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[Home](#) > Pakistan: An Evolving State

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In our preoccupation with the anti-India activities of the Pakistani jihadi organisations, we should not overlook the positive factors that have brought a ray of hope not only to Pakistan, but to the region as a whole.

2. The most positive factor is the fact that the mainstream political class in Pakistan---with the Pakistan People's Party (PPP) and the Pakistan Muslim League (PML-N) of Mr.Nawaz Sharif in the forefront--- have been showing for the last five years since the last elections were held a greater sense of political balance and maturity than ever before in the history of Pakistan.

3. The past habit of political leaders of running to the Army as an institution or to individual Army officers for help in countering the activities of their political opponents is slowly fading away. There is a welcome realization in the mainstream political class that it cannot escape its share of responsibility for the Army acquiring the role of an arbiter in political matters.

4.All mainstream political parties now realize that to curb the political role of the Army and to promote genuine democracy, it is important that the political parties fight out their differences in the legislatures and town halls and should not take them to the army for arbitration.

5. It is this balance, maturity and self-restraint that contributed to the present PPP-led coalition being able to complete its normal tenure of five years. The credit for the remarkable fact that the elected National Assembly and the civilian Government have been able to complete their tenure of five years should go not only to the mainstream political parties but also to the senior Army leadership headed by Gen.Ashfaq Pervez Kayani, the Chief of the Army Staff, who resisted the temptation to intervene on occasions when they could have done so without creating a public outcry.

6. The controversy over the role of Mr.Hussain Haqqani as the Pakistani Ambassador to the US was one such occasion when the Army leadership was under considerable provocation to act to express its indignation over the back-channel assurances allegedly conveyed to the US by Haqqani regarding the steps which the Asif Zardari Government would be prepared to take in return for the US support to the civilian leadership.

7. The fact that Kayani resisted the temptation and urge to intervene reflected well on him and the senior officers under him. By exercising self-restraint, the Army under Kayani contributed to the continuance of the elected civilian leadership for its normal term of five years.

8. The Army still claims for itself the primacy of decision-making in matters concerning national security in general and relations with India in particular. It is still not prepared to allow the civilian leadership a role in monitoring and supervising the functioning of the Armed Forces. But, it is now prepared to keep away from politics if its primacy in decision-making in these matters is respected by the elected leadership.

9.This unwritten code of compromise between the political and military leadership can be an important first step towards the evolution of Pakistan as a genuine democracy.

10. Despite sectarian and jihadi violence, Pakistan is not a failed State. Despite its economic difficulties, Pakistan is not a failing State. The last five years have shown that Pakistan is an evolving State. It is still an ideological State. It is still attached to the ideology of its founding fathers. But it is an ideology tempered by political maturity, balance and pragmatism. It is in the interest of all of us to encourage this evolution.

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[Pak Army](#) ^[2]

Category:

Papers [3]

Countries:

Pakistan [4]

Topics:

Political [5]

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