:

Chief of Army Staff Gen Raheel Sharif visited the US from **15-20th November 2015**, to underscore security issues facing Islamabad and Washington in the region as well as the imbalance in civilian-military power in Pakistan. Two MAJOR REASONS for the visit:

Firstly, few days earlier, Pakistan's PM Nawaz Sharif had visited America and met with US President Obama at the Oval Office to discuss many issues including Afghan peace talks and Pakistan's nuclear ambitions.

Secondly, just two weeks before, on 1st November 2015, Pakistan had lost bid for re-election to the United Nations Human Rights Council [UNHRC], an utter humiliation which had forced the Foreign Office to do some introspection and look for image-repairing.

[Pakistan had served three terms on the 47-member council and was vying for a fourth one from the Asia-Pacific Group which had five vacant slots. Pakistan got 105 votes in the 193-member General Assembly and could not get re-elected. Other countries that lost from the group were Laos and Bahamas.

The group was topped by Mongolia, which bagged over 150 votes. The United Arab Emirates, Kyrgyzstan, South Korea and the Philippines were also elected. The defeat was shocking because it was the first time that Pakistan had lost a major election at the UN. Just a year ago it had polled 180 votes to get elected to the Economic and Social Council.

Pakistan had been in the rights council since 2006. The defeat exposed country's real value for other states because of PML[N] government's poor foreign policy decisions; in fact PM Nawaz Sharif had least priority for the Foreign Office affairs.

Further, Pakistan's permanent representative at Geneva Zamir Akram was changed at the wrong time; the outgoing representative lost interest and the new one had little time to lobby. The country put its weight behind the individual candidatures of Anwar Kamal and Barrister Zafarullah for two UN committees – the tired horses.

Pakistan was not able to argue on issues of its concern nor could block a resolution tabled against it like human rights violations in Kashmir. Two major blocs that did not vote for Pakistan were the Association of Southeast Asian Nations [ASEAN] and the Gulf Cooperation Council [GCC]. Most countries had concerns about Pakistan's human rights record — the blasphemy issue and persecution of Christians, Ahmadis and Shias.]

Analysts held Gen Raheel's influence over both issues made him the dominant broker for Washington. The Americans 'knew where the power was', however that made the visit 'a bit trickier' for Nawaz Sharif as he tried to balance Washington's demands, particularly on Afghanistan.

Stability in Afghanistan had spiralled after a Taliban surge in those months, and Obama announced in October 2015 that Washington would keep thousands of soldiers in the country past 2016. The US saw Islamabad as its partner with the influence to bring the militants to the negotiating table. The new Taliban leader Mullah Akhtar Mansour was believed to have close ties with Pakistan.

Gen Raheel held detailed discussions with US defence officials about the militant Haqqani network, associated with the Taliban and had been earlier described by US officials as a 'veritable arm' of Pakistani intelligence. Washington also believed Pakistan had not done enough to bring its influence to bear and to persuade the Taliban and Haqqani group to renounce violence,

and during PM Nawaz's trip in October [2015] Obama stressed that Pakistan needed to 'do more'.

The initial round of peace talks was broken off in summer [2015] due to the death of Taliban leader Mullah Omar. PM Nawaz had agreed during his October 2015 visit to help Afghanistan re-start the talks, but Washington's concerns over the collapse of negotiations were '*casting a shadow over the General's visit*'; unusual circumstances were cropping up. In the power corridors, the whispering was loud enough that:

"It's not that the Americans have invited him but he has invited himself; it would be Gen Raheel's second visit this year. Normally this doesn't happen.

It signals the importance of the problems that both countries seem to be facing in the region and especially because of the Afghan situation."

A military statement issued that week said that:

"Gen Raheel would use the US trip to clearly highlight Pakistan's perspective of new emerging regional realities."

The world media transcribed it as ***the failure of PM Nawaz's government in taking long term steps to tackle extremism***. But the end point was that the discussions were taking place, irrespective of the point that who had proposed it.

Pakistan's nuclear weapons were [and are] being handled by the military only, so it was natural for the army to want to talk to its US counterparts. The successive political leaderships were not even aware of the strength of their nuclear weapons... They were also unaware of the military needs and other operational details.

The fact remained that that international powers and India had concerns about Pakistan's short range smaller nuclear warhead weapons; the US was expecting to raise the issue with Gen Raheel Sharif during his visit – and it did but the General argued well that Pakistan must maintain its nuclear capability to combat the threat from India.

Gen Raheel Sharif's trip to Washington starting on **15th November 2015** was made critical by the PML[N] government in many ways. The PML[N] government alleged that the US and its allies wanted to do business with

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him because they perceived him to be the man in charge of Pakistan. At stake were Pakistan's relations with Kabul, New Delhi and Washington.

Terrorism remained one factor that linked all the three countries; they accused Pakistan of sheltering various shades of terrorists who were creating massive problems for them. Pakistan, in turn, accused India of actively proxy-warring in FATA, Karachi and Balochistan.

Pakistan also accused Afghanistan of unfairly blaming Pakistan for all its troubles despite mounting evidence of its own failings. And it wanted the US to "**do more**" to shore up the Ghani regime in Kabul, help Pakistan's anti-terrorism drive with money and materials, as well as restrain the RAW hand in Pakistan.